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Project: 6978 - Northfleet School for Girls

Our Ref: 6978-LLB-CO-Ec-0001

Re. HMMP Year 1 Monitoring Survey Report

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in reference to the Year 1 monitoring survey required at Northfleet School for Girls, Hall Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, DA11 8AQ, hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

The survey was commissioned in light of the monitoring requirements provided within the '*Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan*' (HMMP) (Lloyd bore Ltd, 2025).

As per the HMMP report, on-site habitats were to be created and enhanced to meet the statutory biodiversity net gain targets for the Site as specified within the Biodiversity Gain Plan and HMMP for the development.

Habitats were assessed on 25th November 2025 by Nikki Stapleton-Farr BSc (Hons). Nikki is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and has over four years' experience undertaking habitat classification and assessment.

A summary of the required habitats are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of the required habitats as per the 'Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan' (Lloyd bore Ltd, 2025).

Habitat type	Quantity	Target condition
Individual trees	Four trees	Moderate
Other neutral grassland	0.1033ha	Good

Individual Trees

Four individual trees were planted within the grassland. The trees are currently of 'small' size and achieve a 'moderate' condition, passing the following criteria: -

- Criteria A - The tree is a native species;
- Criteria B - The tree canopy is predominantly continuous (individual trees automatically pass this criterion);
- Criteria D - There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities; and
- Criteria F - More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

Current growth is as expected; trees were noted to be in good health but becoming dormant for the winter. Photographs of the planted trees are shown in Appendix 1.

Other Neutral Grassland

Grassland on-site was seeded with EM8 'Meadow Mixture' to facilitate the creation of 'other neutral grassland'. Habitat creation measures detailed in the Site Proposals Plan and within Section 3 of the HMMP specified that all on-site grassland should be created per this specification. However, during the monitoring visit, areas directly adjacent to and behind the building were discovered to have been created using laid turf.

A total of 0.1033ha grassland has been seeded/turfed. The grassland has started to establish with uniform sward between 5-10cm and is currently dominated by perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) with an average of 2 species per m² across the entire grassland area.

The grassland is currently 'poor' condition and does not meet the description of other neutral grassland and is currently classified as 'modified grassland'. However, this is to be expected considering the short length of time the habitat has been establishing. The grassland currently passes the following criteria: -

- Criteria D - Cover of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) is less than 20% and cover of scrub is less than 5%; and
- Criteria E - Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area.

Photographs of the grassland are shown in Appendix 1.

With appropriate management, it is anticipated that the grassland can achieve the required habitat type and target condition within the standard target time of 10 years provided by the Defra 'Statutory Metric' (Defra, 2024).

Other neutral grassland management prescriptions

Management techniques to reduce the dominance of perennial ryegrass and encourage the establishment of 'other neutral grassland' should adhere to the following prescriptions: -

Every year:

- Do not apply any fertilisers, pesticides, soil additives or manure to the grassland throughout the entire duration of management.
- All arisings will be removed from the grassland immediately after cutting and composted within a pre-determined composting location or locations.

2025-2027:

- Grassland should initially be left unmanaged to establish, apart from the removal of weed species such as docks (*Rumex Sp.*), thistles (*Cirsium Sp.*) and bristly ox-tongue (*Helminthotheca echinoides*), that could colonise the grassland. Weed species will be controlled using hand removal.
- The first cut of the grassland should be undertaken in February 2026, then once again within the period April to May 2026 (inclusive).
- These first cuts will reduce the entire grassland to c. 10cm in height with each cut. This will help reduce the dominance of the perennial ryegrass and allow other species within the seed mix to take hold, increasing the diversity of the sward.

- The grassland will be cut once again to c. 10cm in the period mid-August to mid-September 2026 (inclusive). The grassland will be overseeded with EM8 'Meadow Mixture' immediately following this cut.
- Grassland management within 2027 will repeat as from 2026.

2028-2029 onwards:

- Rotational cutting is to be undertaken from 2028 onwards
- Within 2028, half of the grassland will be cut once, in the period mid-September to mid-October (inclusive). This cut will reduce half of the grassland to c. 20cm in height, leaving the other half uncut.
- Within 2029, the remaining half of the grassland will be cut once to c. 20cm in height, in the period mid-September to mid-October (inclusive).
- The grass sward will thereafter be rotationally topped on an annual basis, repeating the above pattern. Half of the total grassland area will be topped each year, in the period mid-September to mid-October, with the opposite half topped in the following year.

I trust the above is clear, please do not hesitate to contact us should you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Nikki Stapleton BSc (Hons)

Senior Ecologist



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References:

Lloydbore Ltd (2025). *Habitat management and monitoring plan: Northfleet School for Girls*. Doc ref: 6978-LLB-XX-XX-T-Ec-0001-S3-P02. Canterbury: Lloydbore

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1 View of the planted trees and seeded grassland.



Photo 2 View of a planted tree and seeded grassland.



Photo 3 View of the planted trees and seeded grassland.



Photo 4 View of the turfed grassland behind the building.



Photo 5 View of the turfed grassland behind the building.



Photo 6 View of the turfed grassland behind the building.