



## **AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION SWEET BRIAR SOLAR FARM**

CLIENT: SWEET BRIAR SOLAR FARM LIMITED  
PROJECT: SWEET BRIAR SOLAR FARM  
DATE: 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021 – ISSUE 1  
ISSUED BY: JAMES FULTON MRICS FAAV

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report assesses the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grading of 87Ha, or thereabouts, of agricultural land at Sweet Briar Farm.
- 1.2 The limiting factor is found to be soil wetness, a combination of the climatic regime, soil water regime and texture of the top 25cm of the soil.
- 1.3 The land is graded as follows:

Grade 1:	3Ha
Grade 2:	4Ha
Grade 3a:	55Ha
Grade 3b:	25Ha

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Amet Property Ltd have been instructed by Sweet Briar Solar Farm Limited to produce an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) report on an 87 hectare site at Sweet Briar Farm, Ulceby in north Lincolnshire. The ALC report is being prepared to accompany a planning application to be submitted for a solar farm.
- 2.2 The report's author is James Fulton BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV who has worked as a chartered surveyor, agricultural valuer, and agricultural consultant since 2004.
- 2.3 The report is based on a site visit conducted on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2021 during which the conditions were dry and sunny. During the inspection three trial pits were dug to a depth of 120cm with additional shallower holes to determine the depth at which the soil structure changed or to determine colour where they were unclear from augur samples. In addition to the trial pits an augur was used to take one sample per hectare on the proposed development site to a depth of 1.2m. A plan of augur points can be found at **appendix 1**. The trial pits were at sample points 21, 64 and 85.
- 2.4 Further information has been obtained from the MAGIC website, the Soil Survey of England and Wales and the Meteorological Office.
- 2.5 The collected information has been judged against the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.
- 2.6 The principal factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil and the interaction between them <sup>MAFF (1988) & Natural England (2012)</sup>. Where factors are used for ALC grading but do not give any limitation to this site, they are not discussed.

MAFF (1988) - *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.* MAFF Publications

Natural England (2012) - *Technical Information Note 049 - Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land*, Second Edition

### 3. CLIMATE

- 3.1 Climate has a major, and in places overriding, influence on land quality affecting both the range of potential agricultural uses and the cost and level of production.
- 3.2 There is published agro-climatic data for England and Wales provided by the Meteorological Office, such data for the subject site is listed in the table below.

Figure 3.1 Agro-Climatic Data – Details at **appendix 2**

Grid Reference	510810 417011
Altitude (ALT)	18.93
Average Annual Rainfall (AAR)	622.20
Accumulated Temperature - Jan to June (ATO)	1385.22
Duration of Field Capacity (FCD)	135.12
Moisture Deficit Wheat	106.90
Moisture Deficit Potatoes	98.58

- 3.3 The main parameters used in assessing the climatic limitation are average annual rainfall (AAR), as a measure of overall wetness; and accumulated temperature, as a measure of the relative warmth of a locality.
- 3.4 The Average Annual Rainfall and Accumulated Temperature provide no climatic limitation to grade.
- 3.5 The whole site is shown to be flood zone 1 with little or no risk of flooding.

## 4. SOILS

- 4.1 The site is generally consistent being a loam or clay loam topsoil over a slowly permeable clay subsoil. Three sample points to the south east were completely different to the rest of the site and were demonstrably a different soil type.
- 4.2 Detailed assessment of each trial pit and augur sample can be found at **appendix 3** with a plan at **appendix 4** showing the two separate soil areas.
- 4.3 Soil profile description

### Area 1

Horizon 1: 0cm to between 30cm and 40cm Dark greyish brown or very dark greyish brown heavy clay loam, medium clay loam, sandy clay loam or sandy loam with a weak fine subangular blocky or weak medium subangular blocky structure.

Horizon 2: From between 30cm and 40 cm to between 50cm and 70cm Dark greyish brown, greyish brown, brown or grey clay with a weak coarse platy or coarse angular blocky structure with many ochreous and black mottles.

Horizon 3: From between 50cm and 70cm cm to 120cm Grey or greyish brown clay with a massive structure and many ochreous and black mottles

### Area 2

Horizon 1: 0cm to between 35cm Dark greyish brown sandy loam with a weak fine subangular blocky structure.

Horizon 2: from 35cm to 120cm yellowish brown sandy clay loam with a medium angular blocky structure

## 5.0 Interactive Factors

### Area 1

#### 5.1 In-Field wetness class:

Site conditions: Undisturbed

Slowly permeable layer: Clay at 35-120cm depth, mottles evidencing wetness, weak coarse platy, coarse angular blocky or massive structure

Gleying – Evidenced by grey or pale ped faces and ochreous mottles from 35cm.

Maff guide to ALC states 'Mineral Soil with a slowly permeable layer starting within 80cm and gleying present starting within 40cm – use figure 7 to determine wetness class':

Using Figure 7 from the MAFF guide the Wetness Class is determined as Wetness Class III

#### 5.2 Wetness Assessment

Field Capacity Days (FCD)	135.12
Wetness Class	III
Soil Texture	Sandy Loam, Sandy Clay Loam, Medium Clay Loam, Heavy Clay Loam

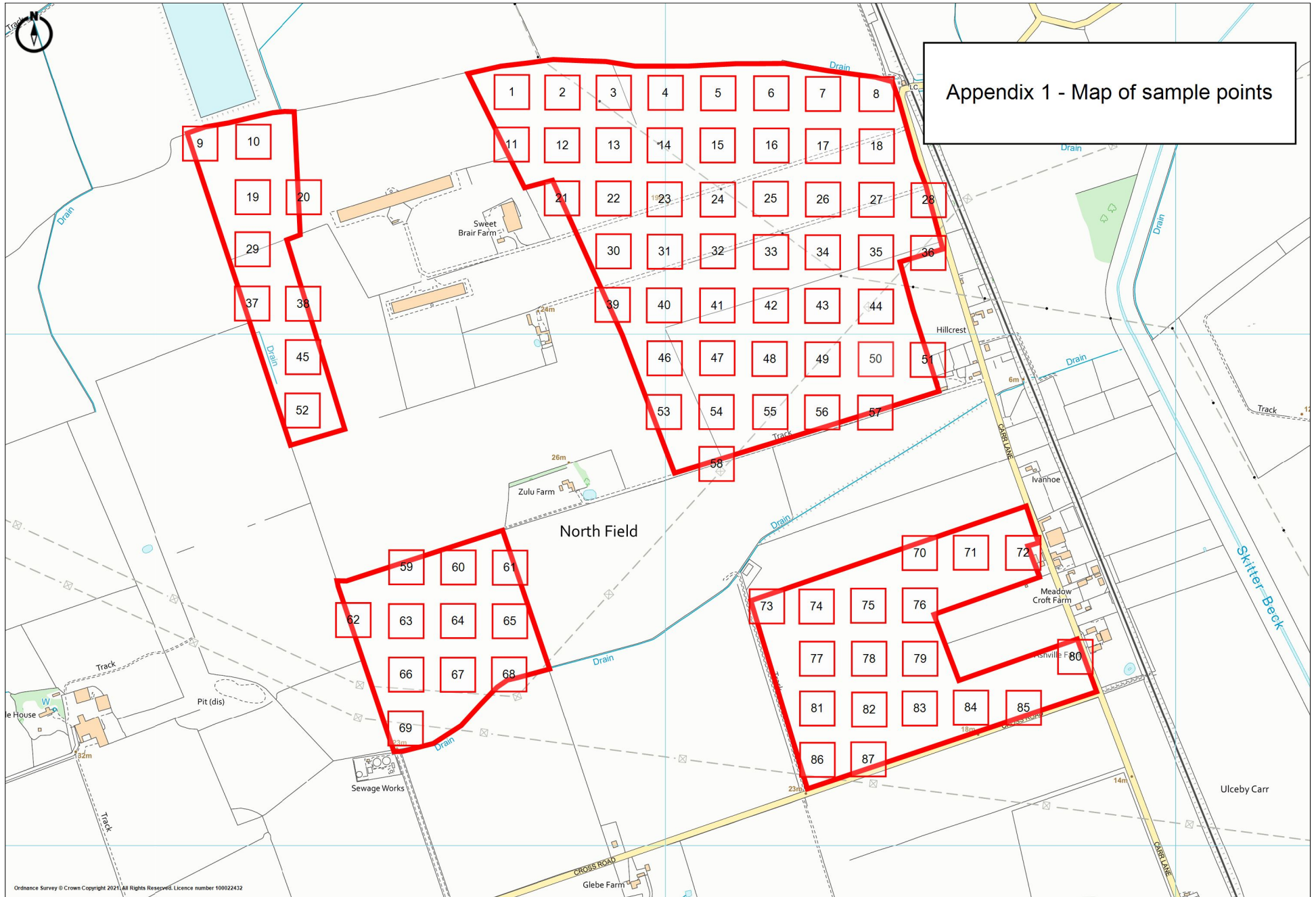
Table 6 Grade According to soil wetness – mineral soils, describes this combination as:

Sandy Loam:	Grade 2
Sandy Clay Loam/Medium Clay Loam:	Grade 3a
Heavy Clay Loam	Grade 3b

## 6.0 AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

- 6.1 The Agricultural Land Classification provides a framework for classifying land according to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The limitations can operate in one or more of four principal ways: they may affect the range of crops that can be grown, the level of yield, the consistency of yield and the cost of obtaining it.
- 6.2 The principle physical factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil and the interactions between them which together form the basis for classifying land into one of 5 grades: grade 1 being of excellent quality and grade 5 being land of very poor quality. Grade 3 land, which constitutes approximately half of all agricultural land in the United Kingdom is divided into 2 subgrades – 3a and 3b. A full definition of all of the grades can be found at **appendix 5**.
- 6.3 The MAFF 1:250,000 map indicates the site to be Grade 3 land.
- 6.4 This assessment sets out that while no one factor limits the grade of the land, the interaction between climate and soil result in a wetness assessment that limits the majority of the land to grade 2, 3a or 3b. The small area of different soil type has no limiting factor and is classified as grade 1. A plan of the land grading can be found at **appendix 6**.





## APPENDIX 2 – AGRO-CLIMATIC DATA

Site Details: Sweet Briar

Grid reference (centre of site): 510810 417011

Altitude: Mean 18.93

Climatic data from surrounding locations:

Grid Reference	ALT	AAR	LR_AAR	ASR	ATO	ATS	MDW	MDP	FCD
51004150	34	630	0.4	320	1369	2345	107	98	136
51004200	13	620	0.5	310	1391	2369	111	104	135
51504150	13	618	0.6	315	1392	2372	110	103	135
51504200	8	599	0.9	300	1395	2376	114	107	132

Altitude Adjusted

Grid Reference	AAR	ATO	FCD	MDW	MDP	Proximity Adjustment
51004150	623.97	1386.18	135.13	108.97	96.01	52.28%
51004200	622.97	1384.24	135.43	110.18	101.21	28.83%
51504150	621.56	1385.24	135.51	109.14	100.17	10.82%
51504200	608.84	1382.54	133.42	112.19	103.65	8.07%

Site Average Annual Rainfall: 622.20

Site Accumulated Temperature January to June: 1385.22

Site Field Capacity Days: 135.12

Moisture Deficit Wheat: 109.60

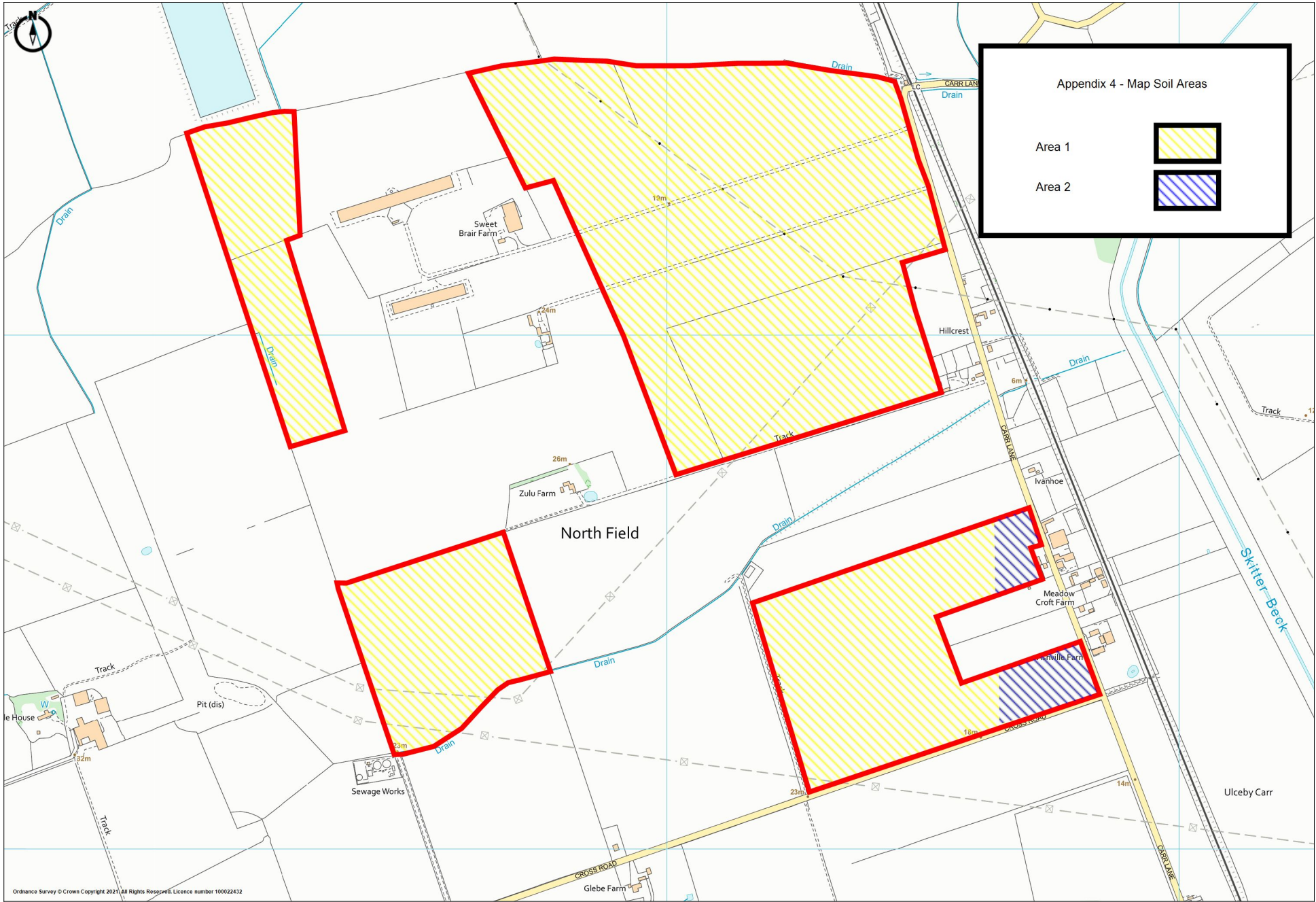
Moisture Deficit Potatoes: 98.58

**Appendix 3 - Soil Sampling Information**

Sample No	Topsoil						Subsoil 1						Subsoil 2						
	Altitude	Depth	Texture	Colour	Stoniness	Mottles	Structure	Depth	Texture	Colour	Stoniness	Mottles	Structure	Depth	Texture	Colour	Stoniness	Mottles	Structure
1	22	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
2	21	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
3	20	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
4	19	0-30	HCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
5	18	0-30	HCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
6	16	0-30	HCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-3		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
7	14	0-30	HCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-3		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-3		OB	M
8	13	0-30	HCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
9	25	0-35	SCL	10YR 4-2			WFSAB	35-70	C	10YR 4-2		MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	M
10	23	0-30	SL	10YR 4-2			WFSAB	30-45	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	45-120	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	M
11	21	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
12	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
13	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
14	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
15	16	0-30	HCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
16	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
17	14	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
18	12	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
19	24	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2			WMSAB	30-120	C	10YR 4-1		MO	M						
20	23	0-40	MCL	10YR 4-2			WFSAB	40-60	C	10YR 4-2		MOB	CAB	60-120	C	10YR 5-1		MO	M
21	20	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	M
22	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
23	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
24	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
25	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
26	14	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
27	11	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
28	9	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
29	24	0-40	SL	10YR 4-2			WFSAB	40-70	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	70-120	C	10YR 5-1		MO	M
30	21	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
31	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
32	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
33	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
34	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
35	16	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
36	14	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
37	25	0-40	SCL	10YR 4-2			WFSAB	40-70	CL	10YR 5-3		MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-1		MO	M
38	27	0-40	SCL	10YR 4-2			WFSAB	40-60	CL	10YR 4-2		MO	WMAB	60-120	C	10YR 5-1		MO	M
39	20	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
40	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
41	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
42	17	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
43	16	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
44	15	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
45	26	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-1		MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-1		MO	M
46	22	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
47	20	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
48	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
49	18	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M
50	15	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2			WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-3		MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2		OB	M

51	12	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
52	27	0-35	SCL	10YR 4-2	<5%	WMSAB	35-80	SC	10YR 5-3	MO	CAB	80-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
53	21	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
54	19	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
55	17	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
56	16	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
57	15	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
58	11	0-30	MCL	10YR 4-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 5-2	MOB	WCPlaty	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	OB	M
59	25	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
60	28	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
61	25	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-1	MO	M
62	25	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
63	25	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
64	22	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
65	21	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
66	23	0-30	MCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
67	22	0-30	MCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
68	19	0-30	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
69	23	0-30	MCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	30-50	C	10YR 4-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
70	16	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
71	15	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	O	M
72	12	0-35	SL	10YR 4-2		WFSAB	35-120	SCL	10YR 5-6		MAB					
73	17	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
74	15	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
75	18	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
76	18	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
77	19	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
78	18	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
79	19	0-35	HCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-50	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	50-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
80	12	0-35	SL	10YR 4-2		WFSAB	35-120	SCL	10YR 5-6		MAB					
81	23	0-35	MCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-70	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
82	22	0-35	SL	10YR 4-2		WFSAB	35-70	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
83	20	0-35	SCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-70	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
84	18	0-35	SCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-70	C	10YR 5-3	MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
85	15	0-35	SL	10YR 4-2		WFSAB	35-120	SCL	10YR 5-6		MAB					
86	23	0-35	SCL	10YR 3-2		WMSAB	35-70	C	10YR 5-3	MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M
87	21	0-35	SL	10YR 4-2		WFSAB	35-70	C	10YR 5-2	MO	CAB	70-120	C	10YR 5-2	MO	M

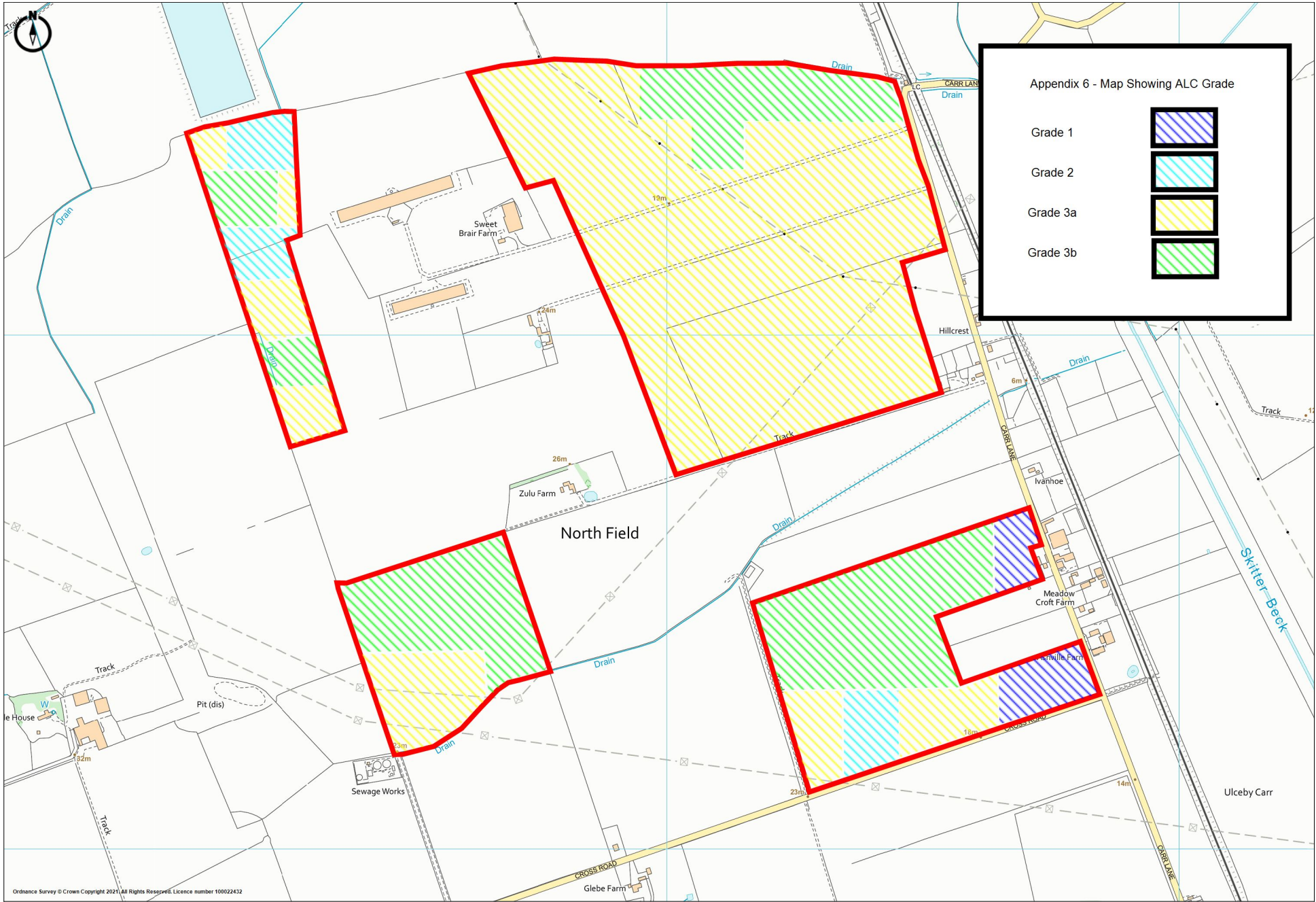
18.93



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## APPENDIX 5 - DESCRIPTION OF ALC GRADES

- Grade 1 - excellent quality agricultural land Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.
- Grade 2 - very good quality agricultural land Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land in the grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1.
- Grade 3 - good to moderate quality agricultural land Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.
- Subgrade 3a - good quality agricultural land Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.
- Subgrade 3b - moderate quality agricultural land Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.
- Grade 4 - poor quality agricultural land Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.
- Grade 5 - very poor-quality agricultural land Land with very severe limitations which restrict use to permanent pasture or rough grazing, except for occasional pioneer forage crops.



Appendix 6 - Map Showing ALC Grade

Grade 1	
Grade 2	
Grade 3a	
Grade 3b	

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