



# Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

## London Oxford Airport - Gateway Site

Presented to: **Oxford Aviation Services Limited**




Issued: February 2023

Delta-Simons Project No: 22-2011.01

## Report Details

<b>Client</b>	Oxford Aviation Services Limited
<b>Report Title</b>	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
<b>Site Address</b>	Gateway Site, Land West of The Junction with The Boulevard, Oxford Airport, Langford Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1NZ
<b>Project No.</b>	22-2011.01
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## Quality Assurance

Issue No.	Status	Issue Date	Comments	Author	Technical Review	Authorised
2	Final	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023				
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## About us

Delta-Simons is a trusted, multidisciplinary environmental consultancy, focused on delivering the best possible project outcomes for customers. Specialising in Environment, Health & Safety and Sustainability, Delta-Simons provide support and advice within the property development, asset management, corporate and industrial markets. Operating from across the UK we employ over 180 environmental professionals, bringing experience from across the private consultancy and public sector markets.

As part of Lucion Services, our combined team of 500 in the UK has a range of specialist skill sets in over 50 environmental consultancy specialisms including asbestos, hazardous materials, ecology, air and water services, geo-environmental and sustainability amongst others.

Delta-Simons is proud to be a founder member of the Inogen Environmental Alliance, enabling us to efficiently deliver customer projects worldwide by calling upon over 5000 resources in our global network of consultants, each committed to providing superior EH&S and sustainability consulting expertise to our customers. Through Inogen we can offer our Clients more consultants, with more expertise in more countries than traditional multinational consultancy.



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If you would like support in understanding your carbon footprint and playing your part in tackling the global climate crisis, please get in touch with your Delta-Simons contact above who will be happy to help.

# Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Context and Purpose .....	1
1.2 Proposed Development .....	1
2.0 METHODOLOGY .....	2
2.1 Overview .....	2
2.2 Biodiversity Metric.....	2
2.3 Habitat Distinctiveness.....	2
2.4 Habitat Condition .....	3
2.5 Baseline Assessment.....	3
2.6 Post Development Biodiversity Unit Calculation .....	3
2.7 Proposed Scheme .....	4
2.8 Future Auditing .....	4
3.0 ASSUMPTIONS AND APPLICATION OF PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT .....	5
3.1 Baseline Habitats .....	5
3.2 Future Habitats .....	5
4.0 RESULTS .....	6
4.1 Baseline .....	6
4.2 Proposed Scheme .....	6
5.0 CONCLUSIONS.....	8
6.0 DISCLAIMER .....	9

## Tables

- TABLE 1 - ON-SITE AREA HABITAT BASELINE SCORE
- TABLE 2 - ON-SITE LINEAR HABITAT BASELINE SCORE
- TABLE 3- POST-DEVELOPMENT AREA HABITAT SCORE
- TABLE 4 - POST-DEVELOPMENT LINEAR HABITAT SCORE

## Figures

- FIGURE 1 - BASELINE HABITATS

## Drawings

- DRAWING 1 - LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL PLANS

## Appendices

- APPENDIX A - DEFRA METRIC 3.1 CALCULATION TOOL

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Context and Purpose

Delta-Simons Limited ("Delta-Simons") was instructed by Oxford Aviation Services Limited ("the Applicant") to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment to determine whether the planning application for a new commercial development ("the Proposed Development") at land adjacent to Langford Lane and The Boulevard, to the north of Kidlington in Oxfordshire (hereafter referred to as "the Site") can achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) states, "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by...(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...", it also places greater emphasis on achieving a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

Biodiversity net gain is based around 10 key principles:

- Principle 1: Apply the mitigation hierarchy;
- Principle 2: Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere;
- Principle 3: Be conclusive and equitable;
- Principle 4: Address risk;
- Principle 5: Make a measurable net gain contribution;
- Principle 6: Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity;
- Principle 7: Be additional;
- Principle 8: Create a net gain legacy;
- Principle 9: Optimise sustainability; and
- Principle 10: Be transparent.

## 1.2 Proposed Development

It is understood from the drawing provided by Spratley and Partners (21.926.PL.005) that the proposed development comprises five buildings with associated parking, hardstanding, and soft landscaping.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Overview

The approach used to assess biodiversity impacts resulting from the proposed development is detailed below. This assessment has been based on the Defra Metric 3.1 beta version (the Metric), the Landscape Proposal Plan provided by Colvin and Moggordidge in an email on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 and the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken in 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022.

### 2.2 Biodiversity Metric

The quantitative assessment is based on the Metric to provide a transparent and repeatable measure of biodiversity at each of the stages identified above. The biodiversity score considers a number of factors including:

- Habitat distinctiveness;
- Habitat condition;
- Temporal risk: time required to reach target condition;
- Difficulty to create/restore;
- Connectivity; and
- Spatial area of loss/gain of each habitat.

The pre-development value is compared to the proposed habitat composition post development to assess the change in biodiversity value using biodiversity units as a proxy numeric value.

The Metric only considers habitats and does not take protected and notable species or associated enhancement measures such as bird/bat boxes into account.

### 2.3 Habitat Distinctiveness

Distinctiveness refers to the relative scarcity of the habitat and its importance for nature conservation. Habitats are assigned to distinctiveness bands. These are based on an assessment of the distinguishing features of a habitat or linear feature, including the consideration of species richness, rarity (at local, regional, national and international scales), and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.

The distinctiveness band of each habitat is preassigned in the Metric. The bands are based upon the UK habitat classification system. Where no directly comparable Defra habitat type was available to match the vegetation recorded by Phase 1 Habitat survey, the closest approximation was selected.

The Defra habitat typologies are split into five distinctiveness bands:

- **Very High** - Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 that are highly threatened, internationally scarce, and require conservation action;
- **High** - Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the NERC Act requiring conservation action;
- **Medium** - Semi-natural habitats not classed as Priority Habitat;
- **Low** - Habitat of low biodiversity value; and
- **Very low** - Little or no biodiversity value.

Under the supplementary habitat calculations for linear habitats, hedgerows are assigned a distinctiveness weighting based on their physical structure and the species composition of the woody element of the

hedgerow, and their association with physical features (ditches and banks) that may enhance their ecological value by providing additional niches or enhanced capacity to provide habitat connectivity.

## 2.4 Habitat Condition

The condition of a habitat is defined by its particular quality. For example, a habitat is in poor condition if it fails to support the notable/protected species for which it is valued, or if it is in unfavourable condition due to degradation from external factors, such as pollution, erosion or invasive species. Condition assessment criteria is based on Common Standards Monitoring of protected sites in the UK where key attributes and positive and negative indicators are used. Habitat condition categories are as follows:

- Good;
- Fairly good;
- Moderate;
- Fairly poor;
- Poor;
- N/A - Agricultural; and
- N/A - other.

For linear features, condition assessment is based on the dimensions and other physical characteristics of a hedgerow or line of trees against a set of minimum requirements for the feature to be considered in a 'favourable' condition. The condition assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.

## 2.5 Baseline Assessment

The baseline biodiversity score for the Site has been determined using the PEA of the Site undertaken by Delta Simons in September 2022. The baseline habitats are shown in Figure 1.

The baseline assessment for the Site has now been established and will not change throughout the development period. This is the baseline from which future audits can be compared.

## 2.6 Post Development Biodiversity Unit Calculation

Biodiversity Units and Linear Units resulting from ecological mitigation for the Scheme to compensate for potential losses are referred to as post-development Biodiversity Units/Linear Units (BUs/LUs).

To calculate the BUs which may be achieved post-development, risk factors are introduced. The aim of a risk factor is to correct for a disparity or risk, associated with the uncertainty surrounding the creation of habitats. There are three main types of risk that are accounted for within the Metric. These are categorised as follows:

- **Spatial Risk** - these reflect ecological risks deriving from the change in location of the habitat or resource. By way of example, it may be that recreating a habitat in a new location distant from the area of loss could reduce its biodiversity value, through reduced connectivity and a decrease in habitat availability for the species affected by the development;
- **Temporal Risk** - the risk associated with the time required for created habitats to reach their target suitability and for the functionality of the habitat to be restored; and
- **Delivery Risk** - the risks associated with the actual delivery of the offset due to, for instance, uncertainty in the effectiveness of habitat creation/management.

Each risk multiplier is assigned a numerical score which enables post development Biodiversity Units to be calculated.

## 2.7 Proposed Scheme

In order to calculate the post-intervention score, the Landscape Proposal Plans (Drawing 1) have been used as well as assumptions for targeted habitat conditions as set out in Section 3.1.

## 2.8 Future Auditing

This Report sets out the predicted biodiversity impacts of the scheme based on a set of assumptions and professional judgement for target habitat conditions post-development. In order to ensure the development achieves the targets set out below, the scheme should be accompanied by an appropriate Landscape and Ecology Management and Monitoring Plan (LEMMP). The LEMMP should allow for regular monitoring of the habitat establishment and their progression to the desired condition target, allowing for changes to management regimes as necessary to achieve the targets set.

## 3.0 Assumptions and Application of Professional Judgement

### 3.1 Baseline Habitats

Professional judgement has been made in relation to the baseline habitats and their conditions based on the criteria provided within the Defra Metric Technical Supplement and User Guide.

### 3.2 Future Habitats

Assumptions and professional judgement have been applied in relation to the habitat target condition. These judgements are based on realistic targets according to the location and context of the development. Future management of the landscaping at the Site should be informed by an appropriate management and monitoring plan to achieve these target conditions.



## 4.0 Results

### 4.1 Baseline

Baseline habitats are shown in Figure 1 and consist of seven buildings, with areas of hardstanding, mostly laid to car parking, amenity grassland, scattered scrub, scattered trees, and bare ground resulting from previously demolished buildings. The western boundary of the Site comprises security fencing, whilst the northern and eastern boundaries are access roads with trees on either side. The southern boundary is a hedgerow.

Overall, the baseline for the Site is calculated to provide 4.04 area BUs and 1.26 LUs.

Table 1, below, provides a summary of the baseline habitats, areas and biodiversity units for the Site. As trees do not provide a groundcover area, they are included in addition to the ground vegetation within the calculator, meaning that the total areas presented are higher than the area of the Site.

**Table 1 - On-Site Area Habitat Baseline Score**

Existing Habitats (Area)	Condition	Area (ha)	Biodiversity Units
Grassland - Modified grassland	Poor	0.74	148
Urban - Vacant/derelict land/bare ground	Poor	0.41	0.00
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - Other	1.96	0.00
Urban - Street Tree	poor	0.35	1.40
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.88</b>

\*As trees do not provide a groundcover area, their areas are not included in the total within this table, meaning that the total areas presented remain the same as the area of the Site. Within the calculator, however, they are included in addition to the ground vegetation areas.

Table 2, below, provides a summary of the baseline linear habitats on Site (i.e. hedgerows).

**Table 2 - On-Site Linear Habitat Baseline Score**

Existing Habitats (Linear)	Condition	Length (km)	Linear Units
Hedge Ornamental Non-Native	Poor	0.04	0.04
Native Species Rich Hedgerow	Moderate	0.14	1.12
Line of Trees	Poor	0.05	0.10
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.23</b>	<b>1.26</b>

### 4.2 Proposed Scheme

Post-development habitat compositions are shown in Drawing1 and detailed in Tables 3 and 4, below. The majority of the Site post-development will be commercial buildings ,hardstanding, and soft landscaping.

Table 3, below, provides a summary of the post-development habitats, areas and baseline biodiversity units for the Site.

**Table 3- Post-Development Area Habitat Score**

<b>Proposed Habitats (Area)</b>	<b>Target Condition</b>	<b>Area (ha) Retained</b>	<b>Area (ha) Created</b>	<b>Area (ha) Enhanced</b>	<b>Biodiversity Units Delivered</b>
Urban - Built linear feature	N/A - Other	0.00	0.98	0.00	0.00
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - Other	0.00	1.68	0.00	0.00
Urban Tree	Poor	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.25
Urban Tree	Medium	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.46
Urban - Introduced shrub	Condition Assessment N/A	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.15
Urban - Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - Other	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00
Grassland -Other neutral grassland	Moderate	0.00	0.29	0.00	1.94
Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	N/A - Other	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2.81</b>

\*As trees do not provide a groundcover area, their areas are not included in the total within this table, meaning that the total areas presented remain the same as the area of the Site. Within the calculator, however, they are included in addition to the ground vegetation areas.

Table 4, below, provides a summary of the baseline linear habitats on Site (i.e. hedgerows).

**Table 4 - Post-Development Linear Habitat Score**

<b>Proposed Habitats (Linear)</b>	<b>Target Condition</b>	<b>Length (km) Retained</b>	<b>Length (km) Created</b>	<b>Length (km) Enhanced</b>	<b>Linear Units Delivered</b>
Native Hedgerow	Moderate	0.18	0.92	0.00	3.08
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.08</b>

All of the hedgerows to be delivered on-Site have been combined to provide the above length measurement. These hedgerows are planned to be a combination of native and non-native species but will be over 50% native species.

## 5.0 Conclusions

The above assessment results in a total net unit change of:

**Area Units = +0.57**                      **Total net % change = +19.67%**

**Linear Units = +3.08**   **Total net % change = +244.41%**

See the attached completed Defra Metric for detailed results (Appendix A).

Based on the information currently available, this assessment indicates that the development will achieve a net gain in biodiversity. The main contributor to this is the 'other neutral grassland'. Trading rules for the assessment are not met for the calculation, however, this is due to the area of modified grassland being lost, despite the enhancements to overall biodiversity.

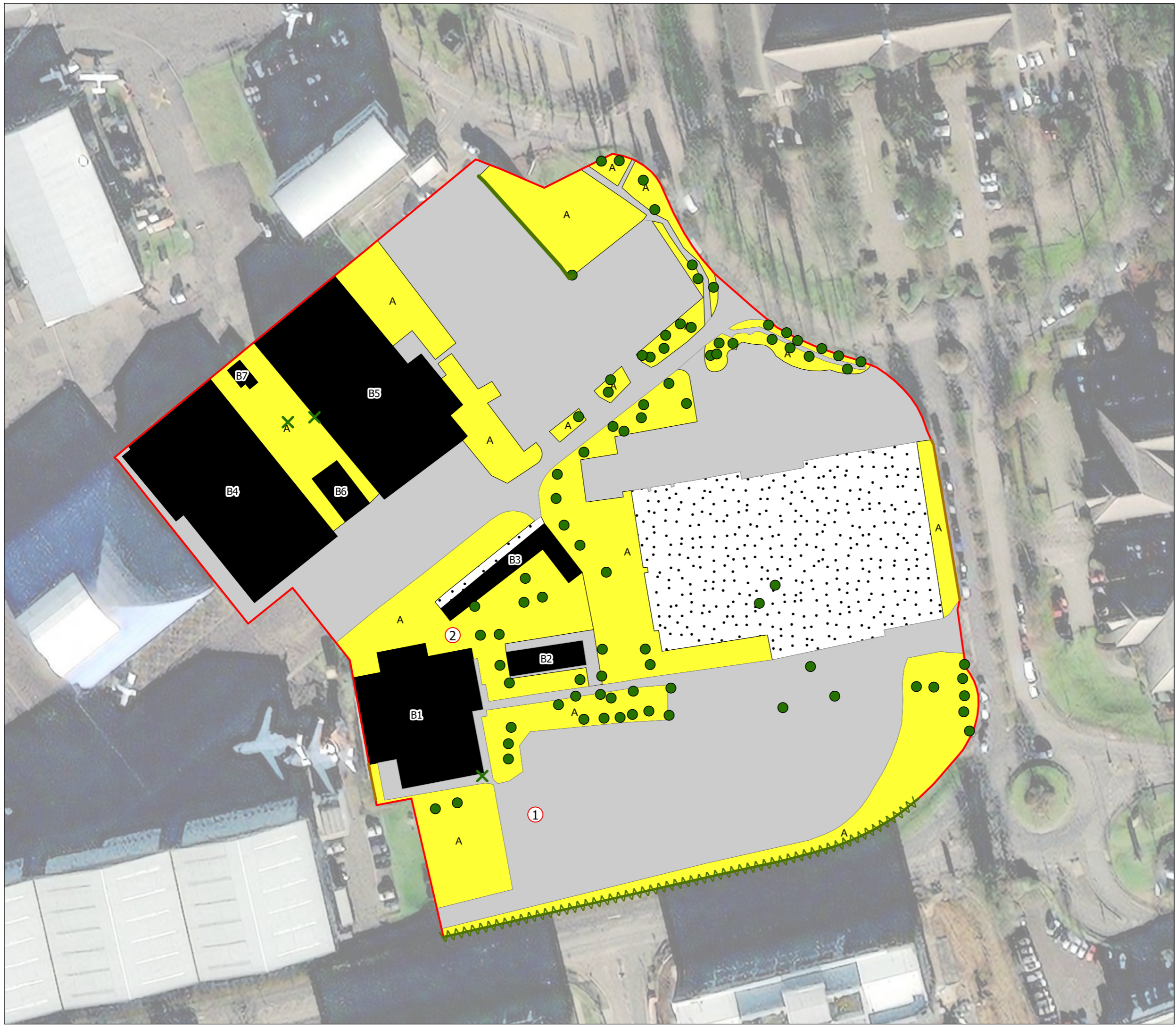
It should be noted that any habitat creation is required to be managed in perpetuity to ensure habitats meet the target conditions (which for the purposes of BNG is considered to be 30 years). Monitoring of this should be implemented through an appropriate LEMMP.

## 6.0 Disclaimer

The recommendations contained in this Report represent Delta-Simons' professional opinions, based upon the information referred to in Section 1.0 of this Report, exercising the duty of care required of an experienced Ecology Consultant. Delta-Simons does not warrant or guarantee that the Site is free of Bats or other protected species.

This Report was prepared by Delta-Simons for the sole and exclusive use of the Client and for the specific purpose for which Delta-Simons was instructed as defined in Section 1.0 of this Report. Nothing contained in this Report shall be construed to give any rights or benefits to anyone other than the Client and Delta-Simons, and all duties and responsibilities undertaken are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Client and not for the benefit of any other party. In particular, Delta-Simons does not intend, without its written consent, for this Report to be disseminated to anyone other than the Client or to be used or relied upon by anyone other than the Client. Use of the Report by any other person is unauthorised and such use is at the sole risk of the user. Anyone using or relying upon this Report, other than the Client, agrees by virtue of its use to indemnify and hold harmless Delta-Simons from and against all claims, losses and damages (of whatsoever nature and howsoever or whensoever arising), arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work by the Consultant.

## Figure 1 - Baseline Habitats



- Legend**
- Site boundary
  - A Amenity grassland
  - Buildings
  - Hardstanding
  - Bare ground
  - Intact hedge - native species-rich
  - Intact hedge - species-poor
  - Line of trees
  - Scattered broadleaved tree
  - × Scattered scrub

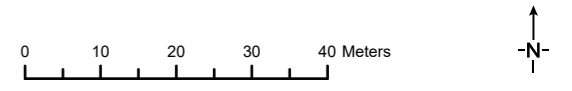


Figure Baseline Habitats

Job London Oxford Airport

Client Oxford Aviation Services Limited

Figure No.	1	Revision	A	Date	23/09/2022
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Drawn	AJ	Checked	CSL	Scale	1:1,000 @ A3
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Job No.	22-2011.01	Central GR	447547E 214972N
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# Drawing 1 - Landscape Proposal Plans

- Key**
-  Sub-station
  -  Cycle storage
  -  External plant space
  -  Existing trees
  -  Proposed boundary trees
  -  Proposed trees: clipped units or small, non fruit-bearing trees
  -  Existing hedge
  -  Proposed native field hedge
  -  Proposed shrub planting
  -  Mown grass
  -  Wildflower
  -  Gravel
  -  Paving
  -  Parking spaces

General notes:

1. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with other CAM landscape drawings and specifications.
2. Any discrepancies between sources of information should be immediately notified to the Landscape Architect for clarification.
3. Do not scale off this drawing.
4. All dimensions in mm unless otherwise stated.



REVISION			
A	General layout amends and additional cycle facilities	02/02/23	AB
<b>London Oxford Airport</b>			
<b>Science Park: Landscape Masterplan</b>			
PLANNING			
SCALE	1:500 @ A1		
DATE	1/11/22	1493.OA.003A	
DESIGNER	LS/AB		



# Appendix A - Defra Metric 3.1 Calculation Tool

# The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 - Calculation Tool

## Start page

### Project details

Planning authority:	
Project name:	Oxford London Airport
Applicant:	
Application type:	
Planning application reference:	
Assessor:	Dean Burniston
Reviewer:	
Metric version:	3.1
Assessment date:	
Planning authority reviewer:	

[Instructions](#)[Main menu](#)[Results](#)

### Cell style conventions

	Enter data
	Automatic lookup
	Result

[View all](#)[Reset view](#)

On-site baseline map

[Insert](#)

On-site post intervention map

[Insert](#)

Off-site baseline map

[Insert](#)

Off-site post intervention map

[Insert](#)

Key

-  Area habitats
-  Hedgerows and lines of trees
-  Rivers and streams

# The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 - Calculation Tool

## Main menu

Start page

Instructions

Technical data

Results

Urban tree helper

Tree size	Number of trees and area (ha) for each condition state					
	Poor	Area	Moderate	Area	Good	Area
Small	40	0.1628	36	0.1465		0.0000
Medium		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Large		0.0000		0.0000		0.0000
Total	40	0.1628	36	0.1465	0	0.0000

Start here






### On-site baseline



- A-1 On-site habitat baseline**  

- B-1 On-site hedge baseline**  

- C-1 On-site river baseline**  


### On-site post development

- A-2 Habitat creation**  

- A-3 Habitat enhancement**  

- B-2 Hedgerow creation**  

- B-3 Hedgerow enhancement**  

- C-2 River creation**  

- C-3 River enhancement**  




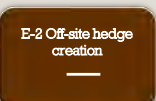
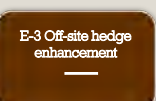


### Off-site baseline

- D-1 Off-site habitat baseline**  

- E-1 Off-site hedge baseline**  

- F-1 Off-site river baseline**  


### Off-site post development

- D-2 Off-site habitat creation**  

- D-3 Off-site habitat enhancement**  

- E-2 Off-site hedge creation**  

- E-3 Off-site hedge enhancement**  

- F-2 Off-site river creation**  

- F-3 Off-site river enhancement**  


On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	2.88
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	1.26
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	3.45
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	4.34
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site net % change (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	19.67%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	244.41%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%
Off-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Total net unit change (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.57
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	3.08
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Total on-site net % change plus off-site surplus (including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	19.67%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	244.41%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

Trading rules Satisfied?

No - Check Trading Summary ▲



**Cardiff London Airport  
A-1 Site Habitat Baseline**

Condense / Show Columns      Condense / Show Rows

Main Menu      Instructions

Ref	Habitat and area			Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Suggested action to address habitat losses	Ecological benefits
	Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic Significance multiplier		
1	Crossland	Modified grassland	0.34	Low	2	Poor	1	Area compensation not in local strategy so local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinctiveness of better habitat required to	1.48
2	Urban	Artificial unvegetated, sealed surface	0.41	V Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area compensation not in local strategy so local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Compensation Not Required	0.00
3	Urban	Developed land, sealed surface	1.96	V Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area compensation not in local strategy so local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Compensation Not Required	0.00
4	Urban	Urban Trees	0.36	Medium	4	Poor	1	Area compensation not in local strategy so local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (3)	1.44
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
		<b>Total habitat area</b>	<b>3.48</b>									<b>3.92</b>

Retention category biodiversity value						Ecologic compensation agreed for unacceptable losses	Comments	
Area retained	Area released	Baseline value retained	Baseline value released	Area habitat lost	Date lost		Assessor comments	Developer comments
		0.00	0.00	0.34	1.48		Assessory grassland	
		0.00	0.00	0.41	0.00		Seal ground	
		0.00	0.00	1.96	0.00		Buildings and hardstanding	
0.18		0.64	0.00	0.18	0.76		30 scattered broadleaved trees	
<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.24</b>			

**Total area lost (including area of Urban trees and Green walls)**      **0.11**



# B-1 Site Hedge Baseline

Condense / Show Columns

Condense / Show Rows

Main Menu

Instructions

Baseline ref	VE Habitat - existing habitat			Habitat disturbance		Habitat condition		Strategic significance			Suggested action to address habitat issues	Biological baseline
	Hedge number	Hedge type	Length (m)	Disturbance	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic priority multiplier		
1	1	Hedge Ornamental Non-Native	0.04	Very Low	1	Poor	1	Area compensation not in local strategy or local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinctiveness based on better	0.04
2	2	Native Species Rich Hedge row	0.14	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area compensation not in local strategy or local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Low for low or better	1.12
3	3	Line of Trees	0.02	Low	2	Poor	1	Area compensation not in local strategy or local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Some distinctiveness based on better	0.10
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
			0.20									1.26

Relative category biodiversity value						Comments	
Length retained	Length enhanced	Value retained	Value enhanced	Length lost	Value lost	Assessor comments	Developer comments
0.04		0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	Impact species-rich hedge	
0.14		1.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	Impact species-rich hedge	
0.02		0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	Line of trees	
0.20	0.00	1.26	0.00	0.00	0.00		



# B-3 Site Hedge Creation

Continue / Show Criteria

Continue / Show Items

Main Menu

Instructions

		Proposed habitat		Habitat characteristics		Habitat condition		Strategic significance			Temporal multiplier					Disturbance risk multiplier				Hedge value delivered	Comments				
Number	Key hedge number	Habitat type	Length (m)	Characteristics	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance multiplier	Strategic position multiplier	Standard time to target condition	Actual created (in years)	Delay in starting habitat construction	Standard or adjusted time to target condition	Fixed time to target condition	Fixed time to target multiplier	Standard difficulty of creation	Applied difficulty multiplier	Fixed difficulty of creation	Difficulty multiplier applied		Assessor comments	Developer comments		
1	1	Native Hedgehog	0.00	Low	2	Moderate	2	Area designated as local strategy as local habitat	Low Strategic Significance	1	0	0	0	Standard time to target condition applied	0	0.00	Low	Standard difficulty applied	Low	1	0.00				
2																									
3																									
4																									
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