
Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Halewood LUF –
Halewood Leisure
Centre
Ref: P.2048.24

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P.2048.24

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

of

Halewood LUF – Halewood Leisure Centre

for

Knowsley Council

January 2025

Document Author	Liz Kenyon BSc (Hons)
Technical Review	Alex Rose MSc
QA Review & Approval	Ciaran Power – Operations Manager

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Appendix 1 Drawing P.2048.24.E01 Baseline Habitats

Appendix 2 Drawings P.2048.24.E02A Post Intervention Habitat Plan
70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed
Soft Landscape Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an assessment study of effects on biodiversity in connection with the proposed development at Halewood LUF, Halewood Leisure Centre.

This report calculates 'biodiversity units' using DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, and following the methods set out in the *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric auditing and accounting for biodiversity value* (User guide) and *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement*. The units are calculated based on the area (or length), condition and distinctiveness of habitats found on the site. Pre-development and post-development biodiversity values are calculated and compared to identify any change in the biodiversity value of the site.

Based on the current proposals there will be **a gain of +5.76 (+37.55%) habitat units** within the proposed development area, demonstrating that a net gain has been achieved within the site in line with National Planning Policy (NPPF).

Post development biodiversity units with the proposed development site were calculated based on the habitats displayed drawing 70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy appendix 2.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

Ascerta has been instructed by Level 2 Architects to carry out a Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) at Halewood LUF – Halewood Leisure Centre (hereafter referred to as the site). The OS grid reference is SJ 45275 85177 and the what3words reference is crowns.tiredness.rally.. The extent of the site is displayed in photograph 1.1 below. The site boundary is shown in **Figure 1**.

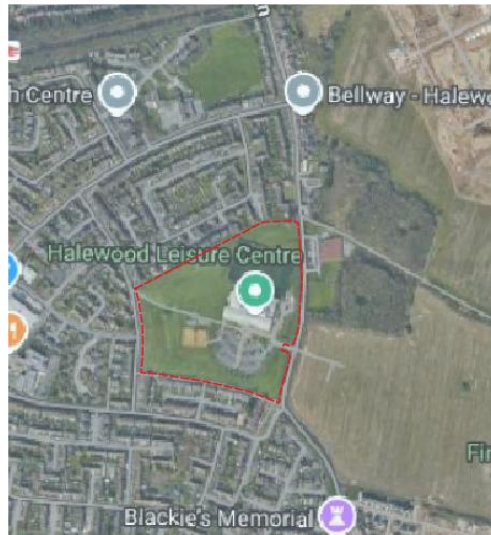


Figure 1: Site boundary of the land at Halewood LUF – Halewood Leisure Centre

The BIA aims to:

- Provide baseline data to classify the type, distinctiveness, condition and strategic significance of habitats prior to and post development.
- Ensure that baseline habitat conditions are classified in a robust and consistent manner, and that classification is based on the best available data at the time of assessment.
- Clearly identify data collection methods and any limitations.
- Calculate baseline pre-development and post-development habitat units for the site based on current development proposals.
- Aim to achieve BNG on-site wherever possible; with off-site contribution measures being considered as an alternative option if required.

The Natural Environment Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) (updated September 2023) provides further explanation on how this should be done. In particular, it addresses principles across a broad spectrum of topics targeting biodiversity conservation, from individual site and species protection through to the supporting of ecosystem services, and the use of local ecological networks to support the national Nature Recovery Network. The PPG promotes the delivery of measurable Biodiversity Net Gain through the creation and enhancement of habitats alongside development.

The Government has confirmed Biodiversity Net Gain at a minimum of 10% for all major development planning applications submitted from 12th February 2024. The Environment Act sets out how the UK will maintain environmental standards following leaving of the EU. The Bill builds on the vision of the 25 Year Environment Plan, with the ambition from the government to leave the environment in a better state than it was when inherited.

The Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been implemented to work alongside the Environment Act. This tool calculates potential biodiversity impacts as a result of development and identifies mitigation and compensation requirements to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. In addition, it identifies measures that can be implemented in order to meet Biodiversity gain as a result of development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 has been published to provide further planning guidance. Wildlife, biodiversity and ecological networks are referred to in Section 15 '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*'. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value, recognise the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services and minimising impacts on and provided net gains for biodiversity. Further guidance is provided within Government Circular 06/05: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*.

Biodiversity net gain has been defined as 'development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, and an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support their priorities for nature conservation' (Baker, 2016).

Good practice principles for biodiversity net gain are set out within Table 1.1 of Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development (Baker et al., 2019).

The key principles include:

- Apply the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (in line with CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)) (CIEEM, 2018) and be 'additional' by achieving outcomes that exceed existing obligations.
- Avoid losing biodiversity which cannot be off-set elsewhere (e.g. irreplaceable habitats).
- Address risk (e.g. difficulty of achieving habitat creation / enhancement for net gain).
- Make a 'measurable' net gain contribution (e.g. calculated using an appropriate metric) and ensure that calculations consistent and transparent (i.e. limitations and assumptions are clearly identified).
- Ensure that net gain design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity (this may require both quantitative and qualitative assessment) and create a net gain legacy for long-term benefits.

2.0 Methods

2.1 Field Survey

The initial walkover survey of the site was conducted on 29th August 2024 when the habitat types and features of ecological interest were recorded along with a habitat condition assessment (*Natural England Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual, 3rd Edition, March 2010*).

Information and Data Used to Inform the Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

The following information was used to inform the Biodiversity Unit Calculations:

- GIS baseline map of the site (Appendix 1);
- Drawing 70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy (Appendix 2); and
- The baseline condition assessments.

2.2 Biodiversity Baseline Methods

To calculate a biodiversity baseline, this study used methods detailed within *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool* and following the methods set out in the *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: auditing and accounting for biodiversity value* (User guide) and *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement*. Initially, habitats were digitised in GIS using field notes. Areas were measured in hectares and linear features in kilometres. The biodiversity unit value for each habitat was then calculated by multiplying the habitat area (or length) by its distinctiveness score and then by its condition score, both described below. The unit values for each habitat were then totalled to produce the biodiversity baseline. Linear habitats were assessed separately to areas.

2.2.1 Habitat distinctiveness

Habitats identified are entered into DEFRA's *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool* which then assigns a pre-determined distinctiveness value. Habitat distinctiveness is a collective measure of biodiversity and includes parameters such as species-richness, diversity, rarity, and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.

2.2.2 Habitat Condition

The condition of the habitats present has been assessed during the site visits using *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: auditing and accounting for biodiversity value* (User guide) and *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement*.

The post-development biodiversity units were calculated using information drawing 70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy (Appendix 2). To calculate the post-development biodiversity units the habitat areas are multiplied by the distinctiveness and condition values and then divided by a multiplier based on the difficulty of creating the proposed habitat and the time needed to achieve the proposed condition. The baseline biodiversity units were then subtracted from the post

development units to determine any change in biodiversity value of the site as a result of the development. The target condition of the habitats is based on guidance set out within the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric: auditing and accounting for biodiversity value user guide* and the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement* which may require ecological input and/or guidance to ensure the target conditions are achieved.

2.2.23 Habitat Strategic Significance

A desk study was undertaken and presented within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Nature Recovery Areas, National Character Area objectives and green infrastructure strategies were also used to identify whether the site was as identified, desirable or not in the local strategy.

Trading Summary

'Trading Up' is a concept which requires 'conserving through offset components of biodiversity that are of a higher conservation priority (for example, because they are more irreplaceable and vulnerable) than those affected by the development project for which the offset is envisaged' (BBOP, 2018). For example, should non-irreplaceable habitats be lost / impacted as a result of the proposed development, offsets should be achieved through the creation / enhancement of habitat of the same or higher distinctiveness, where environmental conditions are appropriate and where it generates the greatest benefits for biodiversity.

2.3 Post Intervention Methods

The post-development biodiversity units were calculated using information from drawing 70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy (Appendix 2). To calculate the post-development biodiversity units the habitat areas are multiplied by the distinctiveness and condition values and then divided by a multiplier based on the difficulty of creating the proposed habitat and the time needed to achieve the proposed condition. The baseline biodiversity units were then subtracted from the post development units to determine any change in biodiversity value of the site as a result of the development. The target condition of the habitats is based on guidance set out within the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric: auditing and accounting for biodiversity value user guide* and the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement* which may require ecological input and/or guidance to ensure the target conditions are achieved.

2.4 Limitations and assumptions

Baseline habitat condition assessments areas and habitat type have been converted into a reasonable category using the assistance of *Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement*. Cross referencing of drawing 70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy (appendix 2), aerial imagery has been used to determine the metric calculations.

3.0 Biodiversity Baseline

This section establishes the biodiversity baseline for the site based on the preliminary ecological appraisal of the proposed development site and the proposed compensatory site.

3.1 Biodiversity Baseline for habitats on site

The *Baseline Condition Assessment*, drawing P.2048.24.01 (Appendix 1) has been used to identify the habitat area types within the development site. The phase 1 habitat categories have translated into UKHab habitat classification (*UK Habitat Classification User Manual*) using the UKHab/Phase 1 translation tool within the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool* and following the methods set out in the the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric : auditing and accounting for biodiversity value* (User guide) and the *Statutory Biodiversity Metric: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement* and biodiversity scores have been calculated and assessed, as displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Baseline Habitat Areas Biodiversity Calculation for onsite habitats

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score
Grassland	Modified grassland	No	3.133	Low	2	Moderate	2
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	0.5427	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	1.8837	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0
Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	No	1.0226	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0
Individual trees	Urban tree	No	0.1547	Medium	4	Poor	1
Individual trees	Urban tree	No	0.0814	Medium	4	Poor	1
Individual trees	Urban tree	No	0.0366	Medium	4	Poor	1
Individual trees	Urban tree	No	0.0765	Medium	4	Poor	1

4.0 Impacts on Biodiversity

4.1 Post-development biodiversity value of the proposed development site

Drawing 70117919_WSP_LUD_GRP_DR_LA_006 Rev P01, Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy (Appendix 2) has been used to identify the new habitat area types within the proposed development site. Habitat areas, distinctiveness and condition scores have been calculated and assessed and are displayed in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

Table 2: Post Development Habitat Areas Biodiversity Calculation for Onsite Habitats

Broad Habitat	Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness		Condition	
			Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	1.1527	Medium	4	Poor	1
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	0.4478	Medium	4	Good	3
Urban	Introduced shrub	0.1076	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.3827	Medium	4	Moderate	2
Urban	Rain garden	0.0458	Low	2	Good	3
Urban	Sustainable drainage system	0.1222	Low	2	Good	3
Grassland	Modified grassland	1.3687	Low	2	Poor	1

Table 3: Post Development Habitat Areas Biodiversity Calculation for Onsite Linear Features

Habitat type	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score
Native hedgerow	0.58	Low	2	Moderate	2

4.2 Change in biodiversity value

Based on the current proposals there will be **a gain of +5.76 (+37.55%) habitat units** within the proposed development area, demonstrating that a net gain has been achieved within the site in line with National Planning Policy (NPPF).

The BNG Good Practice Principles, as outlined in 1.1 have been applied, and net gain has been achieved on the proposed development site.

Avoid losing biodiversity which cannot be off-set elsewhere, applying the mitigation hierarchy, ensuring that net gain design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity and create a net gain legacy for long-term benefits.

Through stakeholder engagement and design team meetings an avoidance for the biodiversity loss has been considered throughout the production of the proposals.

Addressing risk and applying the mitigation hierarchy.

The residual impacts will be short-term and landscape changes following re-vegetation would not be obvious or attract attention given the baseline habits and current use of the site.

Make a 'measurable' net gain contribution.

Given the habitats that are present within the site, predevelopment of a measurable net gain contribution has been achieved. It is considered that the proposed design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity.

5.0 References

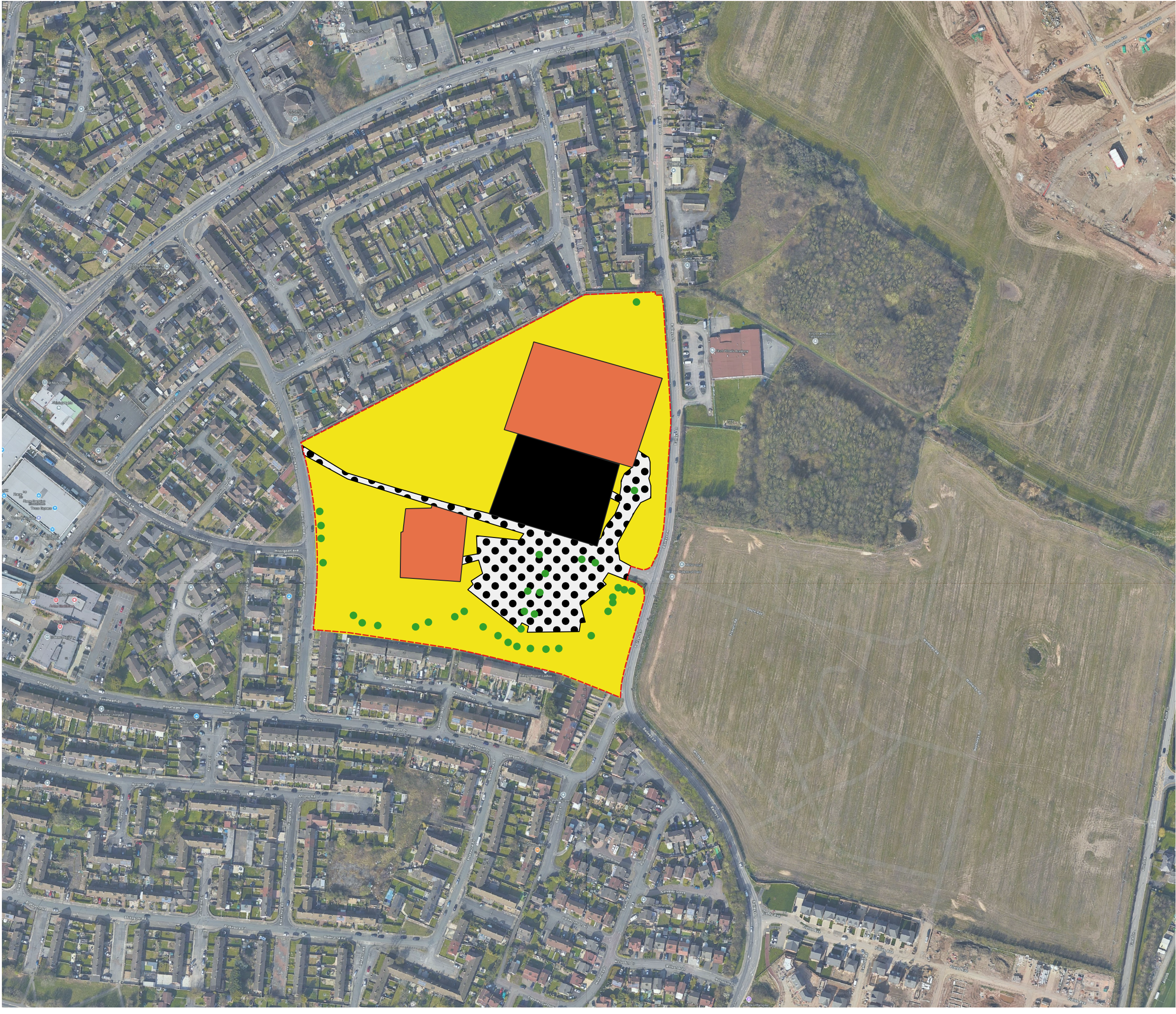
JNCC (2010), Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit. JNCC, Peterborough

STEPHEN PANKS A , NICK WHITE A , AMANDA NEWSOME A , MUNGO NASH A , JACK POTTER A , MATT HEYDON A , EDWARD MAYHEW A , MARIA ALVAREZ A , TRUDY RUSSELL A , CLARE CASHON A , FINN GODDARD A , SARAH J. SCOTT B , MAX HEAVER C , SARAH H. SCOTT C , JO TREWEEK D , BILL BUTCHER E AND DAVE STONE *Biodiversity metric 4.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide*. Natural England.

A – Natural England, B – Environment Agency, C – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, D – Treework Environmental Consultants Ltd, E – eCountability Ltd

UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2023). *UK Habitat Classification User Manual* at <http://ecountability.co.uk/ukhabworkinggroup-ukhab>

UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2023). *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions* at <http://ecountability.co.uk/ukhabworkinggroup-ukhab>



- Survey area
- Artificial unvegetated surface (u1c)
- Building (u1b5)
- Hardstanding (u1b)
- Amenity grassland (g4)
- Scattered trees

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t: 0845 463 4404
e: Info@landscapetreeseecology.com
www.landscapetreeseecology.com

CLIENT:
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PROJECT:
Halewood LUF

DRAWING TITLE:
Baseline Habitats - Halewood Leisure Centre

SCALE: NTS@A3	DRAWN BY: LK	DRAWING No: P.2048.24E01
DATE: 25/11/2024	CHKD BY: CP	REV: -

Note.

- THIS DRAWING TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OTHER SCHEME DRAWINGS AND DOCUMENTS.
LOCATION PLAN
70119719_WSP_LUD_HLC_DR_LA_0002
EXISTING SITE PLAN
70119719_WSP_LUD_HLC_DR_LA_0003
PROPOSED SITE PLAN
70119719_WSP_LUD_HLC_DR_LA_0004
HARD LANDSCAPE PLAN
70119719_WSP_LUD_HLC_DR_LA_0005
PROVIDED LEVELS SHALL BE VERIFIED AND CONFIRMED WITH DESIGNER PRIOR TO ANY WORKS COMMENCING.
ALL DIMENSIONS ARE METERS UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.
FOR LIGHTING PROPOSALS REFER TO LIGHTING IMPACT ASSESSMENT
HAL-WSP-XX-XX-RP-Y-0002
FOR ARBORICULTURAL TREE ROOT PROTECTION PLAN REFER TO DRAWING
70119719-ARB-TRPP-HLC-1.0
FOR TRANSPORT DESIGN REFER TO DRAWINGS
UK0029106.9719-SK02
UK0029106.9719-VT04
UK0029106.9719-VT05
UK0029106.9719-VT06
UK0029106.9719-VT07

ALL LAYOUTS ARE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL SURVEY WORKS AND DESIGN INCLUDING:

- GROUND INVESTIGATION
- DRAINAGE DESIGN
- MATERIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Proposed paved area, where encroaching into the RPA of tree T36, to be installed using cellular confinement system in accordance with section 7.2 to 7.4 BS5837:2012 and in accordance with manufacturers detailed method statement and design, including detailed level information

Planting Schedule				
Planting Types	Scientific Name	Common Name	Specification & Density	
Individual Trees - Total No. 94	Acer campestre	Field maple	Range from 8-10cm to 12-14cm Trees are to be planted as per location on the plan.	
	Betula pendula	Birch		
	Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam		
	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet Gum		
	Pinus nigra	Austrian Pine		
	Prunus avium plena	Double Gean		
	Pyrus calleryana 'Charitceer'	Flowering Pear 'Charitceer'		
	Quercus robur	English oak		
	Sorbus aria	Whitebeam		
	Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan		
	Tilia cordata	Small-leaved Lime		
	Ulmus 'New Horizon'	Elm 'New horizon'		
	Acer campestre	Field Maple		1+1 Transplants Seed Raised; Branches, 3 Breaks, 60-80cm planted at 3 per m2
	Betulus pubescens	Downy Birch		
	Cornus Sanguinea	Dogwood		
Corylus avellana	Hazel			
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn			
Eunymus europaeus	Spindle			
Rosa canina	Dog Rose			
Sambucus nigra	Elder			
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan			
Viburnum lantana	Wayfaringtree tree			
Viburnum opulus	Guelder rose			
Native Scrub Mix - 4478m2 Hedgerow seed mix base with Scrub species to be scattered and/or clustered to support open, mosaic habitat for biodiversity with seed mix beneath - Trees to be planted as Whips with some at 6-8cm	EH1 Hedgerow Mixture, Emorsgate Seeds - https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/special-habitat-mixtures/hedgerow-mixture/ or equivalent and approved		4mgs per m2	
	Acer campestre	Field maple		
	Cornus Sanguinea	Common dogwood		
	Corylus Avellana	Hazel		
	Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn		
	Malus sylvestris	Wild crabapple		
	Prunus avium	Cherry		
	Viburnum opulus	Guelder rose		
	Achillea millefolium	Yarrow		
	Caltha palustris	Marsh Marigold		
	Carex nigra	Common sedge		
	Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowweet		
	Geum helle	Water avens		
	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flag iris		
	Juncus effusus	Soft rush		
Knautia arvensis	Field scabious			
Lythrum salicaria	Purple loosestrife			
Mentha aquatica	Water mint			
Salix pratensis	Meadow Clay			
Native Hedgerow - 580 Lm Hawthorne and to provide dominant species up to 70%	Acer campestre	Field maple (hedge format)	Double stacked 90-80cm apart at 5 plants per metre, 70% Hawthorn and 5% other species contribution.	
	Alchemilla mollis	Lady's mantle		
	Allium sphaerocephalon 'drumstick'	Round headed leek 'drumstick'		
	Astrantia major 'moulin rouge'	Great masterwort 'moulin rouge'		
	Carex comans 'frosted curls'	Sedge 'frosted curls'		
	Centaurea nigra	Common knapweed		
	Galium odoratum	Sweet woodruff		
	Geranium pratense	Meadow cranesbill		
	Hebe 'samy'	Strawberry veronica 'samy'		
	Hedera helix	Common ivy		
	Hyacinthoides nonscripta	English bluebell		
	Ilex crenata	Japanese holly		
	Pinus mugo 'mops'	Dwarf mountain pine 'mops'		
	Primula vulgaris	Primrose		
	Rudbeckia fulgida 'goldsturm'	Black-eyed susan 'goldsturm'		
Salix nemorosa 'balkan daisy'	Balkan daisy			
Sarcocolla	Sweet box			
Stipa capitata 'lace veil'	Feather grass 'lace veil'			
Viburnum davidii	David's Viburnum			
Raingarden Planting - 458m2 Indicative list of planting 2 to 5L Pots	Bouteloua gracilis	Blue grama	2 to 5L Pots 2 per m2	
	Centaurea jacea	Bowles' golden sedge		
	Cephalanthus occidentalis	Butterfly bush		
	Cornus sericea	Red osier dogwood		
	Echinacea purpurea	Pink purple coneflower		
	Erica carnea	Heath		
	Iris versicolor	Blue flag iris		
	Iris virginica	Sweetpea iris		
	Lobelia cardinalis	Cardinal flower		
	Mertensia virginica	Virginia bluebells		
	Monarda fistulosa	Bee balm		
	Panicum virginum	Switchgrass		
	Poa trivialis	Crisping pitiot		
	Sambucus canadensis	Scarberry		
	Schizachyrium scoparium	Little bluestem		
Swale planting - 1222m2	EM6 Meadow Mixture for Wetlands, Emorsgate Seeds - https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/meadow-mixtures-for-specific-soils/meadow-mixture-for-wetlands/ or equivalent and approved		4mgs per m2	
	Grass Seed Mixes			
	Wildflower Meadow Mix - 11026m2 (20% wildflower 80% grasses)			
	ED22 Strong Lawn Grass Mixture, Emorsgate Seeds - https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/grass-only-mixtures/strong-lawn-grass-mixture/ or equivalent and approved			
	Amenity Lawn Grass - 9317m2 (100% grasses)			
	EM3 Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture, Emorsgate Seeds - https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/general-purpose-meadow-mixtures/special-general-purpose-meadow-mixture/ or equivalent and approved			
	25mgs per m2			

- DO NOT SCALE
- KEY:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Existing Trees to be Retained & Protected
 - Existing Trees to be Removed
 - Proposed Swale Planting
 - Proposed Native Scrub Mix
 - Proposed Amenity Lawn Grass Mix
 - Proposed Wildflower Meadow Mix
 - Proposed Ornamental Planting
 - Proposed Rain Garden Planting
 - Proposed Individual Trees
 - Proposed Native Hedge
 - Tree Protection Fencing to BS5837:2012

P01	10/02/25	ZY	First Issue	ER	RW
REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP

DRAWING STATUS

S3 - FOR REVIEW

wsp

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T+44 (0) 151 600 5500
wsp.com

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ARCHITECT

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PROJECT

Halewood LUF

TITLE

Halewood Leisure Centre
Proposed Soft Landscape Strategy

SCALE 1:500

CHECKED ER

APPROVED RW

PROJECT No. 70119719

DESIGNED JYER

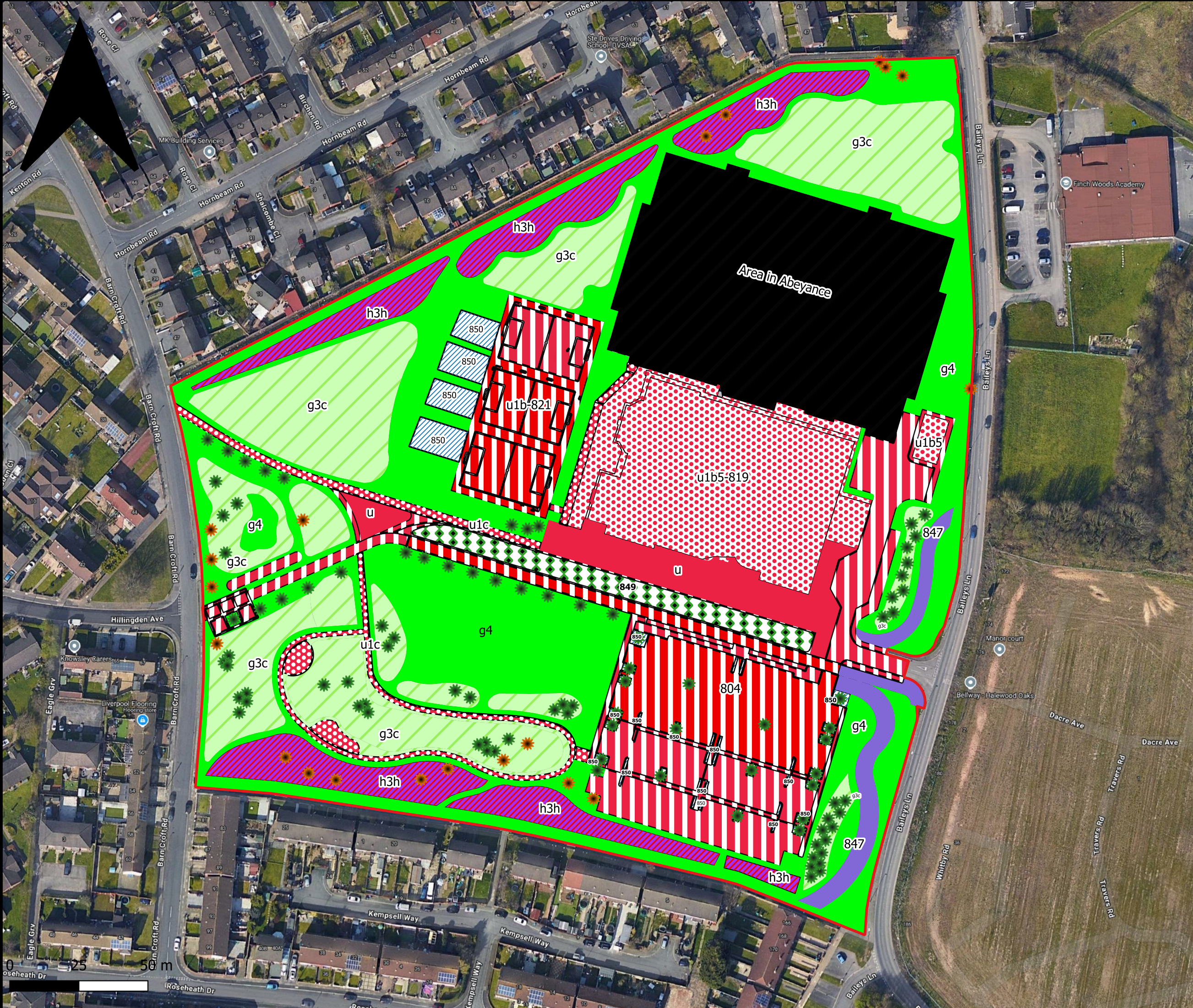
DRAWN JY

DATE February 25

DRAWING No. 70119719_WSP_LUD_HLC_DR_LA_0006

REV P01

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UKHab V2.01 Key

- Red line Boundary
- Halewood LUF
- Retained Urban Trees
- Newly Planted Small Urban Trees

Proposed Habitats

- g3c - Other neutral grassland
- g4 - Modified grasslands
- h3h - Mixed scrub
- u1b- Developed land: sealed surface
- 821 - Artificial sports pitches
- u - Urban - Built up Features
- 847 - Introduced shrubs
- u1c - Artificial un-vegetated, un-sealed surface
- 849 - Bioswale
- u1b5 - Buildings
- 819 - Community Centre
- 850 - Rain gardens
- Area in Abeyance

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t: 0845 463 4404
e: Info@landscapetreeseecology.com
www.landscapetreeseecology.com

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Knowsley Council

PROJECT:
Halewood LUF

DRAWING TITLE:
Post Intervention: Habitat Plan

SCALE: 1:1200@A3	DRAWN BY: JS	DRAWING No: P.2048.24.E02A
DATE: 13/02/2024	CHKD BY: LK	REV: - A