

Assessment of Biodiversity Baseline

Version 1
07.10.2024

Prepared for: FAS

Site: Baileys Lane.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Amenity Tree was commissioned by FAS developments to undertake a site visit and compilation of UK habitats plan and DEFRA habitat condition sheet in consideration of planning permission under The Environment Act 2021 'nature and biodiversity', which allows for biodiversity gain in the planning system.

1.2 Site location and context

The area surveyed comprised of modified grassland, scrub, scattered trees, Hard standing and building, species-poor ornamental hedge, native hedge.

1.3 Report purpose and legislative background

The scope of the Assessment is therefore:

- Assessment of the habitats within the site in accordance with the UK Habitats Classification (UK Habitats Classification Working Group, 2018).
- Completion of Condition Assessments of each habitat in accordance with those presented in The Biodiversity Metric 4.1 23rd July 2024.

2. Survey Methods

2.1 Vegetation and Habitats

2.1.1 A habitat survey walkover was conducted in August 2024 (in accordance with JNCC, 2010) which confirmed the habitats present. Appendix 1 is the habitat mapping based on the UK Habitat Classification system (UK Habitats Classification Working Group, 2018) which details those habitats listed below.

2.1.2 Table 1 details the UK Habitat classifications / BNG metric habitat descriptors, area coverage and condition assessment result. Whilst on the site the habitat survey searched for all plants including those that are considered rare,

uncommon or are statutorily protected such as those listed in schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

UK Habitat Classification	Total Area Coverage (Ha.)	Condition Assessment
Hawthorn Scrub	0.055	Moderate
Modified Grassland	0.0185	Poor
Introduced shrub	0.012	n/a
Urban Sealed Surfacing and Buildings	0.2245	n/a
Total Area Coverage	0.31Ha	
Urban trees (22 trees)	0.1873	Poor
Hedgerows	154 Linear M	Poor

Table 1 UK Habitat classifications, area coverage and condition assessment

Urban trees. There are a total of 22 urban trees as measured by the existing tree report which are detailed below according to BNG size guides for tree sizes as follows. There are 14 small trees and 8 medium trees totalling 0.1873.

G3	SM	50	Small	14	0.0570
T19	Y	100	Medium	8	0.1303
T2	Y	150	Large		0.0000
T15	SM	150	Very large		0.0000
G2	SM	150			
T17	EM	160			
T13	EM	190			
T11	EM	200			
T12	EM	200			
T1	Y	220			
T4	EM	250			
T8	EM	250			
T10	EM	280			
T14	EM	280			
T9	SM	310			
T7	SM	320			
T16	EM	320			
T5	SM	340			
T6	EM	350			
T18	EM	380			
T3	EM	450			
G1	EM	600	Total	22	0.1873

2.1.3 Site strategic significance

The strategic significance of a site will be determined by areas included within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) produced for a region. The LNRS for Surrey is design and no pilot draft are available, and it therefore has no status in the planning system. As a LNRS has not yet been published, alternative documents can be used to assign strategic significance.

A review of local plans and policies did not highlight the Site as an area designated for nature recovery and therefore cannot achieve 'high strategic

significance'. As a LNRS is yet to be produced the Site can be assessed for 'low strategic significance' based on the urban setting of the site's location.

2.2 Surveys results

2.1 The biodiversity baseline value of the site is calculated by the Statutory Metric and reproduced below for the site in habitat units.

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (hectares)	Total habitat/hedgerow units
Heathland and shrub	Hawthorn scrub	0.055	0.44
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.0185	0.04
Urban	Introduced shrub	0.012	0.02
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.2245	0
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.1873	0.75
	Non native ornamental hedge	0.154	0.15

The metric has provided the final figures

On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.25
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.15
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00

2.3 Limitations

The survey was conducted in the optimal survey period for vascular plants as determined by JNCC, 2010 and broad species and habitats were identifiable.

Habitats have been assessed to determine whether they meet those described in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan – Priority Habitat descriptions which are used to form Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

3. History of site

The recent history of the site can be examined using historic aerial imagery. The site does not appear to have changed since 2000.

4. Rural tree planting / Hedgerow enhancements

Whilst the existing tree condition would be difficult to improve the additional further tree planting can be undertaken to join existing trees together. The use of rural trees has a disproportionately positive impact on the accumulation of biodiversity credits because they over sail habitat beneath.

Recommended Species: At least 70% of trees should be native species found in the local area, taking into account the requirement to plant trees that will be appropriate for anticipated changes in climate.

Considerations:

- Trees will adapt to natural conditions. Additional watering will only be required during a particularly long dry spell
Trees are to be planted within the tree planting season (October to March inclusive).

- Up to 30% of street trees will not establish and therefore supplementary planting over the following three years will be required to achieve prescribed numbers over the longer term.

Creation Methodology:

- Advanced nursery stock trees or larger will be planted within optimal tree planting season (October to March inclusive).
- Suitable wooden stakes will be used to support the trees.
- Weeds will be controlled around the base of the trees by applying organic mulch (10cm depth in a 50cm buffer around trees), this will also assist with water retention. This will be applied in early summer until trees are successfully established (minimum 3 years).

The use of additional species planting into hedgerows can add to their biodiversity and biodiversity scores can be improved by ensuring there are no gaps.

Scrub enhancement

The typical low scoring items in the existing condition assessments relate to invasive species cover, % of native trees, open areas, and vertical structure. Much of this can be enhanced by planting of a diverse range of native species and management.

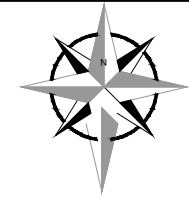
5. Summary conclusion

The sites habitats are currently generally low in biodiversity unit value due to the condition and importance in the distinctiveness ranges. There are various techniques available to increase the biodiversity value of the land allowing the more desirable species to flourish and to reduce the presence of unwanted species that will attempt to colonise the enhanced areas as outlined in the enhancement analysis.

Under Biodiversity Net Gain there are various UKHAB criteria definitions and sub categories of the habitat types present on site that the client could aim to create and enhance. Retention and enhancement is recommended of all medium distinctiveness habitats in order to offset development impact.

The UKHAB criteria shall be used to monitor all habitat improvements and it is normal that the monitoring of enhancements shall be required, at least until they have attained the intended condition.

Appendix 1 Habitat mapping based the UK Habitat Classification system



UK HABITAT MAP KEY

-  Broadleaf scattered trees
-  Modified grassland
-  Introduced shrub
-  Hawthorn scrub
-  Ornamental hedge
-  Urban sealed and building

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HABITATS PLAN - Overview

Drawn By:

Date:

Scale:

PS

07.10.2024

1:500@A3

Drg No:

Revision:

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V1