

# APPENDIX 4: BIODIVERSITY METRIC METHODOLOGY

## Assessment Framework

For the purposes of this assessment, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric) has been utilised.

The Biodiversity Metric is accompanied by a ‘Calculation Tool’. This was used to calculate the biodiversity units for the Application Site before (baseline) and after development. The User Guide<sup>24</sup> has been followed.

## Habitat Measurements

Baseline habitat measurements were carried out in line with the results of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Measurements were made using QGIS.

Proposed habitat measurements were taken from the Soft Landscape Proposals<sup>25</sup>

Measurements were entered to the nearest 0.01ha.

## Distinction Assessments

Habitats are assigned to distinctiveness bands automatically within the Metric. 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 Biodiversity Metric. The bands are based upon the UK habitat classification system. A combination of simple rules and professional judgement have been used to assign each habitat type to the appropriate distinctiveness band. The distinctiveness categories used are tailored to habitat type.

Distinctiveness Assessments are assigned according to **Table 7**.

**Table 7:** Distinctiveness Assessment

Category	Scores	Multiplier
Very High	8	Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that are highly

<sup>24</sup> (2022). *Biodiversity metric 3.1: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide*. Natural England.  
A – Natural England, B – Environment Agency, C – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, D – Treweek Environmental Consultants Ltd, E – eCountability Ltd

<sup>25</sup> DCa Landscape (2024). *SOFT LANDSCAPE STRATEGY -AREAS FOR BNG*. DWG. L23110.01.A

Category	Scores	Multiplier
		threatened, internationally scarce and require conservation action e.g. blanket bog
High	6	Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the NERC Act requiring conservation action e.g. lowland fens
Medium	4	Semi-natural habitats not classed as a Priority Habitat
Low	2	Habitat of low biodiversity value. Temporary grass and clover ley; intensive orchard; rhododendron scrub
Very Low	0	Little or no biodiversity value e.g. hard standing or sealed surface

### Condition Assessments

Condition assessments for existing habitats can be found in a separate excel document.

### Strategic significance

The spatial location of a habitat is treated as a component of the quality of a habitat parcel in the same way as distinctiveness or condition. Strategic significance is used to determine whether the habitat is of increased importance due to its location.

### Risk Factors

As part of any proposed habitat creation and restoration, risk factors must be taken into account to correct for disparity, delay or risk. These values are preassigned within the Biodiversity Metric and take into consideration the following factors:

- Temporal risk; and
- Difficulty of creation and restoration.

Advance/delay in habitat creation takes into account any significant time difference in the creation of a habitat type. This time is measured in full years and is entered by the assessor.

Habitat creation in advance is rewarded by reducing the difficulty and temporal risk multipliers applied. This reflects the lower delivery risk - there is less risk of failure when a habitat is already making progress towards its target condition.

Any significant delay in the creation of a habitat type relative to loss of on-site habitats (e.g. due to phased developments and developments that temporarily require parts of the development site for construction purposes) is added to the pre-populated time to target condition and increases the effect of the risk multiplier accordingly.

## **Limitations**

Although the Biodiversity Metric is a valuable tool underpinned by ecological evidence, there are certain limitations that must be considered when applying the metric. The key principles and rules for the use of the Biodiversity Metric have been followed at all times, in line with these limitations. Further detail is available within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide<sup>24</sup>.



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