Rider Levett Bucknall

Bradford College FTC

Biodiversity Baseline Assessment

2484981

AUGUST 2023

RSK GENERAL NOTES

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Title: Bradford College FTC - Biodiversity Baseline Assessment

Client: Rider Levett Bucknall

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Date:	22 August 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment is a desk-based exercise using the results of surveys carried out by RSK Biocensus on 2 February 2023 to establish the baseline (pre-construction) ecology of the Bradford College FTC site, located off Thornton Road in central Bradford (OS Grid Ref: SE 15856 32999.

The site comprises two distinct areas, Junction Mills and Garden Mills. The Junction Mills building is to be demolished and will be replaced by the new Bradford College Future Technologies Centre (FTC). Junction Mills and the habitats present within its associated red line boundary are considered as on-site habitats for this assessment. The Garden Mills building is to undergo internal refurbishment only, including the replacement of the building's windows. The habitats surrounding Garden Mills are to be retained undisturbed and are therefore considered off-site habitats for this assessment.

This report calculates 'biodiversity units' using the Defra Biodiversity Metric, following the methods set out in Defra's Biodiversity Metric 4.0 user guide and Small Sites Metric Calculation Tool - User Guidance. The calculations are based on the area (or length), distinctiveness, condition and strategic significance of habitats found on the site.

The Junction Mills site comprises three habitat types with a total baseline of 0.17 biodiversity area units across the 0.18 ha within the red line boundary.

The Garden Mills site (considered here as off-site) comprises five habitat types with a total baseline of 0.64 biodiversity area units across the 0.29 ha within the red line boundary. The only linear terrestrial habitat present within the red line boundary is u1e – Built linear features (walls) which achieved 0 biodiversity units.

The proposed development should consider inclusion of habitats within the landscape design for Junction Mills to ensure a biodiversity net gain, though it is anticipated that scope for landscaping within the expected site footprint will be limited. It is recommended that the areas of off-site woodland and the river (Bradford Beck) are retained. Furthermore, brown or green roofs and areas of amenity grassland could be included within the landscape proposals and retained off-site areas of woodland and river enhanced to achieve net gain.

However, it is anticipated that if the off-site, 0.046ha of woodland (located within the Garden Mills site boundary) is enhanced and no landscaping is included within the Junction Mills proposals, the development will still result in a net gain of 0.15 habitat area units, which is a total net gain of 84.29% biodiversity area units. This is based on the woodland being enhanced from poor condition to moderate condition via the removal of invasive non-native species supported by supplementary planting of native shrubs and an appropriate regime of woodland management, which will aid in improving structural diversity.

The baseline condition assessments are listed in *Appendix A.* There were no deviations from default values or standard guidance.

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this report

1.1.1 This report presents the baseline biodiversity value of the Junction and Garden Mills sites on the Bradford College campus, located off Thornton Road in central Bradford (OS Grid Ref: SE 15856 32999; Figure 1).

1.1.2 The site comprises two distinct areas, Junction Mills and Garden Mills. The Junction Mills building is to be demolished and will be replaced by the new Bradford College Future Technologies Centre (FTC). Junction Mills and the habitats present within its associated red line boundary are considered as on-site habitats for this assessment. The Garden Mills building is to undergo internal refurbishment only, including the replacement of the buildings windows. The habitats surrounding Garden Mills are to be retained undisturbed and are therefore considered off-site habitats for this assessment.

1.1.3 It is understood that Rider Levett Bucknall wants to achieve maximum possible biodiversity net gain within the site, in line with national and local policy, while also achieving the aims of the proposed development. This report will form the basis of collaboration with design contractors to ensure the proposals contain sufficient ecological mitigation and landscaping to meet this target.

1.2 Landscape context

1.2.1 The two sites are located within Bradford College campus, to the west of Bradford city centre. Habitats on these sites include two large buildings (Junction Mills and Garden Mills) which are currently disused, dense scrub, plantation woodland, a small watercourse (Bradford Beck) and introduced shrub. The immediate surrounding area is urban, with large high-rise buildings and well-lit busy roads. Greenspace is limited to amenity lawns surrounding the college campus and nearby university campus.

1.2.2 Junction Mills lies to the north of the Bradford Beck, habitats within the red line boundary include the Junction Mills building and a narrow strip of dense scrub along the southern and western aspects of the building. This includes a mix of native and introduced species and is dominated particularly along the western aspect by Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*).

1.2.3 Garden Mills lies to the south of the Bradford Beck and is bordered on its southern and western aspects by plantation woodland; to the east by Westholme Street and associated hardstanding; and, to the north by a narrow strip of scrub between the building and the beck.

1.2.4 The wider surrounding area is similar in composition, with extensive urban areas, well-lit busy roads and small, isolated pockets of greenspace.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 is designed to quantify biodiversity to inform and improve planning, design, land management and decision-making (Defra, 2023).

2.1.2 This study has been carried out as a desk-based exercise, using the results of field surveys carried out at the site by RSK Biocensus (RSK Biocensus, 2023).

2.1.3 The PEA survey and habitat condition assessment was undertaken by RSK Biocensus on 2 February 2023. This is considered to be outside the optimal period for such assessments, which would ideally be completed during the spring and summer. However due to the lack of complexity of the habitats present on the site the habitat condition assessments made are considered to be satisfactory for the purpose of establishing an ecological baseline.

2.1.4 A map of the pre-construction habitats from the ecological appraisal is presented in *Figure 2*.

1.2 Biodiversity baseline assessment methods

2.2.1 To calculate biodiversity units for the site this study uses methods set out by Defra in their latest Biodiversity Metric 4.0 user guide (Defra, 2023) and The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Technical Annex 1 Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (Defra, 2023a).

2.2.2 The Biodiversity Metric uses habitat area as its core measurement, except for linear features where it uses habitat length. Habitat area is multiplied by several factors (distinctiveness, condition, and strategic location) that indicate its quality, and this gives its biodiversity unit value. This can be used for existing and future habitats.

2.2.3 Where future habitats are to be enhanced or newly created, the risk of failure is accounted for by applying multipliers for risk factors (difficulty, time to target condition, and off-site risk).

2.2.4 The biodiversity value is assessed separately for linear habitats because describing them only by area would result in an underestimate and would therefore fail to ensure adequate compensation for losses. Linear habitats are split into two types: terrestrial, mainly hedgerows and lines of trees; and aquatic, mainly rivers and streams. They are assessed using the same metric, but they cannot be summed together. Therefore, a site can have three biodiversity unit values: one for habitat areas; one for terrestrial linear features; and one for aquatic linear features.

Habitat distinctiveness

2.2.5 Habitats are classified using the UK habitat classification system (UKHAB, 2018). The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 pre-assigns each habitat type to a distinctiveness band according to its distinguishing features, i.e., species richness, rarity (at local, regional,

national, and international scales), and the degree to which it supports species rarely found in other habitats.

2.2.6   On rare occasions, the habitat distinctiveness of a habitat can be altered up or down from the preassigned value. Any alterations must then be fully explained in the condition assessment (*Appendix A*) using evidence relevant to the site, e.g., an increase in distinctiveness because of rare flora or fauna or a decrease in distinctiveness because of significant damage to the habitat.

Habitat condition

2.2.7   Habitat condition measures the varying quality of similar habitats against what is perceived to be their optimal state. The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Technical Annex 1 Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (Defra, 2023a) contains condition sheets for all habitats to which the metric can apply. The condition sheets contain a habitat description, contextual information to aid the assessment, and the assessment criteria. The criteria describe what components need to be present for a habitat to be in good, moderate, or poor condition.

Strategic location

2.2.8   Strategic location - sometimes called 'strategic significance' - works at a landscape scale, allowing additional value to be added to habitats in 'priority' or 'biodiversity target areas'. They include statutory and non-statutory sites and other areas with biodiversity value or potential), and they are mainly identified from local plans and objectives. If a habitat is within such a target area, a multiplier is applied to increase its value.

3.0 BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

3.1.1   For the biodiversity baseline assessment refer to the accompanying excel document.

2484981 - Bradford College FTC - Biodiversity Baseline Assessment 4.0 (Rev01).xlsm

4.0 BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

4.1 Biodiversity baseline

Junction Mills – On-site

4.1.1 The UKHab map (*Figure 2*) has been used to identify three habitat areas within the red line boundary with a total of 0.17 area units (generated by 0.18 ha).

4.1.2 The condition assessments are provided in *Appendix A*. There were no deviations from the default methods for baseline habitats.

Garden Mills – Off-site

4.1.3 The UKHab map (*Figure 2*) has been used to identify five habitat areas and one terrestrial linear habitat within the red line boundary with a total of 0.64 area units (generated by 0.29 ha). Terrestrial linear habitats provided a total of 0 units.

4.2 Habitat creation

4.2.1 The proposed development should consider inclusion of habitats within the landscape design with an aim to achieve biodiversity net gain, however it is noted that scope within the new FTC site footprint is likely to be limited for this purpose.

4.2.2 The following habitats could be included within the landscape proposals to achieve net gain;

> Amenity grassland – Any areas included as amenity grassland within the new landscaping plans should be planted using a species rich wildflowers for lawns seed mix (such as Emorsgate EL1F seed mix) and subject to a less intensive management regime to increase species diversity and varied structure.

> Brown or green roofs – included within the new proposed buildings on the site.

> Woodland – Enhancement of the off-site woodland associated with Garden Mills, including works to remove invasive non-native species (INNS) and improve woodland condition.

4.2.3 Further information and a detailed biodiversity net gain assessment can be made when the detailed design and landscape proposals have been finalised. Furthermore, a landscape and ecological management plan should be produced which details how habitats will be created and maintained and monitored following completion of the development. It should cover up to 30 years post development.

4.2.4 Based on the current proposals, it is anticipated that if the off-site, 0.046ha of woodland (located within the Garden Mills site boundary) is enhanced and no landscaping is included within the Junction Mills proposals, the development will still result in a net gain of 0.15 habitat area units which is a total net gain of 84.29% biodiversity area units.

REFERENCES

Defra (2023), *Natural England Joint Publication JP039. The Biodiversity Metric 4.0. User Guide* (March 2023). Natural England

Defra (2023a), *The Biodiversity Metric 4.0: Technical Annex 1 – Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology* (March 2023). Natural England

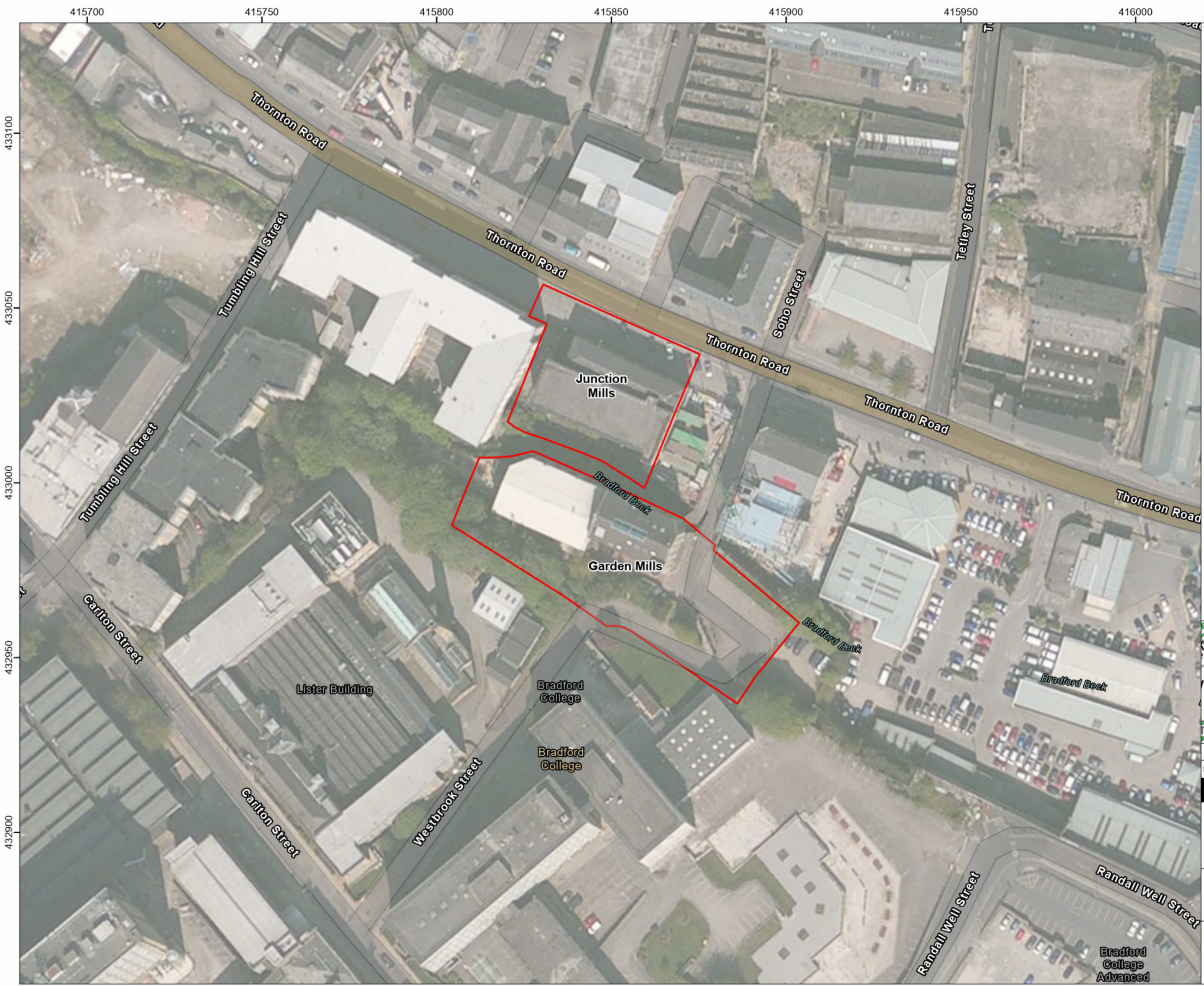RSK Biocensus (2023), *2484981 - Bradford College FTC Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report Rev00.*
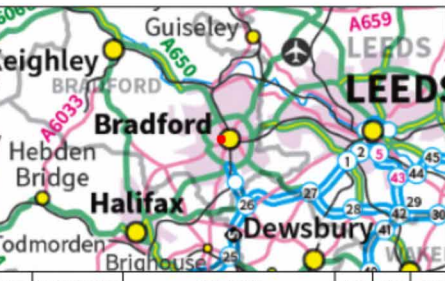
UKHAB (2018), *UK Habitat Classification Documents.* http://ecountability.co.uk/ukhabworkinggroup-ukhab.

FIGURES

Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Existing Habitats

Legend:

Site Boundary

Junction Mills

Garden Mills

Bradford Beck

Thornton Road

Tumbling Hill Street

Carlton Street

Westbrook Street

Randall Well Street

Tetley Street

Soho Street

Lister Building

Bradford College

Bradford College

Bradford College Advanced

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| Rev | Date | Description | Drn | Chk | App |

Bradford College FTC

biocensus
EXPERTS IN ECOLOGY

TITLE: Figure 1:

Site Location Plan

SCALE: 1:1,000   @A3

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Document Path: C:\Users\rebekah.smyth\RSK Group\RSK Biocensus - 06 GIS - 2484981 - Bradford College FTC\03 - APRX\2484981 - Bradford College FTC - Figure 1 - Site Location Plan.aprx
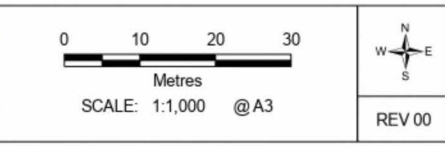
Legend:

- ▭ Site Boundary

UKHab Habitats

- Mixed Scrub
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface
- Buildings
- Other Developed Land
- Other Woodland, Mixed
- Built Linear Features
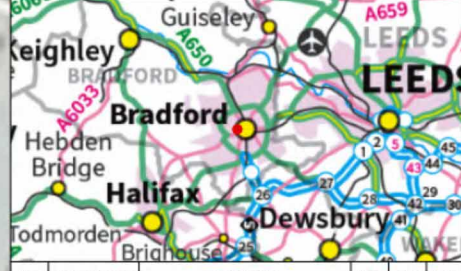- ⊙ Target Note
- ▫ Secondary Codes

Secondary Code	Description
48	Non-Native
1160	Introduced Shrub
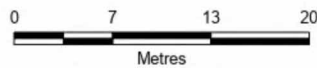
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Bradford College FTC

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EXPERTS IN ECOLOGY

TITLE: Figure 2:

Habitat Survey

0	7	13	20

Metres

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APPENDIX A – BASELINE DETAILED CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

This appendix presents the condition assessments of the baseline habitats against the condition sheets in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 small sites metric calculation tool published by Defra (2023a) any deviations from the published guidance are explained and justified.

Healthland and shrub – Mixed scrub

UKHAB classification	h3h, 48, 1160 – Mixed scrub, non-native, introduced shrub		
Distinctiveness	Medium	**Area**	0.042 ha (on-site), 0.09 ha (off-site)
Habitat Type Description			
Two areas of dense scrub on the site. One area is dominated by Bramble while the other area is scrub containing Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) (including young-semi-mature trees and saplings), Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), and occasional Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*).			
Condition Assessment Criteria			
1. Habitat is representative of UKHab description (where in its natural range). There are at least three woody species, with no one species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except common juniper, sea buckthorn or box, which can be up to 100% cover). 2. There is a good age range – all of the following are present: seedlings, young shrubs and mature shrubs. 3. There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981) and species indicative of sub-optimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover. 4. The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and/or herbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat(s). 5. There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.			
Condition			
Good	Passes 5 of 5 criteria		
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria		
Poor	Passes 0, 1 or 2 of 5 criteria		
Condition Result		Poor	
Justification			
1. Habitat is not representative of UKHab description, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam dominate cover - **Fail** 2. There is a mix of ages present, including seedlings, shrubs and mature shrubs - **Pass** 3. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam present - **Fail** 4. There are no areas of scattered scrub or grassland, it is dense scrub - **Fail** 5. Very small area which does not contain clearings or glades – **Fail**			

Urban – Developed land, sealed surface

UKHAB classification	u1b - Developed land; sealed surface, u1b5 – Buildings, u1b6 – Other developed land (structures), u1e – Built linear features		
Distinctiveness	V. low	**Area**	0.137 ha (on site) 0.251 ha (off-site)
Habitat Description			
Mixture of buildings, pathways, carpark and man-made structures (bridges)			
Condition Assessment Criteria			
N/A – fixed at 'poor', default multiplier of 1.			
Condition			
Good	N/A		
Moderate	N/A		
Poor	N/A		
Condition Result			Poor (1)
Justification			
n/a			

Woodland and forest – Other woodland; mixed

UKHAB classification	w1h – Mixed woodland		
Distinctiveness	Medium	**Area**	0.046 ha (off-site)
Habitat Type Description			
The area of woodland has been planted and there are a number of non-native tree species as-well as native species present, including Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus gunnii*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Goat Willow, Leyland Cypress (*Cupressocyparis x leylandii*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur),* Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), and Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*).			

Condition Assessment Criteria

Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)
1. Age distribution of trees	Three age classes present	Two age classes present	One age class present
2. Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland
3. Invasive plant species3	No invasive species present in woodland	Rhododendron or laurel not present, other invasive species < 10% cover	Rhododendron or laurel present, or other invasive species > 10% cover
4. Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	None to two native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel
5. Cover of native tree and shrub species	> 80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native	50-80% of canopy trees and 50-80% of understory shrubs are native	< 50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native
6. Open space within woodland	10 – 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space, unless woodland is <10ha in which case lower threshold of 10% does not apply	21- 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space	More than 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space
7. Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4-7cm dbh, saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth	One or two classes only present in woodland	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland

8. Tree health	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low risk pest or disease present	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high risk pest or disease present
9. Vegetation and ground flora	Ancient woodland flora indicators present	Recognisable NVC plant community present	No recognisable NVC community
10. Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland	Two storeys across all survey plots	One or less storey across all survey plots
11. Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees per hectare	One veteran tree per hectare	No veteran trees present in woodland
12. Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/ stems and stumps	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/ stems and stumps	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/ stems and stumps
13. Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and/or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and/or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground

Condition	
Good	Total score >32 (33 to 39)
Moderate	Total score 26 to 32
Poor	Total score <26 (13 to 25)

Condition Result		Poor

Justification
1.   Two ages of trees present – semi-mature and mature – Moderate – 2 points 2.   No significant browsing damage evident in woodland – Good – 3 points 3.   Japanese knotweed and cotoneaster present within woodland – Poor – 1 point 4.   At least five native species present – Good – 3 points 5.   <50% of understory shrubs are native – Poor – 1 point 6.   Woodland no areas of open space – Good – 3 points 7.   Only a maximum of two tree classes present – Moderate – 2 points 8.   Tree mortality appears to be less than 10% - Good – 3 points 9.   Ground flora has no recognisable NVC community, dominated by non-native species – Poor – 1 point 10. Woodland not complex, one storey present – Poor – 1 point 11. No veteran trees present – Poor – 1 point 12. No standing deadwood present – Poor – 1 point 13. Woodland highly modified and species present indicate nutrient enrichment – Poor – 1 point Total: 23 points - Poor

Urban - Built linear features

UKHAB classification	Urban – Built linear features		
Distinctiveness	Very low (0)	Length	107m (off-site)
Habitat Description			
Roads, railways, walls, fences, surfaced paths.			
Condition Assessment Criteria			
N/A – no condition assessment required, fixed at '0'			
Condition			
Good	N/A		
Moderate	N/A		
Poor	N/A		

Condition Result	N/A – Other (0)
Justification	
Watercourse has a retaining wall and occasional brick-built walls present within the site.	

APPENDIX B – POST CONSTRUCTION DETAILED CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

Woodland and forest – Other woodland; mixed (off-site) enhanced

UKHAB classification	w1h – Mixed woodland		
Distinctiveness	Medium	**Area**	0.046 ha (off-site)
Habitat Type Description			
The area of woodland has been planted and there are a number of non-native tree species as-well as native species present, including Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus gunnii*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Goat Willow, Leyland Cypress (*Cupressocyparis x leylandii*), Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), and Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*).			
Condition Assessment Criteria			
Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)
1. Age distribution of trees	Three age classes present	Two age classes present	One age class present
2. Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland
3. Invasive plant species	No invasive species present in woodland	Rhododendron or laurel not present, other invasive species < 10% cover	Rhododendron or laurel present, or other invasive species > 10% cover
4. Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel	None to two native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel
5. Cover of native tree and shrub species	> 80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native	50-80% of canopy trees and 50-80% of understory shrubs are native	< 50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native
6. Open space within woodland	10 – 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space, unless woodland is <10ha in which case lower threshold of 10% does not apply	21- 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space	More than 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space
7. Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4-7cm dbh, saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth	One or two classes only present in woodland	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland
8. Tree health	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low risk pest or disease present	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high risk pest or disease present
9. Vegetation and ground flora	Ancient woodland flora indicators present	Recognisable NVC plant community present	No recognisable NVC community
10. Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland	Two storeys across all survey plots	One or less storey across all survey plots
11. Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees per hectare	One veteran tree per hectare	No veteran trees present in woodland
12. Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the

	parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/ stems and stumps	the woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/ stems and stumps	woodland parcel have standing deadwood, large dead branches/ stems and stumps
13. Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and/or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and/or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground

Condition	
Good	Total score >32 (33 to 39)
Moderate	Total score 26 to 32
Poor	Total score <26 (13 to 25)

Condition Result		Poor

Justification

1. Two ages of trees present – semi-mature and mature – Moderate – 2 points
2. No significant browsing damage evident in woodland – Good – 3 points
3. Japanese Knotweed and Cotoneaster present within woodland are removed – Good – 3 points
4. At least five native species present – Good – 3 points
5. <50% of understory shrubs are native – supplementary planting of native shrub species carried out to improve overall woodland condition and structural diversity – Moderate – 2 points
6. Woodland no areas of open space – Good – 3 points
7. Only a maximum of two tree classes present – Moderate – 2 points
8. Tree mortality appears to be less than 10% - Good – 3 points
9. Ground flora has no recognisable NVC community, dominated by non-native species – non-native species including Japanese Knotweed and cotoneaster removed to allow regeneration of native species – Moderate – 2 points
10. Woodland not complex, one storey present – Poor – 1 point
11. No veteran trees present – Poor – 1 point
12. No standing deadwood present – Poor – 1 point
13. Woodland highly modified and species present indicate nutrient enrichment – Poor – 1 point

Total: 27 points - Moderate