

Interim Guidance on applying the 1.15 strategic significance multiplier in the Biodiversity Metric for sites in Birmingham and the Black Country (October 2024)

Introduction

The statutory Biodiversity Metric requires the “strategic significance” of on-site habitats and off-site habitats (where appropriate) to be determined. Where habitats are deemed to be of high strategic significance a 1.15 multiplier is automatically applied. The intention is that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the local area will determine strategic significance.

The West Midlands Combined Authority is currently preparing a West Midlands LNRS for the area including Birmingham and the Black Country authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. In the period before the West Midlands LNRS is adopted, Birmingham City Council and the Black Country authorities have prepared interim guidance on determining strategic significance, informed by the [Local Nature Recovery Mapping work undertaken by Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and EcoRecord](#) and The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (dated July 2024). Guidance on how to determine strategic significance using this interim Local Nature Recovery Map is provided below. The 1.15 multiplier can be applied to on-site habitats at baseline and post-development. For off-site habitats, the 1.15 multiplier is applied only to post-intervention habitats.

Baseline calculations (for on-site habitat)

1. Is your site within a Core Habitat Zone?

Yes - The 1.15 multiplier will be applied to **any**¹ habitats within the Core Habitat Zones of the interim Local Nature Recovery Map.

No (go to question 2)

2. Is your site within a Core Expansion or Priority Restoration Zone?

Yes – The 1.15 multiplier will be applied to very high, high and medium distinctiveness habitats, hedgerows and watercourses.

No – The 1.15 multiplier does not apply to your site.

¹ To reflect the contribution those habitats collectively provide to the ecological function of those core areas unless a specific, sound ecological justification is provided to the contrary.

Post-Development calculations (for on-site and off-site provision within Birmingham and the Black Country)

1. Is your site within a Core Habitat Zone?

Yes – The 1.15 multiplier will be applied to very high, high and medium distinctiveness habitats, hedgerows and watercourses to be created and all retained or enhanced habitats, hedgerows and watercourses.

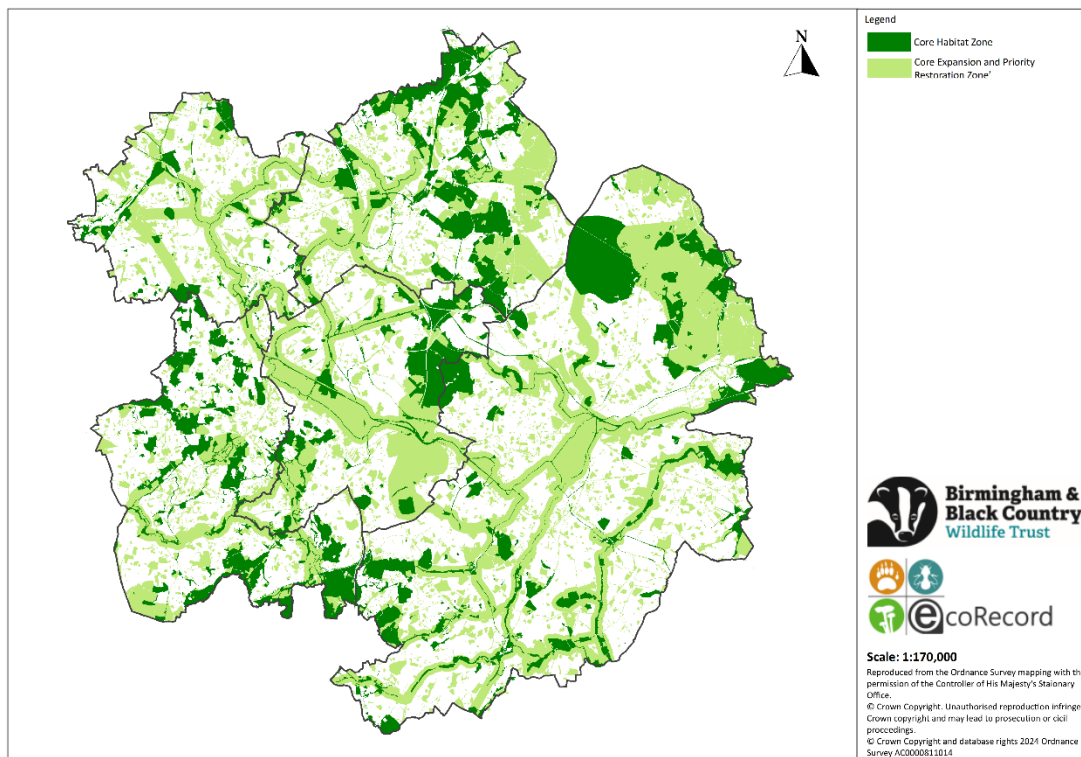
No (go to question 2)

2. Is your site within a Core Expansion or Priority Restoration Zone?

Yes – The 1.15 multiplier will be applied to very high, high and medium distinctiveness habitats, hedgerows and watercourses to be created, enhanced or retained.

No – The 1.15 multiplier does not apply to your site.

Interim Local Nature Recovery Map



Definitions

Core Habitat Zone is comprised of the land use parcels that contain the most ecologically valuable habitats, and includes all areas with a high ecological value, all sites with a nature conservation designation, and priority habitat areas identified in Natural England's Combined Habitat Network data set. ***The Core Habitat Zone is a priority for protection and restoration.***

Core Expansion Zone 1 comprises those land use parcels that are of lower ecological value than those in the Core Habitat Zone but, due to inherent value or location, have the most potential to contribute to a coherent ecologic network. These sites are a priority for investment in the restoration and creation of new habitats.

Core Expansion Zone 2 sites provide an opportunity for the restoration and creation of new habitats but investment in these areas is a lower priority than in Zone 1.

Priority Network Restoration Zones support the creation of a coherent ecological network across the Birmingham and Black Country landscape.

Other Areas of Strategic Significance identified following the publication of the interim Local Nature Recovery Map. This will comprise a list of relevant plans and catchment-based documents that identify where biodiversity net gain can be utilised to meet additional ecosystem service applications, by a location based approach or through stacking. This will be defined at a local level by each Local Authority.

No 'Other Areas of Strategic Significance' are currently mapped but these may be added to the online version of the map at any point.