

TECHNICAL NOTE

Project: Land north of Woodcroft Farm.

Date: 7 August 2024

Subject: De minimis impacts for Biodiversity Net Gain within Havant Borough Council area; outline planning application (APP/24/00342) Woodcroft Farm, Woodcroft Lane, Waterlooville.

Introduction

In an initial response to the outline planning application for the development of up to 190 units with associated vehicular access, infrastructure and landscaping (all matters reserved except access) at Woodcroft Farm, Tristan Norton (Principal Ecologist at Havant Borough Council) requested confirmation that the part of the application site falling within the Havant Borough Council area would qualify for a de minimis exception from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as set out in the Environment Act 2021.

The de minimis threshold can be applied to development that does not impact a priority habitat (as defined under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006) and impacts on less than 25 square metres of non-priority on site habitat or 5 metres of non-priority on site linear habitat.

Submitted Biodiversity Net Gain calculations

It should be noted that the submitted BNG calculations did not take into account the administrative split between the two relevant planning authorities (Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council). This means that should loss of non-priority habitat met the de minimis threshold within the Havant Borough Council boundary this loss would still be accounted for in the overall BNG calculations and fully mitigated within the site-wide BNG calculations.

For example, the submitted BNG metric shows a total loss of 100 square metres of bramble scrub within the outline application red line. Based on habitat mapping the area of bramble scrub falling within the Havant Borough Council area is below 25 square metres. This, in itself, would meet the de minimis threshold if it were lost.

Any areas of non-priority habitat meeting de minimis thresholds within Havant Borough Council area have not been subtracted from the total habitat loss figures for the outline application for the purposes of the site-wide BNG calculations. This means the loss of non-priority habitat is fully mitigated even if the impacts with Havant are de minimis.

De minimis threshold

Figure 1 below shows the approximate location of the administrative boundary between East Hampshire District Council and Havant Borough Council (blue line) and the relevant habitat types recorded within the Havant Borough Council administrative area. Based on the mapping we believe that Hedgerow 1 falls within East Hampshire District Council area and any impacts on the hedgerow would be covered under the submitted BNG calculations.

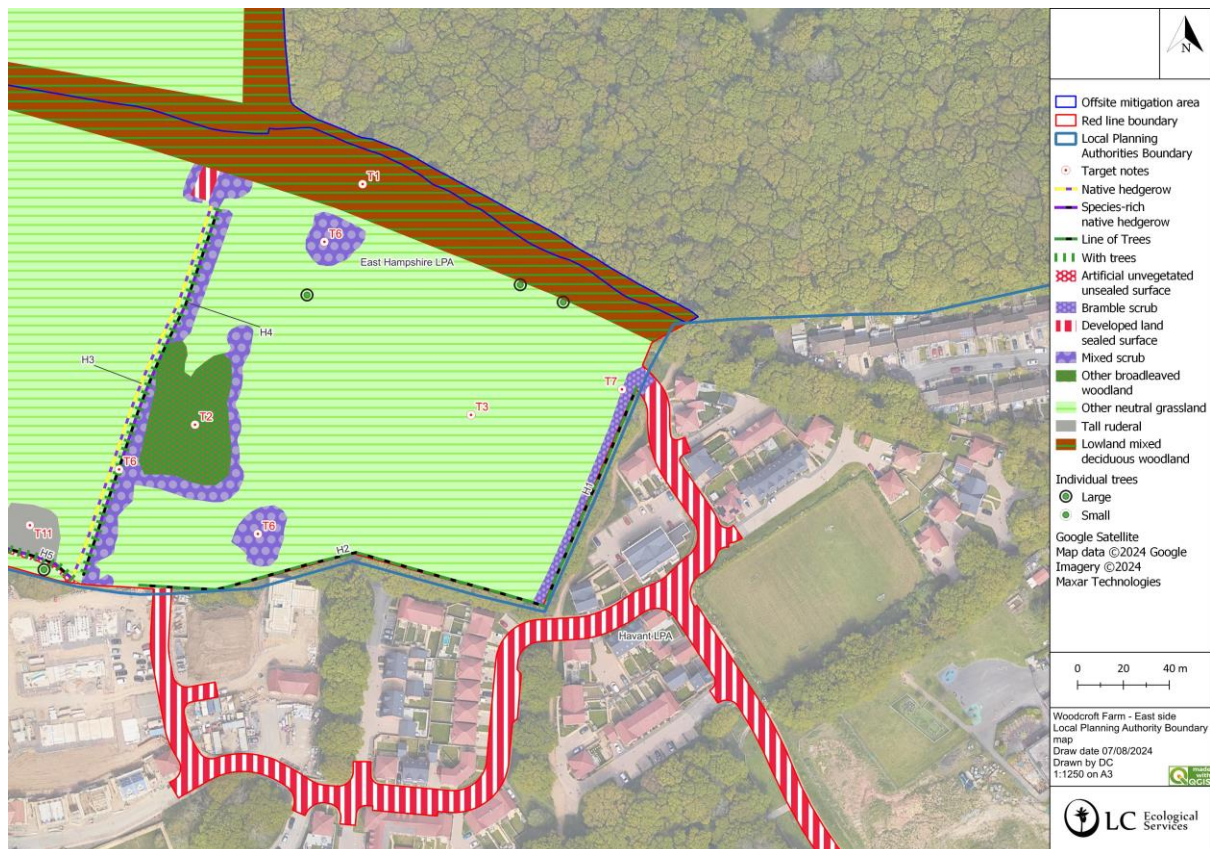


Figure 1: Habitat types and Council boundaries.

The habitats falling within Havant Borough Council area are primarily existing sealed surfaces (existing roads) and a small area of bramble scrub. The bramble scrub would require removal to enable construction of the new access road into the site.

Bramble scrub is not a priority habitat as defined under Section 41 of the NERC Act and the area that would be removed is calculated to be below the de minimis threshold of 25 square metres, although it would be close to the threshold limit. As noted above the loss of this habitat is accounted for within the site wide BNG calculations.

Conclusion

Based on the habitat mapping and information on the application of BNG de minimis thresholds it is concluded that the area of the outline application site falling within the Havant Borough Council administrative area would qualify for the de minimis BNG exception and there is no requirement to submit a completed BNG metric for this land to the determining authority. When reviewing the application it should be noted that the loss of the bramble scrub is fully mitigated as part of the site-wide BNG calculations.

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