

Impact Assessment

Name of LERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)
Contact for enquiries	www.tverc.org
Case study	Assessing the biodiversity impact of proposed development.
Summary	Developers are aware that they need to demonstrate 'net gain' in biodiversity when submitting a planning application. However, environmental consultants may not have the time or expertise to carry out these calculations. TVERC have developed a locally-specific calculator and use this to offer an offset-calculating service to developers (similar to the data search service).
Issue/project to be addressed	A developer asked TVERC to carry out a biodiversity impact assessment for a development site in Oxford.
Action taken	TVERC used data and information provided by the developer and their environmental consultant to carry out an assessment of the biodiversity impact of the proposed development. TVERC used the biodiversity calculator specifically developed for Berkshire and Oxfordshire to do this. This calculator has been peer reviewed by ecologists and local authority planners from the two counties and has been used by ecological consultants and developers for several Local Planning Authorities in the two counties.
Results/The change that has been made	<p>The calculation showed that there were 71.7 biodiversity units for the site in its present state and there would be 42.6 biodiversity units for the site under the current development proposals, resulting in a net loss of 29.1 biodiversity units.</p> <p>This information can be used by both the developer and Local Planning Authority to ensure that there is a net gain in biodiversity, by creating the 29.1 units off-site, and/or by amending the development proposals to include more biodiversity on-site.</p> <p>Developers and local planning authorities can be confident that the units have been calculated accurately by an independent organisation.</p>
Sharing best Practice	Other LERCs could offer a similar service.
Any other information	

Please use no more than two pages to tell the story if possible. Images of all sorts will help to bring it alive – use links to enable the reader find more information. You might include documents, video, etc.

TABLE 1: UNITS CALCULATED FOR EACH HABITAT TYPE, GROUP BY BROAD HABITAT TYPE.

Phase 1 habitat	Existing Score	Proposed Score	Difference
Woodland and Scrub	62.76	30	-33
Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural	38.52	27	-11
Scrub - dense/continuous	3.84	1.44	-2.4
Scrub - scattered	19.9	0	-20
Parkland/scattered trees - broadleaved	0.5	0.54	0.04
Open Water	8.4	8.4	0
Standing water - mesotrophic	3.6	3.6	0
Running water - mesotrophic	4.8	4.8	0
Hedgerows	0	0	0
Species poor hedgerow	0.12	0.33	0.22
Miscellaneous	0.5	4.2	3.7
Buildings and Hardstanding	0.09	1.43	1.34
Caravan site	0.00	0.00	0.00
Buildings	0.36	0.77	0.41
Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland	0.00	1.96	1.96

Totals	71.7	42.6	-29.1
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TABLE 2: SUMMARY CHANGE IN UNITS

Phase 1 habitat	Loss / Gain
Woodland and Scrub	-33.03
Grassland and Marsh	0.00
Tall Herb and Fern	0.00
Heathland	0.00
Mire	0.00
Swamp, Marginal and Inundation	0.00
Open Water	0.00
Rock Exposure and Waste	0.00
Hedgerows	0.22
Miscellaneous	3.70
Total biodiversity units	-29.11