CIRIA C776b London, 2019

Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development

Case studies

Tom Butterworth WSP
Julia Baker Balfour Beatty
Rachel Hoskin Footprint Ecology

Griffin Court, 15 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9PN
Tel: 020 7549 3300 Fax: 020 7549 3349
Email: enquiries@ciria.org Website: www.ciria.org

15 Biodiversity baseline, Transport for London

Details

Organisations	Transport for London, WSP, GiGL
Contact	KylieJones@tfl.gov.uk / Tom.Butterworth@wsp.com

15.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

Transport for London (TfL) is committed to protecting and enhancing its natural assets and has a key target of delivering net gain in biodiversity (ie leaving biodiversity in a better state than how it was found).

The current TfL (2014) framework aims to "*protect, manage and enhance the natural environment within our land holding*" and *"measure and report on the percentage of our land holding with improved habitat and biodiversity quality*". This is in-line with emerging policies within the draft Mayor of London's environment strategy (GLA, 2017) and the draft Mayor of London's transport strategy (GLA, 2018). These documents set out the Mayor's commitments to reshape London with a focus on delivering the 'healthy streets' approach (TfL, 2017) and making London a national park city. Both strategies seek to protect and enhance the natural environment, with the principle of delivering BNG at their core.

Working collaboratively with TfL, WSP undertook an assessment of all habitats within TfL's business estates (highway, rail and underground) across Greater London and beyond. This assessment provides TfL with an up-to-date baseline of biodiversity across its estate. The baseline used a variety of data sources, including London's local environmental record centre and Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). However, the data often contained gaps or was too old to use, so innovative methods were employed, such as capturing data using remote sensing to close these gaps. This is the first time remote sensing has been used for a project of this size and at a detailed resolution, providing TfL with a robust dataset. It is now being used on projects across the UK.

15.2 OUTCOMES

This biodiversity baseline enables TfL to strategically monitor changes to biodiversity that result from specific projects and general management practices, by using two (internal) biodiversity toolkits delivered as part of the project, both of which follow the Defra metric for calculating biodiversity units. The first toolkit calculates the biodiversity units for the baseline and enables monitoring at a network level. The second enables TfL to report on biodiversity gains and losses at a project level. Comparing the strategic baseline and these project changes enables TfL to demonstrate the effect it could have on biodiversity at a project and network level across its estate. The toolkits can be split and presented across TfL's different business areas and by Borough. This enables TfL to track their progress over successive years and communicate the results in a transparent way.

TfL are now systemising the use of both toolkits and are working closely with GiGL who will host and update the biodiversity baseline dataset. TfL and its contractors will then share ecological survey data and reinstatement plans with them. GiGL will update the baseline with new information as it becomes available, ie independently tracking progress against its BNG commitments.

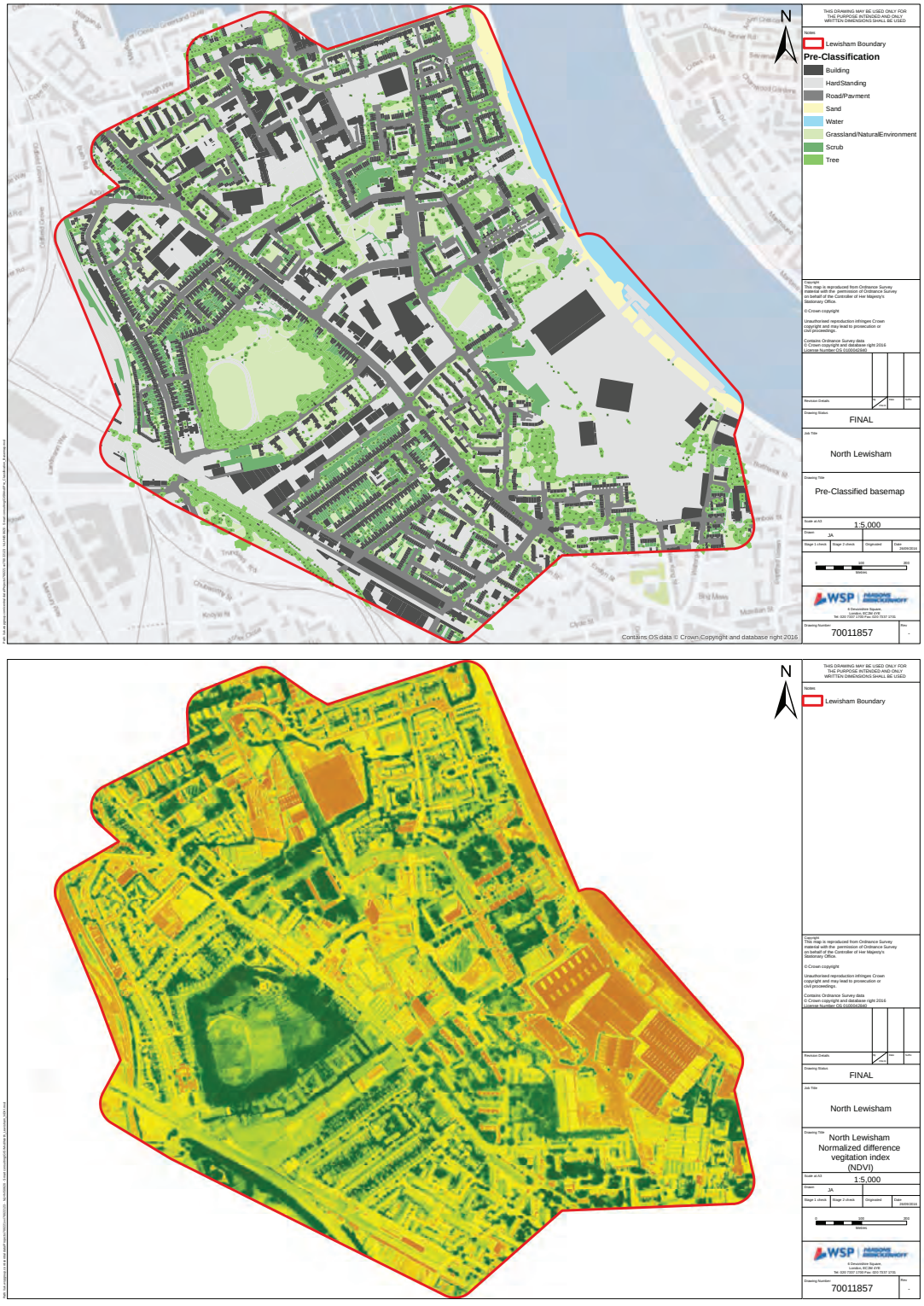

Figure 15.1 Data used to identify habitats