Futures Ecology Ltd
Carrwood Park
Selby Road
Leeds
LS15 4LG

Our Ref: FE152 / Land off High Hoyland Lane, High Hoyland / AGE / JSE

To whom it may concern

27th May, 2025

By email: stevenwarsop@yahoo.co.uk; richard@johnsonmowat.co.uk

Dear Sir / Madam,

LAND OFF HIGH HOYLAND LAND, HIGH HOYLAND – ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER

The below letter provides a summary of an updated ecological assessment conducted by Futures Ecology Ltd on 21st May, 2025 to support a planning application for the proposed construction of one self build residential property at the above site. The Site was considered to be largely unchanged since the reporting produced by Brookes Ecological Ltd (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, issued December, 2023) produced in support of earlier planning applications for this site.

Updated Habitat Assessment and Preliminary Protected Species Survey

The survey was undertaken on 21st May 2025, during weather conditions that were mild and sunny with no rain. Survey methodology followed guidance from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) 2016, comprising a walkover of the survey area mapping (using JNCC standard habitat codes) and broadly describing and classifying the principal habitat types and other features of interest. Habitat features were also assessed using Uk Habitats Classification system and corresponding habitat codes are provided in this report. The frequencies at which plant species occurred were noted using the DAFOR method. Whilst the plant species lists obtained should not be regarded as exhaustive, sufficient information was obtained to determine broad habitat types.

Habitats were also assessed for their potential to support protected or notable species including any incidental sightings of birds recorded during the walkover.

The distribution and extent of any invasive species listed on Schedule 9, Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were also noted during the survey.

The application site comprised a garden and access track with individual habitat types consisting of: improved grassland / modified grassland, scattered bramble scrub and three broadleaved trees. Two timber sheds were present at the boundary and further sheds present outside the application site boundary. Further trees were also noted outside the application boundary. The garden appeared to be regularly used and maintained for amenity purposes.

Hardstanding & Buildings (Developed land, sealed surface; u1b; buildings u1b5)

A stone outbuilding was present along the southern boundary. The structure was single-storey with a stone tiled gable roof. A further two timber garden sheds (Photograph 2) were present along the north western boundary.

A driveway providing access from High Hoyland Lane formed the southern extent of the Site boundary. A further small area of hardstanding was present in the southern extent used for car parking.

Bare ground (Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface; u1c)

A small area of bare ground was present beneath the stone cliff and was used to store, building materials / metal and for vehicle parking.

Vegetated Garden (828) / Modified Grassland (g4)

Previous ecological reporting classified the grassland as other neutral grassland (g3c). Although many of the species were still present the frequency and distribution had changed in the intervening time to more closely resemble modified grassland. The sward was short, regularly mowed and dominated by grass species (refer to Figure 1). The assemblage was dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* with frequent annual meadow grass *Poa annua* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Soft brome *Bromus hordeaceus* was recorded rarely across the sward. Herbaceous forbs were limited to a small number of species comprising locally abundant ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* frequent white clover *Trifolium repens* with occasional broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius.* Other species recorded rarely across the area included creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* and spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare.*

Photograph 1: Short mown modified grassland within the proposed development site boundary, looking south-west (21.05.25).

Photograph 2: Short mown modified grassland within the proposed development site boundary, looking east (21.05.25).

Natural Rock Exposures (Inland Rock Outcrops and Scree; s1a)

A vertical c.7m high and c.20m wide exposed rock face is present on the southern extent of the Site boundary. The cliff face grades into the modified grassland above.

Scattered Scrub (10)

Scattered bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub is present beneath broadleaved trees towards the western boundary and sporadic patches elsewhere at the boundaries. These features was of a limited extent and of low ecological value.

Broadleaved Trees (Line of trees; w 32)

Beyond the northern boundary is an area of broadleaved woodland. From what was visible from the boundary is likely to be classified as Other broadleaved Woodland (w1g) comprising several mature specimens pedunculate oak, sycamore, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, common beech *Fagus sylvatica* and field maple *Acer campestre* as well as a short section of Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*. Further mature shrub and small trees were present beyond the eastern boundary.

Three specimens were present within the Site boundary in the western extent species present included two sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and one pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* the remaining specimens were beyond the Site boundaries.

As the majority of trees and mature shrubs at the boundaries are beyond the landowner ownership, they are unaffected by the proposals. The three trees adjacent the western boundary will be retained and are unaffected by the proposals.

Bats

The timber outbuildings were well used for storage and offered negligible value as potential roosting habitat.

The stone building in the southern extent was previously identified as providing low roosting potential in September 2022. However, this building is unaffected by the proposals and which has been acknowledged through correspondence with the local authority ecologists in June 2024 (Barnsley MBC Planning Ref: 2023/0880). As such, no further assessment of this structure is necessary.

An update inspection of the trees was undertaken during the survey to determine their suitability for or evidence of bat roosting. None of the trees within the site boundary or immediately adjacent the boundaries offered potential roosting habitat. No potential roosting features were found in association with the cliff face. Cracks and crevices that were present were deemed too shallow to offer any potential roosting / hibernation habitat.

As such, it is considered that there are no statutory constraints the to the development due the presence of a bat roost.

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

No ponds are present within the application site. The previous reporting identified one potential pond within 250m however, this pond was in a neighbouring property and has since been confirmed to have been filled in approximately 40 years ago. This has been acknowledged in correspondence with the local authority ecologist in June 2024 (Barnsley MBC Planning Ref: 2023/0880). The remaining waterbodies are located over 250m away on the other side of High Hoyland Lane. 250m is generally considered to be the maximum routine commuting distance for GCN[1,2,3] and High Hoyland Lane is relatively busy and, therefore constitutes a partial barrier to potential GCN dispersal.

Terrestrial habitats within the application site were considered to provide a suboptimal resource for this species. The grassland habitat was mown short with some limited shelter habitat in the form of dry stone walls at the boundaries. However, given the lack of aquatic habitats within a commutable distance it is considered that GCN are unlikely to be present within the site boundary. As such, this species does not present a statutory constraint to the proposals.

Reptiles

Previous ecological reporting identified a record of adder within Deffer Woods north of the application site. However, the Site does not provide a suitable habitat mosaic suitable for this species or other reptiles species.

As such, it is considered that reptiles do not present a statutory constraint to the proposals.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Given that the proposals are for a self-build property this would be exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain as set out in the Governments' guidance[4].

Self-build and custom build applications:
The development must consist of no more than 9 dwellings, be on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5ha and consist exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in Section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

Instead, in this instance a gain for biodiversity will be achieved through the provision of general enhancement measures, which will include the installation of a swift box installed on the proposed building.

[1] Kovar, R., Brabec, M., Vita, R. and Bocek, R. (2009) Spring migration distances of some central European amphibian species. Amphibia-Reptilia, 30: 367-378
[2] English Nature (2004) An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt Triturus cristatus English Nature Research Report 576 http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/134002
[3] Jehle, R., 2000. The terrestrial summer habitat of radio-tracked great crested newts Triturus cristatus and marbled newts T. marmoratus. Herpetological Journal, 10, pp. 137-142
[4] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments#self-build-and-custom-build-applications

I trust you will find the above satisfactory, however, if you would like to discuss anything please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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