



## PLANNING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

<b>Application No</b>	2025/0908
<b>Proposal</b>	Re-engineering and Restoration of Yew Tree Quarry through the importation of non hazardous Excavated Soil Materials
<b>Address</b>	Stairfoot Brickworks, Wombwell Lane, Stairfoot, Barnsley, S70 3NS
<b>Date of Consultation Reply</b>	27/03/2026
<b>Consultee</b>	Katie Lawrence, Planning Ecologist

### Consultation Assessment and Justification

Thank you for consulting me regarding the above application. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report has now been provided and updated reports relating to bats, breeding birds and reptiles have been submitted. I have a number of concerns with the contents of the PEA, with these set out below. It appears my previous comments relating to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment and biodiversity metric have not been addressed, as I don't believe that updated versions of these documents have been submitted. I have kept my previous comments within this response, as these still require consideration. Additional comments are also made in relation to the BNG assessment, based on information included within the PEA.

The PEA advises that species survey data is valid until May 2026 as habitats on site remain relatively unchanged since these being carried out in 2023. Can the applicant's ecologist advise whether an updated data request has been carried out with the local record centre? If an updated data search does not indicate potential use of the site by additional species of concern then I am satisfied with this approach in most cases; however, I still believe an updated eDNA survey should be carried out as the pond will be lost to facilitate the proposals and it would be prudent to re-assess the presence/absence of great crested newts and the potential impact of the proposals upon this species. Can the applicant confirm if this survey is scheduled to be carried out this season (mid-April to late-June)? As highlighted in my previous response, if 3 years does lapse from the initial surveys being carried out, updated surveys are likely to be required.

#### *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*

- The baseline habitat map within the PEA now includes other neutral grassland (ONG) in association with proposed access track, with this previously being mapped as a lower distinctiveness habitat, modified grassland; however, section 5.4.5 of the report still describes this habitat as modified grassland. As the biodiversity metric, which supports the application hasn't been updated, ONG is not included within the baseline tab and should be updated accordingly.
- As discussed in my previous response, Open Mosaic Habitat (OMH) is known to occur to the south of the site where access is proposed. Section 5.4.4 of the report notes the presence of OMH on site; however, this is not mapped within the baseline habitat map, and again not input into the baseline habitat tab of the metric.
- Similarly, the PEA states that the pond on site is likely to represent priority habitat due to the known presence of grass snake; again, the metric has not been updated to include a priority pond within the baseline tab.

#### *Bat Survey Report*

- The bat report clarifies that buildings and trees on site which have been assessed as having potential for roosting bats are not to be affected by the proposals and precautionary working methods are recommended to be adopted during construction works to ensure no adverse impact upon potentially roosting bats. This is welcomed and can be secured by a condition if permission is granted.
- The amended bat report confirms that lighting is proposed at the site extent. I presume that lighting will only be used during re-engineering works and these will be removed once the site becomes an area of green space. Can the applicant please confirm?



- The bat report now includes recommendations for a bat box installation plan, which is welcomed and can be secured by way of a condition, if permission is granted.

#### *Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment*

- As noted within comments relating to the PEA, some baseline habitats noted on site are not concurrent with those included within the baseline tab of the metric and therefore the overall net change indicated is not considered to be accurate. An updated BNG assessment and metric should be submitted in support of the application to agree the baseline value of habitats prior to permission being granted.
- It is noted that sections to the south, where access is proposed, are mapped as tall ruderal vegetation and modified grassland. These areas were surveyed in relation to a separate planning application (ref: 2024/0373) for a glass recycling centre. I undertook a site visit in July 2024 when reviewing this application, following which it was agreed that areas of the site (including parts of the access route which falls within this applications boundary) met the JNCC definition of OMH, with annual species, ruderals, inundation species and areas of open grassland. Reference should be made to the ecology report submitted in relation to this application and amendments made, where necessary. As the baseline survey was undertaken at a suboptimal time within the year (February 2025), this is likely to be the cause of the downgrading of these habitats. The PEA has confirmed the presence of OMH on site, but this habitat is not mapped within the associated baseline habitat map and should be input into the baseline tab of the metric.
- Furthermore, in the post-development map submitted for the site, the habitats along the access route are mapped as retained. It is appreciated this can be recorded as the case for areas of hardstanding but can clarification be given on this in terms of areas of habitat (grassland, tall ruderal, etc.) as it is presumed that these areas will be highly disturbed during works as they will be used for access. It would be more appropriate for these areas to be recorded as lost and replacement habitat proposed.
- Strategic significance appears to have been recorded as low for some habitats; however the site is located within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area and therefore habitats within the baseline and post-development tab can be recorded as high as per guidance within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guidance.
- The BNG calculation indicates that the habitat trading rules have not been met as there is a loss of an area of standing water on site and there are no proposals for ponds on site. The BNG report states that this will be offset through the purchase of pond units from the adjacent habitat bank site. I consider this a missed opportunity with ample space for a pond to be created once habitat restoration works take place. This would be in line with the biodiversity metric hierarchy, and also offer opportunities for invertebrates, bats and reptiles, as set out within the recommendations of the reports submitted. Reconsideration should be given to the inclusion of a pond on site. The EclA sets out that a pond will be created on site, which is welcomed. This should be included within the post-development tab of the metric and plans should be submitted showing the extent and location of this proposed habitat.
- The proposed re-engineering works are estimated to take approximately two years to complete. The delay in the creation/enhancement of habitats should be reflected in the metric, where necessary.
- A number of habitats proposed to be created/enhanced are targeted to achieve conditions of good. Justification should be provided on how these will be achieved, such as which criterion scores for woodland condition can be realistically attained, phosphate levels of the soil used in grassland creation, etc.

#### *Ecology Chapter*

- Paragraph 4.9.1 now states that the developer has committed to the creation of a new pond, which is welcomed. The metric should be amended accordingly to reflect this change and updated restoration scheme plans should be provided to indicate the extent of this habitat. The residual impact assessment (table 4.7) does not appear to have taken the proposals for pond creation into account, still advising that enhancement works of the pond within the blue line boundary will act as mitigation. This should be amended.
- Again, it appears that the residual impact assessment (table 4.7) has not been updated in relation to grass snake with the new proposals to mitigate the loss of the current pond on site with a new pond.



# **BARNSLEY**

**Metropolitan Borough Council**

<b>NO-OBJECTION*</b>	<b>Defer for amends/further information*</b>	<b>OBJECT*</b>
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