

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023

## **UPDATE BADGER WALKOVER SURVEY RESULTS – BARNBURGH LANE, GOLDTHORPE**

### **Instruction**

BWB Consulting (BWB) was instructed by Homes by Homes (the Client) to carry out an update badger walkover survey at Barnburgh Lane, Goldthorpe (the Site).

This document has been produced to provide details relating to planning condition 33 of Planning Application 2023/0195 for a 'Residential development of 95no. dwellings (Amended Plan)').

Planning condition 33 states:

*'As per the EclA an update badger survey of the site shall be undertaken prior to the commencement of works and a report of findings shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. If an active badger sett is present and would be affected by the development, a licence issued by Natural England may be required for the works to legally proceed. If an active sett is located a mitigation strategy shall be submitted to and agreed by the LPA.'*

*Reason: To conserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Local Plan BIO1 Biodiversity and Geo Diversity and the SPD's Biodiversity and Geodiversity, and Trees and Hedgerows'*

### **Introduction & Background**

This statement presents the findings of an update badger walkover survey of the Site. The survey was undertaken to update the findings of the badger survey undertaken as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey undertaken by BWB Consulting in February 2023. The survey undertaken in February 2023 found no evidence of badgers (including setts) within the Site and all suitable accessible land within 30 m of the Site. The findings from the PEA are as follows:

*'Records provided by South Yorkshire Badger Group located no records of badgers within 1 km of the Site.'*

*No evidence of badgers such as hairs, latrines, footprints, or setts was identified on-Site at the time of the survey, with the habitats generally considered unsuitable for sett excavation due to the flat, exposed nature. The Site was considered to offer some suitable foraging habitat for badgers, due to its arable nature and it cannot be ruled out that they may cross the Site periodically.'*

*A targeted badger survey was undertaken within 30m of suitable habitat adjacent to the Site, namely, the railway embankment. During the survey, no evidence of badgers*

*(including setts) was located on the embankment. The embankment does offer a slope which is often used for sett excavation; however, the ballast and associated materials from the disused railway are likely to reduce the ease of tunnelling into the embankment, and the high levels of dogwalkers may also be a limiting factor. However, the disused railway does provide a well-connected wildlife corridor, and is likely to be used by foraging and commuting badgers and therefore the occasional presence of badgers within the Site cannot be discounted.'*

*'It cannot be ruled out that badgers may periodically cross the Site and become injured in open excavations during the construction phase. This would be a minor adverse effect at the local level.*

*In addition, badgers are mobile animals and can excavate setts over short periods of time. Subsequently, potential future setts could be disturbed or destroyed during the construction period. This would be a major adverse effect at the local level.'*

## **Methodology**

An update badger survey of the Site was undertaken by Principal Ecologist, Ben McLean BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. The survey followed best practice methodology (Harris et al., 1989) and comprised a daytime visit to search for evidence of badger activity within the Site plus the surrounding land (where access was available, including the railway embankment). The survey area was inspected for field signs, such as setts; latrines; footprints and hairs. All field signs were recorded, and a detailed assessment would be made of any setts, noting the signs of activity and current status. Each sett would be assessed in terms of the number of well-used, partially used and disused entrances found, any evidence of latrines, recent bedding, spoil heaps and paths.

## **Legislation**

Badgers are legally protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the primary aim of which is to protect badgers from persecution associated with baiting and deliberate harm.

Under this legislation it is illegal to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, or take a badger or attempts to do so;
- Cruelly ill-treat or dig for a badger;
- Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger; and,
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett or by obstructing access to the sett.

## **Conclusions**

Despite a detailed search within the Site, around all Site boundaries and within the bordering railway embankment, no evidence of badgers were recorded i.e. setts, badger hairs, latrines etc.

It should be noted that although no evidence of badgers was recorded, areas of dense scrub are located to the east of the Site and along the railway embankment, but no obvious mammal tracks were recorded leading into the scrub.

Based on the survey data collected, no badger setts are currently present within the Site or adjacent to the Site.

## **Recommendations and Survey Validity Period**

Badgers are highly mobile animals and can excavate setts over short periods of time. Given the suitable habitat within the Site and the potential for sett excavation, it is recommended that an update badger walkover is undertaken if the works have not commenced within 3 months of this update badger survey.

As a purely precautionary and standard measure, in the unlikely event that a badger sett is found during the development process, work must stop immediately, and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

## **Construction Phase Mitigation**

As a matter of good practice, any trenches dug as part of construction work should be covered over at night, or left with a ramp or sloping end, to prevent mammals from falling in and becoming trapped. Similarly, any pipes over 200mm in diameter should be capped off at night.