

Our ref: 9295 / AWB

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07 October 2020

Dear Katherine

RE: Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland (Planning Ref. 2020/0647) – Ecological Appraisal offsite Area A and B

The below provides detail of habitat and preliminary protected species surveys of two arable plots proposed for habitat enhancements in accordance with the above application and in response to comments from Trevor Mayne, Barnsley MBC Countryside and Biodiversity Officer (email dated 6th October 2020) that requested:

“...that sufficient new botanical surveys of the two proposed off-site compensation sites are required at this stage, including field parcel boundary vegetation (ie. not only ‘within-field’ vegetation as indicated by yellow-line boundaries)”

Both plots were surveyed in accordance with the standard survey methodology (Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, 2010¹). Habitats were also assessed in accordance with UK Habitat assessment criteria as detailed within The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Technical Supplement (Natural England July, 2019²). Hedgerows were surveyed using the Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS³).

Both plots were surveyed by Andrew Burrows, an experienced ecologist and Associate CIEEM member with over ten years of field survey experience and a FISC level 4 botanical surveyor. Area A was surveyed on 6th February 2020 and Area B on 28th July 2020.

Results

Area A

This comprised approximately 1.2 hectares of heavily cultivated arable land bordered by broadleaved woodland (southern and eastern boundaries) bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub (northern and north-

¹ JNCC (2010), Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit

² Natural England Joint Publication (July 2019) The Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Technical Supplement – auditing and accounting for biodiversity (Beta Edition). Natural England.

³ Clements, D.K., & Tofts, R.J.(1992). Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS): A methodology for the ecological survey, evaluation and grading of hedgerows. Countryside Planning and Management

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western boundaries) and a trimmed native hedge (H1) at the south-western boundary. The hedge supported hazel *Corylus avellana*, elm *Ulmus sp.* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. It was a trimmed trackside hedge approximately 3m high the 2.5m wide running adjacent a public footpath and assessment considered it to be of moderate value under HEGS. The arable field was recently ploughed and the narrow margins (less than 1m wide) supported coarse grasses and ruderals including false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and cleavers *Galium aparine*. The woodland boundaries supported a slightly broader margin that included bramble and nettles overgrowing a collapsed drystone wall. A further narrow margin of bramble was supported at the northern boundary.

The woodland margin provided some suitability for badger but detailed search of all boundary features recorded no evidence of the species. No ponds were recorded within 300m of the arable plot which itself is considered unsuitable for terrestrial amphibians. No signs of or suitability for other protected or notable species was recorded.

Area B

This comprised approximately 8 hectares of heavily cultivated arable land bordered by coarse grassland, Leylandii tree line and hedgerow boundaries. The arable was down to a barley crop with narrow margins and was bisected by a vehicular track of bare earth. The south-eastern end of the field supported a small temporary pool of shallow standing water that was devoid of any vegetation indicative of anything more permanent. The southern extent of the western arable boundary supported a flood protection bund of short mown improved grassland dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* and with frequent white clover *Trifolium repens*, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg.* The northern extent comprised a line of Leylandii *Cuprocyparis leylandii* trees bordering a sewerage works. The southern boundary supported a bank of coarse grasses and herbs dominated by false oat-grass and common nettle adjacent a metalled road (Broomhill Lane).

Most of the northern arable boundary was also adjacent to a strip of coarse grassland forming the margin with established scrub and dominated by false oat-grass. The remainder of the northern boundary was an unmanaged garden hedgerow (H2) of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* with a coarse grassland margin of false oat-grass. H2 was considered to be of moderately to high value under HEGS. The eastern boundary supported a further trimmed hedgerow (H3) of hawthorn approximately 2m high and 2m wide. H3 was assessed as moderate value under HEGS.

A single pond was present approximately 70m from Area B and aerial imagery indicates this to be a lagoon within the compound of a sewerage works. No further ponds were within 500m. While boundary features provided some suitability for badger a thorough search recorded no signs of their activity and no other signs of or suitability for protected species was recorded. The arable plot itself was considered to be unsuitable for terrestrial amphibians.

Conclusions

Proposals for both areas will require the seeding of native wildflower grassland and planting of native scrub and, in Area B, works will also include deepening and widening of the existing temporary pool and excavation of a ditch at the southern boundary. These works will be confined to the existing heavily cultivated arable land and as such will have no negative impact on the existing ecology.

The existing boundary hedgerows, considered to be of good condition under the UK Habitats assessment criteria, and other boundary features association with both areas will be complimented by the proposals that will augment any corridor function they may have for local wildlife.

The proposals for these areas aim to maximise the aspiration within the Lawton Review calling for a 'Bigger, Better, More and more Joined-up' approach to nature conservation sites. The proposals, for

a range of complimentary habitats to those already present locally are located appropriately close to existing features of interest and within the Nature Improvement Area. As a result, they support the delivery of Nature Recovery Networks; part of the government's landmark Environment Bill. It is also central to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan for the natural environment and for restoring our wildlife.

We trust that the above provides that clarification required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Burrows'.

Andrew Burrows
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