



PLANNING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application No	2026/0640
Proposal	Residential development of 270 new dwellings, together with access, public open space, landscaping, drainage infrastructure and associated works
Address	Land south of Cemetery Road, Jump, Barnsley, S73 0QN
Date of Consultation Reply	29/09/2026
Consultee	Claire Wilson, Planning Ecologist

Consultation Assessment and Justification

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) report, Statutory Biodiversity Metric, habitat condition assessments and a Landscape Masterplan have been submitted in support of the application. My comments are set out below.

- The pre-application submission proposed 175 dwellings on the site, whereas the current application seeks permission for 270 dwellings, representing a significant increase in development density. This increase will result in greater habitat loss, fragmentation and disturbance across the site, thereby increasing the overall ecological impacts of the development.
- The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain assessment indicates an overall loss of habitats, notwithstanding the concerns and comments set out below. Given the size and strategic location of the site within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area, it is considered that the development should seek to achieve biodiversity net gain on-site wherever possible. Achieving this objective is likely to require a reduction in the number of proposed dwellings and a revision of the current layout to allow for the retention, enhancement and creation of habitats.
- The site also lies within the River Dove Valley Corridor, which forms part of Barnsley's Strategic Green Infrastructure Network, detailed within the Local Plan. As such, the proposed landscaping scheme should make a meaningful contribution to the enhancement and connectivity of green infrastructure within the corridor. The current layout and landscape proposals do not achieve this and are therefore considered to be contrary to Policy GI1 of the Local Plan.
- The baseline habitat survey was undertaken in February 2026. However, the site has subsequently been surveyed during the appropriate season for bats and breeding birds. On this basis, the survey effort is considered acceptable.
- It is unclear why ponds located beyond 200m of the red line boundary were excluded from the assessment. Standard practice is to assess ponds within 250m of the red line boundary. A pond located approximately 229m north-east of the site should therefore be reviewed.
- The results of all bat activity surveys have not been incorporated into the EcIA. The EcIA should be updated to include all the survey data together with a revised impact assessment, once all results are available.
- The results of the breeding bird surveys are not fully presented within the EcIA and have instead been provided in a separate BBS report. Consequently, the EcIA impact assessment does not appear to have been informed by the final breeding bird surveys. Further comments on this matter are provided below.
- A Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) has not been undertaken. CIEEM Guidance on Ecological Report Writing for EcIA point B.11 states that applicants should identify other projects that could give rise to significant cumulative effects and assess whether such effects would be significant within the relevant geographical context, providing robust justification for the conclusions reached. This assessment should be undertaken.



- Following review of the submitted plans, clarification is required regarding the provision of four separate access points through the northern hedgerow. A single access point is considered acceptable where an existing gap is present opposite Preston Avenue, as this would minimise impacts on the hedgerow. However, the need for three additional access points has not been justified and does not adhere to the mitigation hierarchy. The Landscape Masterplan should be revised to minimise impacts to H1 to maximise retention of the feature.
- The proposed ecological buffers along the southern and eastern boundaries do not appear sufficient enough to maintain an effective dark corridor for commuting and foraging bats. The applicant should confirm the proposed buffer widths. These buffers should comprise woodland and scrub planting to maintain habitat connectivity, provide foraging opportunities and reduce the impacts of artificial lighting.
- The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment indicates that the majority of retained hedgerows will remain in good condition. However, a review of the proposed layout suggests that many retained hedgerows will be located directly adjacent to residential development and modified grassland and will be fragmented by roads, dwellings and areas of public open space. Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that the hedgerows will be capable of maintaining their current condition. The submitted metric should therefore be reviewed in accordance with statutory metric guidance on habitat retention, which requires retained habitats to remain in their baseline condition and where this cannot be achieved, habitats should be treated as lost and re-created.
- The EclA states that none of the site's hedgerows qualify as Important Hedgerows. This conclusion is not accepted and should be revisited through a full hedgerow assessment. For example, Linnet have been recorded as breeding within Hedgerow 2. Given that the hedgerow exceeds 30 years in age and supports a Red Listed species with a known severe breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term (BoCC, 2021), it qualifies as an Important Hedgerow under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. Red Listed species have also been recorded in additional hedgerows across the site. Furthermore, all hedgerows on site constitute Habitats of Principal Importance.
- Policy BIO1 of the Barnsley Local Plan requires the protection and enhancement of habitats and species of principal importance, the policy states that proposals will be expected to have followed the national mitigation hierarchy (this must be demonstrated within the EclA) and that biodiversity opportunities should be maximised within and around new developments. The proposal must therefore demonstrate how the hedgerows on site will be safeguarded and enhanced.
- NPPF Policy N2 requires development proposals to conserve and enhance existing natural features, including established hedgerows, wherever possible, again this must be demonstrated within the EclA and landscape masterplan.
- Given the hedgerows on site qualify as both Important Hedgerows and Habitats of Principal Importance, the development should be redesigned to secure greater retention of these features and wider buffers. Where loss cannot be avoided, mitigation and compensation measures must be consistent with national and local planning policy requirements and the mitigation hierarchy to avoid the loss of hedgerows.
- Japanese Knotweed has been recorded along the southern site boundary. An Invasive Non-Native Species Management Plan will be required to ensure that the species is appropriately controlled and not spread during construction. This can be secured by condition.
- The bat emergence survey undertaken on Building B2 on 7 May 2026 confirmed likely absence of roosting bats. The findings of this survey are accepted.
- All new dwellings should incorporate integrated bat and bird nesting features in accordance with the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPD. In addition, Barratt's Homes for Nature commitment provides an opportunity to secure bird nesting boxes or bricks and hedgehog highways throughout the development, which is welcomed.
- Badger surveys should be undertaken immediately prior to commencement of works rather than three months in advance. This requirement can be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan for Biodiversity (CEMP-B).
- Paragraph 4.46 of the EclA states that no breeding Linnet were confirmed during the 2026 surveys. This directly contradicts the August 2026 Breeding Bird Survey report, which confirms breeding Linnet on site and records Yellowhammer as a possible breeding species. Consequently, the breeding bird impact assessment cannot be relied upon in its current form and requires revision.



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- I agree with the EclA's acknowledgement that species such as Linnet and Yellowhammer may avoid nesting within hedgerows that become fragmented and enclosed by residential development. However, the EclA subsequently concludes that there will be no residual impacts. This conclusion is not supported by the survey evidence. A robust mitigation strategy should therefore be provided to address the loss of suitable nesting habitat and the displacement of farmland bird species.
- The proposed hedgehog mitigation measures are welcomed and supported.
- Paragraph 4.23 refers to Appendix 7; however, this appendix relates to modified grassland rather than hedgerows. The EclA should be updated to correct this error.
- The BBS report confirms the presence of one breeding pair of Skylark, a Species of Principal Importance. My pre-application response specifically stated that should Skylark be recorded on site, mitigation should be informed by Issue 117 (September 2022) of *In Practice* (CIEEM), which provides guidance and a metric-based approach for assessing and mitigating impacts to Skylark populations on development sites. This has not been undertaken.
- The current mitigation proposed for skylark is not considered adequate. The EclA states that alternative nesting opportunities are available within the wider landscape and that proposed wildflower grassland "may" provide foraging habitat. Neither statement constitutes effective mitigation. The existence of off-site habitat does not mitigate the direct loss of nesting habitat within the development site, nor does it address the potential displacement of breeding birds into surrounding areas where carrying capacity may already be constrained.
- Furthermore, the assertion that proposed grassland habitats may provide foraging opportunities is speculative and does not demonstrate a measurable benefit to the species. A robust assessment of impacts and a mitigation strategy should therefore be included within the EclA to address the loss of skylark foraging and nesting habitat.
- Mixed scrub, other neutral grassland and species rich native hedgerows within the post development metric are proposed to achieve moderate/good condition. However, following a review of the landscaping scheme I do not consider these conditions realistic or achievable, especially within the centre of the site when the potential for trampling/damage is high. As such, the post development habitats and their condition should be reviewed to ensure their creation is possible.

	Defer – further information required	
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*Delete as applicable

Consultation Suggested Conditions:

Consultation Informative(s):

Planning Obligations required: