



PLANNING CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application No	2026/0232
Proposal	Erection of 119 dwellings, open space and associated infrastructure.
Address	Land to the south of Bloomhouse Lane, East of Woolley Colliery Road, Darton, Barnsley
Date of Consultation Reply	21/05/2026
Consultee	Katie Lawrence, Planning Ecologist

Consultation Assessment and Justification

Thank you for consulting me regarding the above application. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) feasibility review with associated biodiversity metric have been submitted in support of the application. Both reports set out the requirement for survey work, and this will be required prior to me being able to recommend approval of the application. My initial comments in relation to biodiversity are as follows:

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- The PEA recommends further survey work including an updated habitat survey in the optimal survey period, a survey to identify the presence of invasive non-native species and species surveys to assess the use of the site by badger, foraging and commuting bats, wintering birds, breeding birds, reptiles and invertebrates. The PEA sets out a scoping survey will be carried out for breeding birds, but as per the advice provided to the developer as part of a pre-application query, breeding bird surveys should be undertaken on the basis that the site is located in proximity of arable habitat and comprises hedgerow and scrub habitat and could support a range of priority bird species typical of farmland.
- As set out above, the results of these surveys, along with impact assessments and mitigation measures will be required to support the application.

Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Review & Statutory Biodiversity Metric

- The BNG review recommends an updated habitat baseline survey to be carried out within the optimum survey season (April – September) to inform the BNG assessment. I undertook a site visit on the 20th May and noted that the western most field comprised a number of species of botanical interest such as common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, field wood rush *Luzula campestris*, sheep sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odorata*. The suggested updated habitat survey should be carried out to ensure a robust assessment of the habitats is undertaken and their value is properly accounted for.
- The BNG report states that no areas of strategic significance were identified; however, the following advice was given in response to the pre-application query: The proposals site is located within the River Dearne Valley Corridor (refer to Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure within the Local Plan) and this should be reflected within the metric when assigning strategic significance if the application is made prior to the publication of the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This advice is also given within the Biodiversity Appendix of the Local Validation Requirements where applications are made prior to the publication of the South Yorkshire LNRS (<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/w52pwl04/biodiversity-appendix-bng-final-pdf-version-accessible.pdf>).
- Figure 2 of the BNG report sets out the proposals; these don't appear to match that which is set out within the site layout plan, so this requires amendment. Figure 2 and the metric submitted indicates a SUDS basin to the south-east corner of the site. The site layout plan shows that surface water attenuation tank is proposed in place of a SUDS basin. A SUDS basin would be preferable offering more opportunities for biodiversity and consideration should be given to the provision of SUDS in place of the attenuation tank.



- The Baseline Habitat Plan (Figure 1) shows a linear area of dense scrub which dissects the site. This habitat would be more appropriately mapped as a hedgerow. When referring to historical maps, it is clear that there has been a field boundary in this location since at least the 1880's (see screenshot below indicating the field boundary). The ecology survey undertaken on behalf of the council when allocating the site also identified this feature as a hedgerow (please refer to ecology report for the allocated site which was provided as part of the pre-application query). The baseline map and metric should be amended accordingly, and effort should be made to retain this feature as part of the proposals, it being a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. Planning Policy BIO1 states that development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough by protecting and improving habitats, species, sites of ecological value and sites of geological value with particular regard tospecies and habitats of principal importance identified via Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006....Any hedgerow on site to be impacted by the proposals should be assessed under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 to further assess their value.



- The current metric indicates that there will be a loss of 24.15 habitat units (-80.94%) and 0% hedgerows units as a result of the development. As discussed above, it is considered that the hedgerow to the centre of the site has not been mapped correctly and therefore the metric should be amended accordingly and any loss of this hedgerow should be accounted for within the metric, although effort should be made for this feature to be retained, where possible. The BNG report sets out measures for the development to meet it's 10% net gain requirement, such as the purchase of off-site units. The amended BNG information should indicate the developer's intentions, with further effort made in addressing this loss on site where possible, as per the biodiversity gain hierarchy.

NO OBJECTION*

**Defer for amends/further
information***

OBJECT*