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Our ref: SE40 (YH-2003)
Your ref:

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Dear Alexandra

Darfield fishing facility and enhancement project

Thank you for consulting us on the above matter. We aim to respond to planning applications within 21 days of receiving them from the local authority. We would like to make the following comments at this stage.

Ecology
Based on the information provided in the ecology survey, Natural England would have no particular objection to the scheme. However, we would wish to see full details of the amphibian survey carried out by Ecoloserve Ltd, including survey methodology and results.

The information provided at this early stage suggests that the water vole population will be adequately protected by the mitigation measures proposed. However, we would wish to see full details in the method statement to confirm that there will be no negative impact on the water vole population.

We would encourage the Environment Agency and BMBC to consider the possibilities for wetland habitat creation, for instance alongside the proposed footpath between the car park and the angling platforms, and possibly further north. As well as replacing any such habitat lost to the scheme, this would help to meet the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 9, which states that development should not only have a minimal impact on the natural environment and biodiversity, but should also actually make enhancements for biodiversity gain wherever possible.

Access and Recreation
Natural England welcomes the proposed provision of a footpath between the car park and the angling platforms, as this will facilitate access along the river for local people. We would encourage the authority to consider ways in which this can be linked to other routes in the area, such as the Dearne Way, and also whether it may be extended along the river to the north.

Dearne Valley Green Heart Project
The proposed development site falls within the Dearne Valley Green Heart project area. This is a partnership project between Natural England, Environment Agency and RSPB which seeks to deliver both environmental, and socio-economic benefits through the creation and improvement of green infrastructure

in the Dearne Valley. The project will create habitats and sustainable transport links to encourage people to enjoy, and take pride in, their local environment.

This scheme has the potential to contribute to the project through the suggestions outlined above. In particular, the creation of wetland habitat along the river to the north could potentially provide a habitat corridor to Edderthorpe Ings, which is currently rather isolated from similar wetlands further downstream.

Yours sincerely

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