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Katherine Morgan
Cushman and Wakefield
St Paul's House
23 Park Square South
Leeds
LS1 2ND

29th July 2021

Dear Katherine,

RE: Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland –Ecological Appraisal and Net Gain Assessment for Plot 2 application

The below provides a summary of the baseline ecological assessment carried out in support of the hybrid planning application covering the above site for which permission was granted by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council on 9th November 2020 (planning ref. 2020/0647).

This report supports a full planning application for Plot 2, which includes a revised plot layout and changes to the associated off-plot Green Infrastructure (GI). The detail below, which includes a summary of revised Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations, is supplemented by detailed BNG calculations and supporting Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan.

The following reports authored by FPCR were submitted in support of the above planning application for the wider site and include detailed protected species reporting which ruled out significant impacts to breeding and wintering birds and bats. The presence of reptiles and great crested newts (GCN) within the site and surrounding ponds was ruled out including in a separate eDNA survey report (covering GCN):

- **Ecological Appraisal – May 2020**
- **Great Crested Newt & Reptile Report – June 2020**
- **Wintering Bird Report – June 2020**
- **Breeding Bird Survey Report – June 2020**
- **Bat and Barn Owl Report – September 2020**
- **eDNA Report covering P5 (addendum letter) – May 2021**

Methodology
The wider consented development site including the Plot 2 area was surveyed in accordance with the standard survey methodology (Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, 2010[1]). Habitats were also assessed in accordance with UK Habitat assessment criteria as detailed within The Biodiversity

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

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Metric 2.0 Technical Supplement (Natural England July, 2019[2]). Hedgerows were surveyed using the Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS[3]).

For the Plot 2 area this work was done across four visits on 6th February, 29th April, 6th May and August 2020 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.

Results

Habitats (Refer to Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Plan)

Scattered scrub bordering a single grassland pasture and a margin of scrub bordering the south-eastern boundary of the Plot 2 was dominated by hawthorn and bramble respectively and largely supported a single age class and with a trimmed margin lacking a well developed edge of tall herbs.

Two grassland compartments (F2 and most of F1) and a small section of a third (F3) were present within the footprint of Plot 2. The former two supported a closed sheep-grazed sward dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. F3, also dominated by perennial rye-grass, was pony grazed supporting an open sward with significant cover of bare soil recorded in the spring survey visit. The August survey recorded approximately 20-30% cover of wildflowers including ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*. A wet ditch/shallow stream (D3) at the boundary of F2 supported a 1.5m wide channel with a slow flow and shallow banks vegetated by short-grazed grasses and some greater willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*. The arable habitat was cultivated for cereal and short rotation grassland crops with narrow margins supporting coarse grasses and ruderals.

Native hedgerow H2 bordered F1 and was a defunct unmanaged hedge fenced from grazing with a margin of grasses and herbs on one side and a short mown arable margin on the other. It didn't support more than 4 canopy species.

The condition of the above habitats was described in the separate Biodiversity Impact Assessment report (FPCR, 2020[4]) – the mixed scrub was considered to be of poor condition; F1 and F2 were recorded as 'modified grassland' in poor condition; F3 was recorded as 'other neutral grassland' in moderate condition; and D3 was of poor condition (supporting <50cm of water and adjacent intensive grazed pasture). H2 was recorded as being of good condition.

Protected Species

No permanent standing water suitable for GCN was recorded within the site (confirmed by survey during the amphibian breeding season). Aquatic survey of offsite ponds confirmed the absence of GCN. Habitats within the wider site were largely unsuitable for reptiles and targeted survey, including of more suitable habitat at the site periphery did not record reptiles.

Breeding and wintering bird surveys undertaken across the wider site recorded breeding farmland specialists and Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red List species such as yellowhammer *Emberiza Citrinella* largely associated with boundary features. Central field compartments supported suitability for low numbers of ground nesting species such as skylark *Alauda arvensis.* The fields and boundaries provided overwintering and foraging opportunities for a variety common and widespread generalist species including flocks of thrushes, black-headed gull and corvids. Low numbers of farmland specialists were recorded in the wider site, including eight skylark and three lapwing

[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

[4] FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. (2020) *Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland – Biodiversity Impact Assessment*. For Newlands Developments.

Vanellus vanellus. Evidence of a barn owl roost was recorded away from the Plot 2 area in the north of the wider site.

A suite of monthly bat activity surveys covering the whole of the wider site recorded low levels of activity dominated by common pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and reflected the heavily managed nature of the field compartments. The main foraging routes through the site were away from the Plot 2 site area whose hedgerows provided poor connectivity.

Conclusions

New proposals for Plot 2 are not materially different in terms of their potential ecology impacts. The consented outline proposals were for a single shed on a net developable area of 10.47 ha. Whereas new proposals are for two smaller sheds on a net developable area reduced to 9.75 ha. New proposals include a further building (pumping station) and curtilage of amenity grassland with a footprint of 0.09 ha. outside the above net developable area but within the off-plot GI at the south-eastern plot boundary. Due to the reduced size of Plot 2 the proposed plantation woodland now provides a broader buffer to the adjacent offsite woodland.

The presence of reptiles and GCN within the wider consented development (including the Plot 2 area) was ruled out and these species do not represent a constraint.

The consented scheme provides a significant extent of new native habitats including plantation woodland, scrub, neutral grassland and open water; facilitating connectivity for wildlife around the site and buffering offsite woodland so that impacts to bird and bat populations were not considered to be significant.

Under the new Plot 2 proposals the extent of GI has slightly increased, providing an increase in compensation for the same habitat losses and impacts to species. In line with assessment under the consented scheme, losses are therefore not considered to represent a constraint to the revised detailed Plot 2 development proposed.

The table below summarises the baseline values for the Plot 2 application

Table 1: Baseline biodiversity value

Habitat	**Area (ha)**	**Condition**	**Biodiversity Units**
Arable	9.23	N/A	21.14
Grassland: Modified grassland (F1 & F2)	4.09	Poor	9.41
Grassland: Other neutral grassland (F3)	0.08	Moderate	0.73
Heathland and shrub: Mixed scrub	0.04	Poor	0.18
Lakes: Ditches	0.06	Poor	0.25
Hedgerows (linear features)	**Lengths (km)**		
H2 Hedges: native hedgerow – associated with bank or ditch	0.18	Good	2.48
Totals	**13.50**		**31.74 (habitats)**
	0.18		**2.48 (linear)**

The table below provides the net gain commitment detailed under the consented application within the Plot 2 application boundary. Plot 2 was granted outline consent with a commitment of 10% amenity habitats (90% built infrastructure). Based on the revised plot area (9.75 ha.) this equates to 0.975 ha of GI.

Table 2: Net gain consented under the existing consented scheme (on and off plot)

Habitats	Area (ha)		Condition	Biodiversity Units
	Off-plot	On-plot		
Plantation woodland	1.68	-	Good	4.95
Scrub	0.52	-	Moderate	4.23
Scrub	0.36	-	Good	3.87
Neutral grassland	0.42	-	Moderate	2.69
Amenity grassland	-	1.0	Poor	2.37
Built/hardstanding	-	10.0	N/A	0
Hedgerows (linear features)	**Lengths (km)**			
Intact hedge: native species-rich	0.38	-	Moderate	1.95
Plot totals	**3.50**	**10.45**		**18.11 (habitats)**
	0.38	**-**		**1.95 (linear)**
Total site area	**13.50**			

The below table shows biodiversity units achievable under the new Plot 2 application including both off-plot and on plot proposals.

Table 3: Proposed scheme net gain figures (on and off-plot)

Habitats	Area (ha)		Condition	Biodiversity Units
	Off-plot	On-plot		
Plantation woodland	2.05	0.07	Good	6.25
Scrub	0.3	-	Good	3.23
Scrub	0.62	0.68	Moderate	10.65
Neutral grassland	0.64	-	Moderate	4.10
Amenity grassland	0.13	0.1	Poor	0.51
Introduced shrub	-	0.2	Poor	0.44
Built/hardstanding	0.03	8.68	N/A	0
Hedgerows (linear features)	**Lengths (km)**			
Intact hedge: native species-rich	0.38	0.91	Moderate	5.72
Plot totals	**3.77**	**9.73**		**25.18 (habitats)**
	0.38	**0.91**		**5.72 (linear)**

Habitats	Area (ha)		Condition	Biodiversity Units
	Off-plot	On-plot		
Total site area	**13.50**			

While both consented and new proposals within the Plot 2 application area achieve an overall loss, net gain proposals across the wider site, including consented off-site mitigation achieve a significant gain. New net gain proposals for the Plot 2 area will achieve more Biodiversity Units than the consented scheme covering the same area and increase the overall habitat compensation for the wider site.

We trust that the above provides sufficient detail to support the new application but should further be required please let us know.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Burrows
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Enc. Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Plan

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Key

- Plot 2 Application Boundary
- Consented Scheme Boundary
- Scrub - scattered
- Dry stone wall
- Stream
- Hedgerow
- Dry ditch
- Scrub - scattered line
- Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
- Built Environment: Buildings/hardstanding
- A Cultivated/disturbed land - arable
- SI Poor semi-improved grassland

Newlands Developments

Land West of Sheffield Road, Hoyland - Plot 2

PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN

1:2250 | SPW/AWB | 29/7/2021

Figure 1 | 9295

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