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Head of Planning,  
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24 July 2020

Dear Bruce,

### Shelton Road, Corby Laydown Area – Ecology Summary as of July 2020

Please find below a summary of our works undertaken to date along with a programme of remaining works. In addition, we have also provided a summary of the conclusions drawn to date from those works that have been completed.

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – completed July 2020 – summary below.
- NVC Botanical Survey – completed July 2020 – summary below.
- Otter Survey – Site visit complete July 2020, report to follow. This will determine the need for a European Protected Species Licence should there be a breeding holt present within 150 metres of site.
- Hedgerow Survey – Site visit complete July 2020, report to follow. This will determine if the hedgerow is Ecologically or Historically Important and inform the need for habitat compensation and/or reinstatement.
- Reptile Survey – Ongoing – set for completion August 2020. This will give a population estimate for reptiles on site and inform any future need for translocation or precautionary working methods.
- Breeding Bird survey – final survey completed on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020, report to follow in August 2020. This will give an indication of which species are breeding on site and how many breeding pairs are present. This information will be used to inform any need for compensatory habitat.

#### Preliminary Ecological Appraisal:

- **Potential Local Wildlife Site (pLWS)/HPI Woodland (Off Site):** Retained trees must be suitably protected during the construction phase. Minimum distances between the construction area and retained vegetation must be defined by a suitably qualified person and in compliance with the British Standard BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Protective fencing should be set up delineating a 10 metre buffer zone and also follow specification set out in BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction and be installed prior to commencement.
- During both the construction and operational phases, methods of working should comply with The Environment Agency Pollution Prevention Guidelines to avoid potential impacts from sediment/pollution discharge upon terrestrial and aquatic habitats within the pLWS.



- **Contribution to the Wider Green Infrastructure Resource:** Local Planning Policy 19 states that development that would compromise the integrity of the overall green infrastructure network in the locality is not permitted. Therefore, in the first instance, as much of this habitat type on site should be retained as possible. Where possible, habitats should be restored to their original status on site following the completion of works. Where the loss of habitat contributing to the wider green infrastructure resource cannot be avoided, a compensation strategy, to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, must be devised.
- **HPI – Hedgerow:** As a portion of the hedgerow must be cleared to make way for the proposed haul road, a hedgerow assessment must be undertaken to determine if the hedgerow is ecologically or historically important under the Hedgerows Regulations (1997).
- Following the completion of works, the gap in the hedgerow must be re-instated. Where hedgerow is to be retained this must be protected. Protective fencing should be set up 1 metre from the retained hedgerow where this meets the proposed haul road. Fencing should follow specification set out in BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction and be installed prior to commencement.
- **Potential HPI- Lowland Meadows, and Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land:** Planning Policy as set out in Section 5.0 of this report states that HPI/LBAP habitats should be retained in situ and that any unavoidable loss must be compensated for. Therefore, as much of these potential HPI habitat types on site should be retained as possible.
- If loss of potential HPI/LBAP habitats cannot be avoided, a National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey will be required to determine whether the habitats qualify, the condition of the habitats if they do and their relative ecological value in order to inform a compensation strategy, to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
- **Bats (Commuting and Foraging):** To ensure policy compliance, potential impacts to commuting and foraging bats must be determined and, if required mitigated and/or compensated. In order to do this, an assessment must be made of the likely value of the site for commuting and foraging bats according to current Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Guidelines (CIEEM, 2018).
- Provided works pose temporary habitat damage only over a short duration, and existing habitats are reinstated like for like on completion of works a desk based assessment could be used to predict which species may use the site, the extent of activity and thus ecological value and significance of any adverse effects. The assessment would be made utilising data on species known to reside within the wider area, species habitat preferences from the latest bat survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) and the likely roosting opportunities present on site and in the vicinity. If permanent habitat loss is proposed, bat activity surveys should be undertaken in accordance with Collins (2016).
- **Otter:** To ensure legal compliance, both banks of the off-site watercourse that fall within 150 metres of site should be subject to an Otter survey.
- **Bearded Tit, Cetti's Warbler and Marsh Warbler:** To establish use of the site by Schedule 1 birds and determine likely impacts, avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures, a breeding bird survey should be carried out. Three visits would provide sufficient data with which to determine the assemblage of birds using the site. The visits should be at least 4 weeks apart during the established breeding bird season (March to June inclusive).
- **General Nesting Birds:** To ensure legal compliance, clearance of habitat suitable for nesting birds should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (October – February). If this is not possible, a Precautionary Working Method Statement must be produced detailing how works should proceed ensuring legal compliance.

- **Reptiles:** To ensure legal and policy compliance, a 7-day (non-consecutive) reptile survey of all suitable habitat should be undertaken in accordance with Hill et al. (2005) and Froglife (1999) to determine presence/absence of reptiles extending to 15 days survey to determine population size where reptiles are found. Refugia should be set out and left for a period of 2 weeks to bed down prior to the survey commencing. The survey should be undertaken between April and September during suitable weather conditions as defined by Froglife (1999).
- **Great Crested Newts:** To ensure legal compliance and avoid the need for further survey and a European Protected Species Licence, the area of site that falls between 100 and 250 metres of the closest pond should be reduced by 0.03 hectares. This would change the assessment under the Natural England rapid risk assessment calculator to GREEN offence unlikely. The site may be increased in size to the south to compensate for this.
- If the above approach is adhered to, measures must also be taken to avoid the killing/injury of GCN. Prior to the start of works a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) must be produced detailing how works should proceed to ensure legal compliance
- **SPI Invertebrates:** To ensure policy compliance, potential impacts to SPI Invertebrates must be determined and, if required mitigated and/or compensated. In order to do this, an assessment must be made of the likely value of the site for SPI Invertebrates according to current Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Guidelines (CIEEM, 2018).
- Provided works pose temporary habitat damage only over a short duration, and existing habitats are reinstated like for like on completion of works a desk based assessment could be used to predict which SPI species may use the site and thus ecological value and significance of any adverse effects. The assessment would be made utilising species habitat preferences. If permanent habitat loss is proposed, an invertebrate survey should be undertaken in accordance with current guidance.
- **SPI Common Toad:** All areas of suitable terrestrial habitat must be cleared following a PWMS under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.

#### **NVC Botanical Survey:**

- No Nationally Rare or Scarce species or Species of Principal Importance were recorded during the survey. Additionally, no plant species listed on the county Rare Plants Register or Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2015-2020) were found, and no Devil's-bit Scabious was noted.
- Three species recorded are positive indicators for the HPI Lowland Meadows (JNCC), though only 1 of these (Oxeye Daisy) was widespread and it did not match the habitat very well. The more disturbed areas also had some characteristics of the HPI Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Disturbed Land, although the land was not obviously a brownfield site, and the vegetation was not strongly matched to, nor contained any specialist or notable species for, this habitat type.
- Whilst the plant communities present on site were tricky to place within the NVC, and did not meet the definition for any HPI, they did contain a significant diversity of higher plants, and a good mix of mesotrophic grasses. Species recorded included those indicative of unimproved, semi-natural conditions, such as the Lowland Meadow indicator species, but also such species as Black Medick, Common Reed and Wood Small-reed. The habitat was, therefore, considered to be of Local value.
- Loss of habitat should preferably be temporary and vegetation communities present prior to works should be reinstated as close as possible to their original form. This may well prove possible using the residual seedbank and spread from adjacent unaffected areas. More pro-active restoration techniques (such as the introduction of local-provenance seed) used in addition could result in enhanced botanical interest overall. Restored areas will require long term management and monitoring in order to maintain and enhance the restored flora.

- It will be important for remaining and restored open areas to receive some management (cutting, livestock grazing or significant grazing from wild herbivores) to prevent development of dense scrub, and for the scattered areas of finer-grassland (e.g. on the road verge) to persist. There should be no addition of fertilisers or broad-spectrum herbicides, and planting with ornamental or non-native plants should be avoided.
- If the habitat is not reinstated, its loss should be compensated for by enhancing the biodiversity interest, ideally to achieve a similar floristic composition to that being lost, on existing poorer quality habitat present within the current land ownership boundary. The requirement will be to create a larger area of equal value or the same area of greater value so that an increase in biodiversity is achieved overall.

Yours sincerely



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**Ecologist**

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