

Lisa Jackson

Jackson Planning Ltd
Fox Barn
Lower Chute
Andover
Hants, SP11 9DU

13 April 2021
Our ref: UE0364
Your ref:

Dear Lisa,

Appeal Reference: APP/D3830/W/21/3266563

Site: Land North of Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex RH10 4PB

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the forthcoming planning appeal at Land North of Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex.

I understand that you require me to review and briefly comment on the following:

- Responses from Mid Sussex District Council's ecology consultee
- Representations on the planning application/appeal
- Any recent changes in policy or legislation pertaining to biodiversity which may be of relevance to the documents we prepared for the site

With regard to the latter bullet, I can confirm that the following reports were produced by Urban Edge Environmental Consulting in 2020:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and eDNA Survey for Great Crested Newts, July 2020 (report no. UE0364_TurnersHillCrematorium_PEA_2_200723)
- Reptile Survey, October 2020 (report no. UE0364_TurnersHill_Reptiles_0_201016)

Responses from MSDC's ecology consultee

MSDC obtains independent ecological advice on planning applications from Mr Mike Bird of Calyx Environmental Ltd. His original advice provided on 8 October 2020 contained no objections to the application based on biodiversity policy, subject to conditions regarding protection of ancient woodland and submission/approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. These conditions are in keeping with the recommendations of our Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Supplementary advice was supplied by Mr Bird by email on 6 November 2020 following submission of our Reptile Survey report. This confirmed that the reptile survey was acceptable and its recommendations were required to “inform the mitigation compensation measures” asked for by Mr Bird in his original advice.

It appears therefore that the Council’s independent ecology adviser is satisfied with the documents we have produced and the recommendations contained therein.

Representations on the planning application/appeal

To our knowledge two representations on the planning application/appeal raised issues regarding the nature conservation or biodiversity value of the site.

Mrs Gibson’s Letter states “*There are protected wild flowers in the field including wild orchids*”. Our Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site recorded no rare or protected species of flora within the survey area and, based on the habitat types present (improved grassland, tall ruderal and scrub) and past and current management regimes, it was considered unlikely that any rare or protected species of flora are present. Botanical species were not considered to present a constraint to the development proposals and no further surveys for this group were considered necessary.

Consultation responses to the planning application included the observation that “*Birds of Prey and other wildlife in Butchers Wood will disappear*”. It is difficult to address such an observation without further substantiation of which species might be affected, but we consider it more probable that the landscaping proposals for the development will increase the habitat resource available for small birds and mammals which form the prey species of many raptors, and would therefore be likely to have a beneficial effect on birds of prey when compared to the existing situation. Butchers Wood itself is proposed to be protected by a 15m buffer zone to avoid impacts to the ancient woodland resource. In conclusion, neither Butchers Wood nor birds of prey are likely to be negatively affected by the proposals.

Recent changes in policy or legislation pertaining to biodiversity

We are not aware of any recent changes in policy or legislation which would affect or alter the findings or recommendations of the documents we prepared for the site.

You will be aware that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal included a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment. BNG Assessment is a nascent technique for establishing the change in biodiversity value resulting from development proposals. The Government has published proposals within the Environment Bill to mandate all new developments to achieve a BNG of at least 10%. However, the Bill has not yet been enacted and net gain requirements are hence not mandatory at the present time. Furthermore, if or when the Bill is enacted, it is expected to include transitional arrangements for implementation of mandatory net gain of approx. 2yrs.

Yours sincerely,



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Director

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