

Suzanne Taylor

From: Charlotte Watkins
Sent: 05 December 2023 15:11
To: Suzanne Taylor
Subject: RE: Planning notification for application reference: 23/00207/DISC

Suzanne

The actual metric has now been submitted. Whilst I appreciate this is not yet at a detailed design stage there are issues with the metric which should be addressed with comment from the applicant as a minimum.

- The loss of hedgerows of high distinctiveness have not been replaced with hedgerows of the same distinctiveness (or higher) which they must under the trading rules. The trading rules for this linear habitat are not met therefore. Sometimes this may be permitted if there are exceptional circumstances but it has not been justified here.
- There are several ditches on site some of which are said to be wet. Where ditches are on site the watercourse section of the metric must be used and a net gain achieved in this linear habitat also. Here they have stated there are no ditches on site by leaving the watercourse part blank and there is no justification of exceptional reasons why this has been done within the biodiversity strategy. They have not demonstrated that a net gain is achievable here therefore nor shown the baseline value of these wet features - which should be included in this biodiversity strategy.

Other points to note:

The potential need to go off site for compensation should updated metrics show that a net gain cannot be achieved is stated. This may be acceptable.

4.3.4 Now mentions there will be off site provision for farmland birds – however it does not commit to the form of this – will this be contributed to per phase? or is the proposal to provide their own off site provision. A clearer commitment to the form of this provision would be helpful when this is referred to at reserved matters.

Hedgerows in NW Bicester must have (under the masterplan biodiversity strategy) 10m buffers each side, which should be 'largely diverse grassland'. The proposals here appear to be for hedgerows to be buffered each side with mixed scrub. This may have some ecological benefits but may also make it difficult to manage hedgerows and the impact of shading on hedgerow condition should be considered at the detailed stage.

Kind regards
Charlotte

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