

Comment for planning application 20/02469/SCOP

Application Number	20/02469/SCOP
Location	Land On The North East Side Of Gavray Drive Bicester
Proposal	Scoping Opinion - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the allocated Gavray Drive site in Bicester
Case Officer	Bernadette Owens
Organisation Name	Rachel Crookes
Address	44 Redwing Close, Bicester, OX26 6SR
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>Gavray Meadows is a much appreciated nature reserve visited by many local residents daily, especially in light Covid-19 where many were discovering and enjoying sites such as this for the first time. It is the only Local Wildlife Site in central Bicester, and provides habitat for many bird, invertebrate, reptile and mammal species. The flora is also notable compared to other green spaces in the area. Where houses are to be built on the site's habitats, the reserve will inevitably become less biodiverse due to direct and indirect impacts, and the site's ecological communities, value and importance will be degraded. For this reason, I must object to the scheme. The reduction of the housing density from the previous application is noted and appreciated, however the location of housing in the CTA is still concerning. Having seen for myself the large volume of surface water and river levels from the most recent flooding events, I would advise that flooding calculations and mitigation would be carefully considered for the site, with a strong emphasis on green infrastructure and multifunctional SuDS features. I agree with comments from Dominic Woodfield of BioScan regarding the site's ecology. The impacts of badgers and otters are currently scoped out of the EIA scoping report - these should be assessed as part of the scheme due to their relatively close records (accessed via the NBN) - otters can have large home ranges, and badgers prints have been anecdotally sighted at the reserve previously. Alongside a full ecological impact assessment, biodiversity net gain calculations should be undertaken to show at least a 10% gain. The achievement of 15-20% should be considered due to the site's being in a CTA, and to show how the scheme is going above and beyond to mitigate its impact on the Local Wildlife site. An assessment of the impacts on the site's natural capital assets would also be welcomed. As well as the proposed Wildlife Management Plan, a funding mechanism for its implementation and monitoring should be established in the long term (min 25 years), to ensure any remaining biodiversity will have the best chance of surviving at the site.</p>
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Attachments	