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7884M: INNOVATION QUARTER, BICESTER MOTION,  
BICESTER, OXFORDSHIRE

## **ECOLOGY BRIEFING NOTE: CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED S73 SCHEME AMENDMENTS**

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### Introduction

1. Ecology Solutions (Manchester) Limited have been asked to consider a revised scheme layout for the consented Innovation Quarter (IQ) Site Proposals (19/02708/OUT).
2. The IQ Site has been subject to extensive ecological assessment work by Ecology Solutions over multiple years, with a comprehensive ecological avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement strategy included within the approved Ecological Assessment (2019).
3. This Ecology Briefing Note serves to consider the revised scheme and summarise and assess the pertinent alterations (insofar as these relate to biodiversity matters).
4. In summary, relative to the consented scheme, the revised Proposals offer opportunities for a marginally increased extent of semi-natural habitat and marginal reductions in built form and hardstanding, whilst remaining compliant with the ecological principles identified within the submitted Ecological Assessment (2019). As such, the S73 Proposals would secure identical (if not marginally improved) biodiversity opportunities post-development. They are therefore deemed to remain appropriate in nature, and compliant with planning policy and legislation of relevance to nature conservation.

### Planning Context and Comparative Assessment of S73 Proposals

5. As detailed in the Introduction above, the Application Site is in receipt of Outline Planning Permission (planning ref: 19/02708/OUT) to deliver mixed employment use development.
6. The S73 Proposals seek to retain the proposed use types and broad scale of development, with changes limited to the precise footprint of built form. For clarity, the revised extent of built form (inclusive of hardstanding), allows for a consolidated and focused scheme layout. It retains the full quantum of open space

identified as part of the previously submitted Ecological Assessment (November 2019) and indeed permits minor betterment (+0.01ha) in this regard.

7. Importantly, the S73 Proposals seek to adhere to the ecological principles secured within the Ecological Assessment (inclusive of the *Ecological Mitigation & Enhancement Plan* submitted as part of the ecological information). Crucially, this includes the continued retention of a 2.85ha dedicated ecology area, amongst other semi-natural habitat provision, and a commitment for long-term, biodiversity led management.
8. In order to allow for a clear, quantifiable comparison between the extant consent and the S73 Proposals, a post-development comparison table is provided below.

Habitat Type/Grouping	Extent Proposed as part of the Consented Scheme (19/02708/OUT)	Extent Proposed as part of S73 Proposals	Notes
Combined built form and hardstanding	3.01ha	2.66ha	A reduction in built form reflects a reduction in hardstanding, and an increase in unmetalled surfacing (e.g. ecology car parks).
Semi-natural habitats (Grassland, Scrub, Woodland)	6.18ha	6.19ha	The net quantum of semi-natural habitat provision is to remain effectively unchanged (minor increase in S73 Proposals), inclusive of SuDS.
Ephemeral/perennial	0.82ha	1.16ha	Increase in the S73 application reflects an increased extent of unmetalled surfacing (e.g. ecology car parks) relative to hardstanding.
<b>Total Site Area</b>	<b>10.01ha</b>	<b>10.01ha</b>	

**Table 1.** Quantitative comparison in post-development habitat provision between consented (19/02708/OUT) scheme and S73 Proposals.

9. Complementary to Table 1, an updated *Ecological Mitigation & Enhancement Plan* (Plan ECO3a) is included at Appendix 1. This revised plan retains the full suite of mitigation and enhancement identified previously, and simply serves to identify the revised scheme layout.
10. On the basis the Proposals retain a comparable quantum of post-development habitats, whilst adhering to the ecological principles previously approved for the Application Site (19/02708/OUT), the revised scheme layout proposed through the S73 submission are not assessed to give rise to any additional ecological impacts, nor require additional assessment in this regard.
11. Indeed, the Proposals are assessed to permit a marginally improved biodiversity outcome, with reductions in built form and minor increases in semi-natural habitat provision. Given the minor scale of changes, these positive impacts are considered non-significant.

12. Given the above, the ecological implications of the S73 Proposals are assessed as non-significant. The ecological safeguards identified within the previously submitted Ecological Assessment (November 2019), in addition to the ecological conditions attached to the planning permission (see Conditions 22 to 25) remain appropriate and sufficient to safeguard and enhance the ecological interest of the Site.

#### Summary and Conclusion

13. In summary, the S73 Proposals seek to secure a comparable scale of development, albeit with a minor reduction in built form (inclusive of hardstanding) relative to semi-natural habitat provision.
14. The ecological implications of the S73 Proposals are assessed as positive but non-significant, noting the minor increases in habitat provision.
15. On the basis of the ecological safeguards previously secured through the Ecological Assessment (November 2019) and ecological planning conditions associated with the consented scheme (all of which remain relevant and should remain), it is considered the S73 Proposals remain equally appropriate in ecology terms. The S73 Proposals can therefore be safely granted, in accordance with relevant planning policy and legislation.

## **APPENDIX 1**

Plan Eco3a: Ecological Mitigation & Management  
Plan (S73)

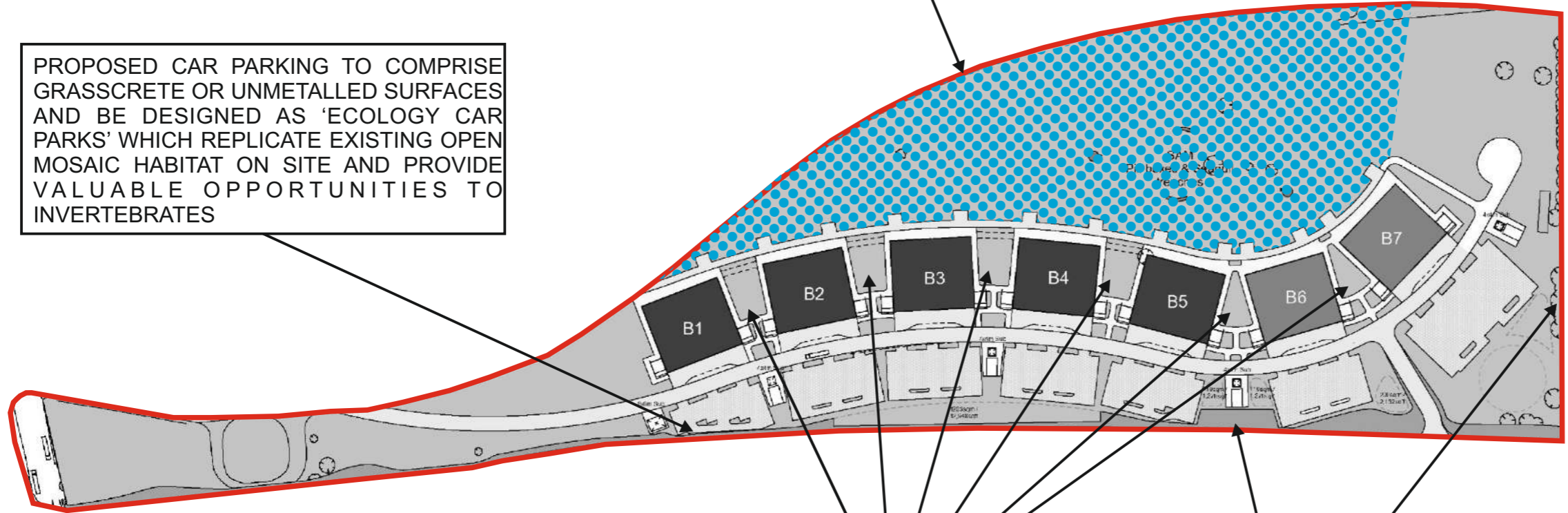
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PROPOSALS TO SEEK A NET GAIN IN THE EXTENT OF EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITATS INCLUDING GRASSLAND AND OPEN HABITAT MOSAIC. THESE HABITATS ARE THE PRIMARY INTEREST FEATURE FOR WHICH BICESTER AIRFIELD LWS IS DESIGNATED.

30 BAT ROOSTING FEATURES AND 30 BIRD NESTING FEATURES TO BE PROVIDED UPON NEW BUILDINGS OR RETAINED TREES WITHIN THE FAST SITE

A 2.85HA AREA OF LAND TO BE RESTORED AS OPEN GRASSLAND AND OPEN MOSAIC HABITAT AND BOUGHT UNDER APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT AS PART OF THE PROPOSALS. TREE AND SCRUB HABITAT WILL BE RETAINED AS A MINORITY COMPONENT.

PROPOSED CAR PARKING TO COMPRISE GRASSCRETE OR UNMETALLED SURFACES AND BE DESIGNED AS 'ECOLOGY CAR PARKS' WHICH REPLICATE EXISTING OPEN MOSAIC HABITAT ON SITE AND PROVIDE VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO INVERTEBRATES



OPPORTUNITIES FOR 'LIVING ROOF' HABITAT TO BE SOUGHT ON FLAT ROOFED STRUCTURES WITHIN FAST



LANDSCAPING BLOCKS WITHIN MAIN DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT TO BE DESIGNED TO ENSURE A RANGE OF OPEN AND EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITATS, CONTRIBUTING TO THE SITE WIDE OPEN HABITAT MOSAIC. THESE AREAS TO COMPRISE A MIXTURE OF SPECIES RICH CALCAREOUS GRASSLAND, BARE GROUND AND EARLY EPHEMERAL HABITAT AND BOTANICALLY DIVERSE SUDS

BOUNDARY VEGETATION TO BE STRENGTHENED AND WITH NEW NATIVE PLUG PLANTING TO PROVIDE ENHANCED FORAGING, COMMUTING AND NESTING HABITAT FOR FAUNAL SPECIES

ALL RETAINED AND NEWLY CREATED HABITATS TO BE BOUGHT UNDER ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE MANAGEMENT POST-DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE LONG TERM ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS.

A SENSITIVE LIGHTING STRATEGY TO BE SECURED FOR THE FAST PROPOSALS, UTILISING WARM WHITE LED LIGHTING WITH NO UV CONTENT. LIGHTING DESIGN WILL AVOID LIGHT SPILL ONTO LINEAR HABITATS

**KEY:**

-  FAST SITE BOUNDARY
-  ECOLOGY ENHANCEMENT AREA BOUNDARY (IQ)



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PLAN ECO3a: ECOLOGICAL  
MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENT  
PLAN (S73)

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