Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Land off Skimmingdish Lane
Ecological Appraisal Addendum

Report reference: BES-R-180-02.3
September 2015

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Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned by Albion Land to produce an addendum to the Ecological Appraisal Report BES-R-180-1.1 which was provided in support of an outline application for the development of land to the north East of Skimmingdish Lane Bicester in July 2015.

2. The addendum reassesses the proposed development which has been updated to respond to the recently adapted Cherwell Local Plan and where appropriate comments from consultees in the original submission. This addendum reassesses the impacts of the development as defined by the updated parameters plan and development fixes, however an example of the type of layout that can be achieved according to these parameters is illustrated in figure 1 below.

3. It is evident that changes to the parameters plans do not affect the conclusions reached in the submitted Ecological Appraisal Report - BES-R-180-1.1. The proposed development areas do not affect any habitats not already appraised and having no additional influence on appraised faunal receptors. On balance it will have wider green landscaping belts to the north east and south of the site and present an improvement on the scheme which Ecological Appraisal Report BES-R-180-1.1 appraised, offering more opportunities to retain and enhance habitat corridors.

4. The illustrative lighting plan presented in the Design and Access Statement demonstrates the lighting principles that may be adopted across the site, the detail of which will be set out and agreed at the Reserved Matters stage.

5. The illustrative plan shows how light spill beyond the site boundary can be effectively controlled to result in no significant effect on the surrounding environment. Moreover, the illustrative lighting plan does not take account of the influence of existing and proposed landscaping in and around the site's boundaries which will further reduce the levels indicated.

Third party comments

Biscester Airfield LWS and Proposed LWS extension.

6. We do not consider that the scheme submitted to, and commented upon by 3rd parties presents as was suggested, a threat to the BAP habitat of 'Open Mosaic on Previously Developed Land' of the LWS. The habitat was shown as retained within the original scheme and its end use remained unchanged. The Ecological Appraisal Report BES-R-180-1.1 set out recommendations that this is managed to prevent it becoming overgrown and loosing its interest. The development is therefore a driver for potentially positive intervention on a piece of land that would naturally loose its interest without any intervention.

7. The amended scheme still retains this habitat and offers exactly the same opportunities for the development to be a driver for management of the BAP habitat and LWS extension.

8. In respect to comments relating to the 'potential negative impacts on the local flora and fauna associated with discharge of attenuated surface water runoff, we can confirm that SUDS schemes are designed to attenuate runoff hold back water and dissipate into the system passively. They form an important part of new green infrastructure and present the opportunity to establish additional habitats on site which can themselves be of high value.

Bat survey

9. Brooks Ecological has completed the bat emergence survey and two bat activity transects recommended in Ecological Appraisal Report BES-R-180-1.1. A final autumn visit is commissioned and programmed for late September 2015. The surveys have not identified bat roosts and show low levels of bat activity associated with common bat species. They have not shown the hedge and railway habitats to act as strong and important corridors for bats.