



Mike Pollard
Conservation Officer
Banbury Ornithological Society
Grace Dieu
Thorpe Road
Wardington
Banbury
OX17 1SR

Matthew Parry
Planning Officer
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA

By Email

11 March 2017

Dear Mr Parry

16/02586/OUT Bicester Gateway Planning Application

I am writing on behalf of the Banbury Ornithological Society (BOS) in my role of Conservation Officer, further to our letter of 15 February 2017, and as a follow-up to the response from ecology solutions ltd. via email on 2 March.

We wish to clarify that although our concern relates primarily to the Bicester Wetland Reserve, from our experience the nature reserve does not sit in isolation from the surrounding landscape. Especially as it is a relatively small site, the importance of the surrounding ecological network is significant - in which the contribution of semi-natural habitats across adjoining areas is important. Many species using the reserve will also use the application site as it is easily within the territory size of many birds, including song birds, kestrels and woodpeckers. This is why we are advocating a strong approach to delivering a net positive approach through this proposal, in which this area's function as a biodiversity hotspot within Bicester is maintained and enhanced.

We are therefore supportive of BBOWT's advocacy of a biodiversity accounting approach in this case and which is becoming established as best practise in the development sector, e.g.

<http://www.wsp-pb.com/Globaln/UK/WSPPB%20Biodiversity%20whitepaper.pdf>

There is excellent guidance for developers is set out in this good practise guide from CIEEM: http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Publications/Biodiversity_Net_Gain_Principles.pdf

The development will involve the removal of much of the existing semi-natural habitat across the application site, which will be replaced by built development, indicating that a net loss of biodiversity value is likely. It would therefore be a good first step to establish the biodiversity account for Phase One.

We advise against the provision of nest boxes and bat boxes in the locations suggested as these are short term measures that do not offer a sustainable long-term solution for local wildlife. We consider that as this will become a primarily built environment it would make sense to make provision for species adapted to this. In this case, we feel provision of permanent nest sites for swifts built into the structure of the hotel would be the most appropriate measure. 20 nest boxes would be a significant contribution the developer could make. There is plenty of advice and guidance available, not least through the Cherwell Swifts Project: <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4419>.

I hope this update is useful and we are happy to provide further input if needed.

Yours sincerely

Mike Pollard