

## CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEMORANDUM

To: Maria Philpott – Principal Planning Officer  
(Development Management)

From: Paul Evans – Ecology Officer  
(Enforcement – Development Management)

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

#### **Ref: 18/01253/F Hotel Development, Bicester Heritage, Buckingham Road, Bicester - Ecology Comments**

I have reviewed the information provided regarding the proposal for the development including the submitted Ecological Assessment by Ecology Solutions dated July 2018. The proposal has also been reviewed with consideration to my previous comments provided as part of pre-application advice 18/00045/PREAPP Bicester Heritage Hotel Development in April 2018.

The area identified for development is within the designated area of Bicester Airfield Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is of county importance designated due to the presence of Habitats of Principal Importance including Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land and Lowland Calcareous Grassland. However it is clear from the detailed botanical survey data and assessment with the submitted report (paragraph 3.5.10) and previous detailed botanical survey by BSG Ecology in 2016 (File Ref. 8742.01\_R\_NORTH\_APPR\_010916), that area of the LWS within the application area does not meet the LWS criteria for designation and is not of sufficient quality to be considered as a Habitat of Principal Importance. The majority of the grassland surveyed is close mown, disturbed by car parking and grounds management e.g. rolling and species poor, indicating that the habitat interest for which the LWS is designated appears to be in other parts of the Bicester Airfield LWS. The loss of grassland habitat is mitigated with the creation of species rich calcareous grassland in the areas surrounding the development (paragraph 5.2.15).

There is however a strip of unmown species rich grassland along the western boundary hedge that is considered likely to qualify as Lowland Meadow Habitat of Principal Importance. This is detailed to be retained within the proposals apart from the area where access is required from the A4421, this loss is detailed to be mitigated with the creation of species rich calcareous grassland in the areas surrounding the development (paragraph 5.2.15). Should permission be granted the retained grassland and hedgerow along the western boundary should be protected e.g. with appropriate fencing whilst construction takes place.

Should the proposals be granted permission I would recommend conditioning the delivery of the mitigation and enhancements detailed in section 5 of the Ecological Assessment in a suitably worded condition:

#### ***K15 Carry Out in Accordance with Survey***

*The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in section 5 of the Ecological Assessment carried out by Ecological Solutions dated July 2018.*

*Reason KR1*

Paragraphs 5.2.15 – 5.2.18 of the report outlines habitat enhancements including creation of calcareous grassland on banks, writing of a management plan for the habitat areas, native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting. The detail of this should be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the development should the proposals be granted permission, this should be included in a suitably worded condition:

***K20 Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)***

*Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the LEMP shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason KR2*

The Ecological Assessment details in paragraph 5.3.16 the potential to directly impact on reptiles through site clearance and construction operation and outlines mitigation measures including reference to a clearance methodology and a habitat manipulation exercise, details of this mitigation strategy should be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the development (including site clearance) should the proposals be granted permission, this should be included in a suitably worded condition:

***K9 Reptile Mitigation Strategy***

*Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, including any demolition and any works of site clearance or the translocation of any reptile, a reptile mitigation strategy, including timings of work, clearance methodology and habitat manipulation exercise, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, all works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

*Reason KR1*

This proposal forms part of a wider masterplan for the Bicester Heritage site as such it would be sensible to take a strategic approach to ecology matters across the whole area covered by the Bicester Heritage masterplan rather than piecemeal per application for different aspects of the masterplan as they come on line. This will allow the ecological opportunities and constraints of the whole site to be assessed in view of the masterplan, the masterplan design can then be adapted to take account of ecology on site to ensure the important ecological aspects are conserved, appropriate mitigation/compensation considered and integrated with future site development proposals.