



ecosupport

Darrelle Moffat
Ecosupport Ltd.
K4 Keppel, Daedalus Park
Lee-on-the-Solent
PO13 9FX

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RE: Response on Badgers for F/23/94668 'Land East of Knowle Lane, Fair Oak, SO50 7DZ'

To Lisa Malter,

Ecosupport Ltd. have produced the Ecological Statement for the planning application F/23/94668 'Land East of Knowle Lane, Fair Oak, SO50 7DZ' dated 6th March 2023 as well as the updated SINC Enhancement Report dated December 2022. The purpose of this letter is to provide additional information and address comments on Badgers (*Meles meles*) that were raised.

Comments were provided to the client on the 3rd April 2023 as follows:

The update walkover survey reports a mammal hole at the base of a tree along the northern boundary of the SINC. The photo shows leaf litter at the front of the hole, so it does not look like an active burrow, but this can be checked in the spring by either a trail camera or placing crossed sticks across the entrance and returning a few days later to see whether they have been disturbed. It is not clear whether the surrounding areas have been checked for badger setts or signs of foraging. If there are badgers or evidence of foraging nearby, a precautionary working method for badgers will be required.

The mammal hole in question is shown in **Fig 1** below.

Figure 1. Mammal hole found at the northern boundary of the site (taken November 2022).



Results

To address the uncertainty on if the area had been checked for Badger setts or signs of foraging, the following methodology was carried out during both site surveys for the recent Ecological Statement and Updated SINC Enhancement report: The site was thoroughly searched for evidence of use by Badgers, with the specific aim of identifying the presence and location of any setts. In accordance with the *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing* (Natural England, 2011) guidance, the survey accounted for a 30m from the site's boundary (observed where possible i.e. does not conflict with private dwellings). Evidence of Badgers could include latrines, dung pits, feeding remains and foraging evidence, trails and setts.

As noted, the mammal hole is located along the northern boundary of the SINC. It did not appear to be likely active at the time of the survey due to the heavy leaf litter cover and lack of mammal tracks in this area. No latrines or foraging activity were noted during the updating recent assessments. However, mammal tracks were noted along the northern boundary of the main site adjacent the ditch and leading into the neighbouring field. The main site was considered limited for foraging opportunities due to the hard standing habitats comprising the majority of site.

For the mammal hole, the works within the SINC itself are restricted to minor enhancements works including vegetation management, strengthened planting, installation of fencing with Badger access, and wildlife enhancement features. This mammal hole was not considered to require further survey work after initial assessment due to it appearing inactive and the nature of the enhancement works which are unlikely to significantly adversely impact any potential setts or foraging or commuting Badgers. Further the mammal hole is over 30m away from the area of impact within the main site for development and therefore will not be impacted by the development.

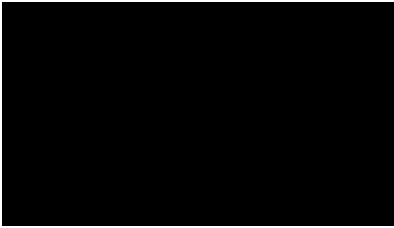
Mitigation

There is potential however for foraging or commuting Badgers to be within the site. Therefore, precautionary measures are proposed during construction works. During construction, any excavations on site will be covered nightly and/or include a suitable escape ramp for the protection of wildlife e.g. Badgers (a suitable escape ramp can be created using wooden planks placed at a 45-degree angle or provision of a sloping end wall). Any temporarily exposed open

pipe systems will be covered.

With the above provisions, it is considered that Badgers will not be adversely impacted by the development. Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Darrelle Moffat
Project Ecologist
darrelle@ecosupport.co.uk