

Ecology response for O/23/96467 Land adjoining Chalcroft Business Park, Burnetts Lane, West End, SO30 2HH

Outline application for up to 4,130sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E(g)(ii), (iii) and B8) to include farm shop (Use Class E(a)) of up to 327sqm, parking and yard areas (including accessible spaces), landscape buffers and acoustic mitigation. Formation of vehicular and pedestrian access to estate road. Access considered only.

Rachael Morris

14/12/23

The following reports by The Ecology Partnership have been reviewed:

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (October 2023)

Ecological Impact Assessment (October 2023)

Bat report and activity surveys (October 2023)

Reptile Survey (October 2023)

Dormouse Monitoring Report (October 2023)

Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment (November 2023)

And

Tree Survey Report by CBA Trees (August 2023)

Flood Risk Assessment by GTA Civils (First issue, November 2023)

## **Ecology**

I raise an objection to this proposal. It represents an overdevelopment of the site.

The proposed layout provides almost continuous green infrastructure around the perimeter of the site, however this is interrupted in the area to the north of Building E. If there is a gap in connectivity in this area, wildlife will not be able to access the SuDS ponds, which are proposed as wildlife features. Although the BNG Feasibility Assessment proposes that there would be 10.03 % biodiversity net gain on site, these areas need to be connected in order to be fully functional as potential habitat, which would not be possible with this scheme.

Areas of wildflower grassland are proposed in Figure 3 in the Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Assessment. Some of these areas, particularly those on the eastern edge of the site, are shown under the canopy of existing large trees and proposed replacement trees so would not grow successfully due to shading when the trees have leafed out. Shading from buildings would also affect the ability of plants to thrive as many of the buildings are too close to these areas. The areas on the eastern edge of the site would be shaded by the trees to the east in the morning and by the buildings to the west in the afternoon. The areas under the trees cannot be counted

as wildflower grassland if it has little chance of success due to shading. The 20 m SINC buffer must be measured from the canopy edge,

Four areas of land outside the red line boundary but within the ownership of the applicant are proposed to be used to provide biodiversity net gain for this proposal (Figure 5). Evidence must be provided to show that these areas are not already part of the biodiversity net gain or mitigation from another application. Area 3 on figure 5 has been included in application F/18/83945 as the Round Copse SINC buffer zone and is covered by the SINC Management Plan (agreed in condition 11 DC/20/87637). Area 4 would have shading issues.

The proposed loss of two mature oak trees from the centre of the site would also result in a loss of very high-quality habitat features for nesting birds and invertebrates and potential bat roost features. Section 7.3 of the Ecological Impact Assessment report had missing numbers for proposed replacement trees, with XX representing the numbers. This must be corrected in the next version of the report.

A low population of slow worms was found during reptile surveys in 2023. The enhancement strategy includes grassland management, and creation of hibernacula and a new wildlife corridor. This must be a continuous corridor (other than the site entrance) to allow slow worms to move around the site and into adjacent retained habitat. Creation of a continuous corridor will also provide habitat for hedgehogs.

### **Surface Water Drainage**

Section 5.1 of the Flood Risk Assessment states that the soil soakage rate was considered to be too low for infiltration features to be viable. Further test results are required before the SuDS strategy can be assessed. The SuDS plan will need to comply with local plan policy DM6 and demonstrate three forms of naturalised above ground filtration. The simple index approach must be used to demonstrate that any pollution hazards will be mitigated.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist