

Ecology response for DC/26/101569 Land West of Allbrook Way, Knowle Hill, Eastleigh, SO50 4LZ

Application for discharge of Condition 14 (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) of Outline planning permission ref. O/19/86980 for up to 52no. residential dwellings (C3 use) with associated landscaping, infrastructure and access from Knowle Hill (all matters reserved except for access).

Rebecca Altman

22/6/26

I have reviewed the Landscape Management Plan by Terra Firma (PO3, June 2026), the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan by Ecosa (June 2026) and the Ecological Enhancement Features plan by Ecosa (June 2026).

Ecological Enhancement Features plan

In the Ecological Enhancement Features plan there are hedgehog highways shown between most of the rear gardens, but I don't see any between plots 30 and 29, 27 and 28, or plots 13-18 and 20-22. Is this an oversight or are there no closed board fences around those plots?

Plots 18, 29 and 37 have north facing bat bricks which are not ideal. Is there a specific reason these were placed on north facing elevations?

The Bat Conservation Trust recommends installing a bat brick/box at least 4 m above the ground, away from artificial light sources, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing south, south-east or south-west. (<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/putting-up-your-box>).

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Section 5.2.1 states *Grass is cut to a minimum of 100 millimetres with arisings removed after two weeks of cutting to allow wildflowers to set seed.* This is unclear. Allowing the wildflowers to set seed is done before cutting which would occur in September or October. The arisings are normally left on the cut grass area to allow the wildflower seeds to drop onto the soil and then the arisings would be removed. Leaving the arisings for as long as two weeks would prevent the grass from getting enough sunlight, the arisings are usually only left for a few days, depending on the weather. Plantlife recommends "about a week" [How to Manage a Meadow - Plantlife](#) and the RHS recommends "a few days" [Wildflower Meadow Maintenance | RHS Advice](#).

Landscape Management Plan

Use of herbicides

Section 7.2.5 states *All bitmac and paved areas should be treated with a suitable herbicide spray in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations (as required) to remove algae, weeds and moss.*

This does not distinguish between permeable and non-permeable paving. Herbicides must not be allowed to enter the surface water drainage system, as they will have a negative effect on the vegetation in the SuDS wetlands. How can herbicides used on paved areas be prevented from being carried by rainwater and entering the SuDS system? The SuDS system is designed to provide filtration for the surface water drainage before it is discharged off site and then entering the River Itchen SAC. Use of herbicides to remove algae, weeds and moss could therefore affect the water quality of the SAC.

The Landscape and Ecological Management Plan must provide evidence that any specific named herbicides proposed to be used on this site will not affect the SuDS wetland vegetation or be able to affect the SAC.

Clipped hedges and nesting birds

The following amendments are required:

7.9.2 Preferably undertake all management operations outside of the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

7.9.6 When cutting hedges, care should be taken to ensure that there are no nesting birds within the hedging as it is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to disturb wild birds, their nests or eggs.

This should be amended to include the following:

Some bird species do nest outside of this time. If any active nests are found, all work must stop and a minimum 5 m buffer zone must be established to protect the nesting birds from disturbance until after the young have fledged and left the nest.

7.10.4 Hedges shall be pruned to encourage dense bushy growth. Hedging is to be pruned in autumn to front face and top only.

This should be amended to once dense bushy growth has been achieved, hedges should be pruned on a 3-year rotation, with front, top and rear to be pruned in alternate years to provide a constant supply of flowers, fruits and seeds for wildlife.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist