

Ecology response 29 10 24 for F/23/96629 Land at Fieldfare Road, adjacent to the roundabout with Winchester Road.,

Erection of 70-bed C2 Care Home incorporating an ancillary Community Hub with new vehicular access to White Stork Road (AMENDED DESCRIPTION)

Additional Notes: Please could you comment on the BNG and Biodiversity Enhancements information rec/d 21.10.24

Liz Harrison

29/10/24

I have reviewed the BNG and Biodiversity Enhancements letter from Ecosupport (16 October 2024).

The Pre-development UK Habs map has been corrected; however the Post development UK Habs map does not quite reflect the amended Soft Landscape Proposals plan by ACD Environmental (November 2023). This latest Soft Landscape Proposals plan shows more amenity grassland and less wildflower grassland than the Post development UK Habs map.

The Statutory Metric has been updated to show an increase of 6.56 % in habitat units based on a larger amount of other neutral grassland which would be the wildflower grassland. Other neutral grassland contributes the most to this increase, having the highest values in distinctiveness and condition ie. having the potential to attain *good* condition (after 10 years), so if there is less of it than shown on the UK Habs plan, the % of habitat units would be smaller.

The Species-rich Grassland section of the letter refers to this grassland being created around the boundaries of the site, however in the latest amended Soft Landscape Proposals plan it has been limited to two smaller areas partly under and to the side of the retained trees which will be shaded by the trees and a few small strips along the western edge of the car park which will be shaded by the hedgerow. The key shows this as *Proposed meadow mix, to be seeded with EH1 Hedgerow mixture as supplied by Emorsgate Seed*. I don't feel confident that this habitat is properly valued by the landscape architect/developer. The area of species rich grassland must either be increased to previous levels, or the metric must be re-calculated to show that there is still a measurable increase in habitat units.

In the BNG and Biodiversity Enhancements letter the Modified Grassland is described as the grassland areas directly adjacent to the building and specified to be sown with Emorsgate EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture and managed to allow the flowering of herbaceous species to provide maximum benefit to local wildlife. The key in the Soft Landscape Proposals plan shows this as *proposed grass areas to receive good quality amenity grass turves laid in line with good horticultural practices*. Amenity grass turves do not usually contain flowering herbaceous species, they are usually just a mixture of perennial ryegrass, fescue and bent grasses which do not provide nectar and pollen.

The oval planting bed containing the proposed bulb mix would only be a seasonal feature as it is not clear what would be flowering after the bulbs have died back. I am not sure why two

trees and an oval planting bed have been placed in this location, it looks a bit incongruous and would not have much value as cover for wildlife in this area. The *Prunus avium* 'Plena' is proposed to be planted on what is labelled the proposed root barrier so I am not sure what effect this would have on the growth of either tree.

The locations of the proposed bat bricks and swift bricks on the building should conform to best practice guidance so that these species have conditions for successful breeding. Bats need a warm roost, and swifts need a roost that will not get too hot. The Enhancement plan shows swift bricks on south and south-western elevations and at least one of the bat bricks on a northern elevation which are contrary to the guidance listed below. The external lighting plan and the locations of windows must be considered at the same time when siting these roost features to ensure that the bat boxes will be kept dark. If the external lighting plan is to be conditioned, then it must be provided before the start of works to ensure that the built-in bat and swift bricks are able to be installed in the correct positions on the building.

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](https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/putting-up-your-box))

Swift nest boxes are best positioned under the eaves or on walls facing north, northeast or north-west **out of direct sunlight**, five metres above the ground, with clear adjacent airspace so swifts can access them in a high-speed direct flight. (<https://www.swiftconservation.org/Nestboxes%26Attraction.htm>)

Lisa Malter

Ecologist