Ecology response for Phase 1 of F/25/99007 EAST HORTON GOLF CENTRE, MORTIMERS LANE, FAIR OAK, EASTLEIGH, SO50 7EA

HYBRID APPLICATION

Phase 1 (Greenwood Course) - full planning application for the re-siting/ alterations to 1st tee box, fairway and green, enlarging 18th green and creation of event space with associated reprofiling, landscaping, footpath and drainage works following closure of existing driving range.

Phase 2 (Parkland Course) - full planning application for the creation of a driving range with associated reprofiling, landscaping and drainage works following closure of holes 14, 15 & 18 and outline planning application for the construction of a new driving range building (with all matters reserved except for access).

This is a cross-boundary planning application with Winchester City Council. Phase 1 is within Eastleigh Borough Council and Phase 2 is with Winchester City Council.

18/3/25

I have reviewed the following documents most of which cover both phases of the application.

Planning, Design and Access Statement by Gillings Planning (February 2025).

Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and Phase 2 Surveys by Phillips Ecology (February 2025).

Biodiversity Net Gain Metric by Phillips Ecology (February 2025)

Proposed Phase 1 Drainage Layout by Odyssey (February 2025)

Phase 1 Opportunities and Constraints Diagram by KSA (Rev F, February 2025)

Biodiversity net gain

I raise a holding objection based on errors in classification of the watercourses on site.

The watercourse that runs through the site from northeast to southwest was classified as a ditch on the Statutory Metric. It should be classified as a watercourse. It is a tributary of the River Hamble. It is shown as a watercourse on the Environment Agency's Statutory Main River map. We think it should be classified as r2 Rivers and streams in UK Hab, not as a ditch, and might be one of the priority habitats (r2a, r2a5, or r2a6). The applicant's ecologist must provide a discussion of this watercourse together with sufficient evidence including photos to show whether this is priority habitat and explain why they have come to this conclusion. Surveyors must be trained and accredited to conduct a River Condition Assessment. This must include the area extending outwards 10 m from the riverbank top edge on both banks.

There is also a watercourse along the northeastern boundary of the Phase 1 site which has not been considered in this application. Although it may be outside the red line boundary, and is marked as drain on the map, this could be a modified stream. Photos are required. The riparian corridor must be measured from the bank top edge on both banks. This would extend onto the site and must be considered in the metric.

Ecology

This site is in a red impact risk zone for great crested newts, with several ponds on site and a positive record of a GCN egg in pond 3. There are records of great crested newts in the wider area. There are records of bats and badgers in the wider area. Durley Copse SINC is located along the southeastern boundary of the site. The SINC is designated 1B Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving.

The proposed works would be beyond 30 m from the boundary of Durley Copse, so it is not likely that there would be direct impacts on the woodland.

proposed re-profiling of the golf course

No further surveys have been recommended. Tree 33 in group E has been assessed to have low bat roost potential. Soft felling is recommended with the tree being left on site for 24 hours before removing or chipping to ensure that any bats that may be using the tree have time to escape.

Lighting recommendations have been given in section 15.1. A wildlife sensitive lighting plan must be conditioned.

A Natural England license for disturbance to badgers will be required and can be applied for after planning permission has been granted.

The precautionary working methods recommended for hedgehogs are appropriate and can be conditioned.

The reptile mitigation and enhancement recommended in the report is appropriate and can be conditioned.

District licensing for great crested newts has been recommended. The mitigation strategy recommended in the report is appropriate and can be conditioned.

Vegetation affected by the proposal must be cleared outside of nesting bird season (which is usually late February-August inclusive). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist must check for nesting birds no more than 48 hours before vegetation clearance.

If evidence of an active bird’s nest is found before or during the works, work must stop, and a 5 m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the chicks have fledged and left the nest.

Additional enhancements including bat boxes, bird boxes and invertebrate boxes are recommended can be installed in the wider site to increase the use of the site by these species. This can be conditioned and shown on a landscaping plan.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist