

Ecology response for O/25/99534 Land at Denhams Corner, Snakemoor Lane, Eastleigh, SO32 2BW

Outline application for up to 150 dwellings including 40% affordable housing, with vehicle and cycle accesses from Snakemoor Lane, pedestrian/cycle access from Botley Road, sustainable transport hub, public open space and play area, and associated infrastructure and landscaping (all matters reserved except for access).

Gary Osmond

22/7/25

Summary

Ecology objects to the development of this site.

Development of this site would cause unacceptable pressures on the adjacent SINC's (Scorey's Copse (Ancient Woodland) and Scorey's Copse Rush Pasture), the stream to the east of the site and the nearby SINC's (Scorey's Copse Meadow and Snakemoor Farm Meadow) due to recreational impacts, impacts from pets and lighting. This could include nutrient enrichment due to pet wastes, trampling of and changes to ground flora, creation of informal paths, collecting fallen wood for den building and fires, and fly tipping of garden waste.

The site supports a bat assemblage of at least County importance including very rare Barbastelle bats which would be negatively impacted by lighting and loss of foraging habitat due to development.

Ecology

I am satisfied that the survey work described in the EclA by Ecosupport (May 2025) was done using best practice methodology and that the survey effort was sufficient. Walkover surveys were done in 2024 which confirmed some management changes on site. Dormice are considered likely absent after surveys in 2023. Great crested newts are considered likely absent; however, the site is in an amber impact risk zone for great crested newts so updated assessments would be required at reserved matters stage if the application is permitted.

Precautionary working methods were recommended for bats, reptiles, breeding birds, badgers and hedgehogs. If the application is permitted these must be strengthened, with additional information provided on lighting.

Bats

Barbastelle bats were recorded among the assemblage of bats of at least County importance using the site. Barbastelles are among the rarest Annex II species of bats and classified as a vulnerable species in Great Britain by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). They use deciduous woodland, wet meadows, streams and rivers for foraging for insects, so loss of this habitat and the resulting decrease in the population of the specific moths that make up their narrow diet would have a detrimental effect on this species. The development of the site would also remove the habitat for the prey insects of Barbastelles. Barbastelles are

a light-avoiding species. The additional lighting that a development of 150 homes would bring to this site would have a negative effect on this population. Although the street lighting can be controlled, there is no way to control the additional lighting that homeowners could add to their houses and gardens.

Badgers

In the Ecological Impact Assessment report by Ecosupport (May 2025) Figures 26 and 27 show changes to the badger setts first identified in 2022.

Possible badger activity and presence of setts must be monitored. Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Hunting Act 2004. Badgers are also listed in Appendix III of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.

Green infrastructure

The built framework parameter plan by Corstorphine & Wright (June 2025) shows continuous green infrastructure with an area labelled as a 20 m ecology buffer around the site, broken by the site entrance and the foot and cycle path entrances. The buffer area would also be the public open space for this development, so it does not serve as a 20 m protective buffer against recreational impacts for the SINC, or for the stream running through the SINC. It is only an area free from housing, parking and roads. The SuDS ponds have been included in the buffer, so it is not really free from all development.

Biodiversity net gain

The statutory metric submitted with this application provides a 41.12% increase in area habitat units and a 31.75% increase in hedgerow units. Purple moor grass and rush pasture is a very high distinctiveness habitat which is proposed to be retained. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is a high distinctiveness habitat. A small amount of woodland (0.002 ha) is proposed to be lost due to the access path, but 0.26 ha is proposed to be retained and enhanced with "creation of deadwood" (does this mean dead wood piles?) and planting new mixed scrub patches. If this application is permitted, any significant habitat (of medium or higher distinctiveness) would need to be secured for 30 years and monitored, with a habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP) and a s106 agreement to secure monitoring fees.

Surface Water Drainage

The infiltration test results reported in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by SLR Consulting (May 2025, rev 01) showed that the site is not suitable for infiltration of surface water drainage.

Surface water drainage is proposed to be discharged pipes and swales, then into two attenuation ponds and then via a swale into what is described as a ditch on the eastern boundary within the SINC. This discharges into the stream that flows through Scoreys Copse Rush Pasture SINC. It is a tributary of Ford Lake and of the River Hamble and is labelled as

main river on the Environment Agency map layer. If the application is permitted, this would need to be re-assessed to avoid any effects on the SINC, the hydrology of the stream or the rush pasture. SuDS schemes should align with best practice and pipe to pond SuDS is to be avoided.

The report states that permeable paving, rain gardens and tree pits and design for exceedance flow would be addressed at detailed design stage. Three forms of above ground naturalised filtration would be provided, and the pollution hazards would be mitigated to meet the water quality requirements of DM6. the stream within the SINC.

Other

Pedestrian/cycle access

The footpath through the woodland to Botley Road would be the major access route for pedestrians and cyclists. This would need to be an all-weather path, not the low impact gravel path proposed. Lighting would also be required for the path which would have an unacceptable impact on this woodland and the bat population.

Although there is only one official access proposed to Botley Road, there are other areas where desire lines would cut through the woodlands surrounding the site which would have an unacceptable impact on these protected woodland SINC.

The proposed path that exits the site onto Snakemoor Lane would also provide additional access for people onto the road and then into the SINC woodland and stream to the east of the site.

CEMP

If this application is permitted, a CEMP will be required. This must contain best practice methods to control water pollution including sediment controls, lighting, air pollution including dust, and specific protective measures for wildlife and trees.

Noise

The Noise Assessment by Hawkins Environmental (May 2025) looks at the existing noise levels on site and whether mitigation would be necessary to achieve reasonable internal and external noise levels for the proposed dwellings. It does not provide an estimate of the additional noise on wildlife or the cumulative impacts which would be created by the addition of 150 dwellings, additional vehicles and related activities.

The report does mention that the Noise Planning Practice Guidance states that *Noise can adversely affect wildlife and ecosystems. Particular consideration needs to be given to the potential effects of noisy development on international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity* (Section 2.3, page 11 top). If the application is permitted, a noise assessment and mitigation for noise impacts on wildlife during the operational and construction phases will be required. The EclA report section on noise pollution (section 5.1.2 and 5.2.3) must be considered.

Air pollution

The EclA report section on air pollution (section 5.1.3 and 5.2.2) must also be considered. Ancient woodlands support pollution-sensitive species of lichens, which would be affected by any air pollution caused by the development during the construction and operational phases. Householders could install woodburners which would cause a decrease in local air quality.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist