

F/25/100141 Land south east of Kings Copse Avenue, Hedge End

Residential development of 192 dwellings comprising houses and apartments, to include access, parking, landscaping and other associated works, along with off-site footway and bridleway improvements.

Thank you for consulting Ecology, my observations are as follows:

Documents consulted:

Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD, November 2025)

Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy form (ACD)

Statutory BNG Metric (September 2025)

Great-crested Newt Precautionary Method Statement (ACD, November 2025)

Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy (AKS Ward, September 2025)

Design and Access statement (MH Architects, February 2024)

Various Site Layout drawings and elevation plans

Summary: No ecology or drainage objection subject to conditions

Site Context

The site is just 7ha in size and is located on the south east edge of Hedge End. The site is bounded by Kings Copse Avenue to the northwest, Tanhouse Lane to the west, woodland and scrub to the south and east and by a watercourse and residential development of Ambleside to the north.

The northern and northeastern portion of the site bounded to the north by the watercourse is designated as Tanhouse Meadow Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). This site is designated under criterion 5B of the Hampshire SINC criteria – *“Fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent).”* The recent management of the SINC is unknown but general observations suggest there has been periodic grazing by horses and some maintenance of trees and shrubs lying under the overhead powerlines. Under the NERC Act, as strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, Local Authorities have a duty to manage local wildlife sites favourably. The SINC is also identified within the measures mapping in the recently approved Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire.

Tanhouse Meadow forms the western edge of the much wider Manor Farm Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which is owned and managed by Hampshire County Council. The LNR also incorporates parts of the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The site drains into the Hamble Estuary via the watercourse to the north which joins the Pudbrook Stream and discharges into the Hamble.

Ecological Baseline

Full details of the habitats on site are provided in the EclA produced by ACD. The development site itself is predominately comprised grassland bounded by hedgerows with numerous mature trees. This grassland has been classified as other neutral grassland and was determined to be in moderate condition. The majority of this grassland will be lost under the submitted proposals.

Tanhouse Meadow SINC is comprised of blocks of deciduous woodland, scrub, and purple moor grass and acid grassland pasture. There is significant scrub, particularly along the stream edge which is encroaching into grassland significantly in some areas. The stream itself is around 1.5m wide with a predominantly gravel bed. In the southern section of the stream the banks have been significantly engineered due to erosion issues associated with the residential gardens associated with properties along Ambleside. The SINC is set to be retained under the proposals.

The requirements for detailed phase 2 protected species survey work was informed by the design, in particular the retention and buffering of boundary habitats (aside from minimal loss to facilitate access) and the SINC with only the area of ONG being lost. As such, detailed survey work was limited to dormice and bat roosting opportunities.

No evidence of dormice was found during the survey work, although dormice can occur in very low density and can be difficult to detect. Nonetheless, any suitable dormouse habitat with wider connectivity is set to be retained and enhanced. A number of trees around the site periphery were assessed as having potential for roosting bats. These are set to be retained under the proposals.

There are records of great-crested newts (GCNs) within 500m of the site and while there is considerable suitable terrestrial habitat between the ponds and the site there is a very low likelihood that GCNs may be present in the terrestrial habitat on site. Likewise, the site as a whole is considered likely to support populations of common reptiles such as grass snake, slow-worm and common lizard around the periphery and within the SINC.

In common with sites of this nature on the settlement edge, the site will also support an assemblage of breeding birds and common invertebrates, again centred on the retained peripheral habitats and SINC.

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

The proposals as presented result in a:

30.44% loss of habitat units

39.34% gain in hedgerow units

15.06% gain in watercourse units

The loss of habitat units is reflective of the quantum and quality of ONG that will be lost to the development footprint. The overall loss of habitat has been reduced through:

- Creation and enhancement of ONG
- Tree and scrub planting
- Pond creation
- Enhancement of the retained habitats within the SINC
- Hedgerow creation

- Enhancement of existing ditch on site

However, in order to meet the statutory requirement for an overall 10% increase in all unit types, the applicants will need to secure 25.48 units of offsite ONG in moderate condition or equivalent habitat meeting trading rules of the statutory metric. The purchase of suitable offsite habitat units will need to be evidenced in order to discharge the relevant planning condition.

Created and retained habitats on site to be enhanced will require 30-year monitoring to ensure that they reach the desired condition. As such, a monitoring fee will be applied in line with the Council's approved BNG charging structure secured through a planning obligation agreement. Having considered the size of the site and complexity of the habitats being proposed, I recommend that a monitoring fee of £16,7974 equivalent to category three would be appropriate.

Recommended ecological mitigation and enhancement measures

The SINC is to be retained and enhanced as part of the development proposals. As the development falls within the 5.6km impact zone of the Solent Special Protection Areas (SPAs) the development will be required to make a contribution to the Bird Aware Solent scheme of strategic mitigation in line with the current charging structure per new dwelling.

The proposed layout allows a buffer to the SINC and eastern/southeastern boundary where habitat will be created/retained and enhanced. The buffer will also serve to protect the SINC from any direct and indirect impacts from the development during operation and construction.

The EcIA provides a detailed list of mitigation measures required for protected species. This has been supplemented with a specific precautionary method for great-crested newts to ensure that in the unlikely event that any are present within the development footprint area.

Additionally, the proposed dwellings can provide nest sites for birds such as swifts. The final details of locations for nest boxes/integrated bricks can be agreed with the Ecology team as part of planning conditions.

In summary, I support the measures outlined in the EcIA which can be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions.

Drainage

The Ecology Team have been extensively involved in discussions with both the applicant and drainage consultant (AKS Ward) to ensure that the drainage strategy is both compliant with Local Plan Policy DM6 and reflects best practice guidance.

Overall, the drainage strategy is found to be sufficient to comply with policy and has also satisfied both the LLFA and EA. The strategy makes use of permeable paving, rain gardens, swales and gullies and attenuation basins. Ultimately the site discharges into the tributary of the Pudbrook Stream east of the properties on the north bank at Ambleside.

The most recent submission of the drainage strategy (December 2025) reflects the requirement for additional forms of filtration for several areas of road runoff that had previously been discharging to directly into an attenuation basin without any prior form of treatment. This has been revised and the run off goes through a series of swales before being discharged.

There remains the possibility that the drainage strategy could incorporate re-wetting of the Tanhouse Meadow SINC which is designated as wetland site. This isn't achieved in the current strategy where the status quo is maintained.

So, while the drainage strategy is acceptable as presented, I recommend that a suitably worded condition is applied that allows detailed drainage options to be explored prior to commencement while being based on the strategy that has been submitted and agreed.

Suggested Conditions

1. The development shall accord in full with the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, 6.11.2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (ACD Environmental, June 2025) submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To accord with the Environment Act 2021, Schedule 14.

2. The development must adhere to the Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, 6.11.2025), Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (ACD Environmental, June 2025) and Great-crested Newt Precautionary Method Statement (ACD, November 2025) which have been submitted and approved by the LPA in accordance with paragraph 14(2) of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA.
3. The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), prepared in accordance with the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, 6.11.2025), Landscape General Arrangement Plan (Terraforma drawing number 2541-TFC-XX-00-DR-L-1001) and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (ACD Environmental, June 2025), has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA along with a timetable for implementation. Thereafter those habitats shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details for a minimum period of 30 years following completion.
4. Notice in writing shall be given to the LPA when the:

- a) habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP have commenced, and
- b) habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP have been completed.

Monitoring reports shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified the approved Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

5. Evidence of purchase of the correct number of biodiversity credits or units for the development must be provided.

Reason for all of the above: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with paragraph 2 Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and policy DM11 and to accord with the Environment Act 2021, Schedule 14.

Ecology

Date 28/11/25