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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Baumber

Planning consultation: Outline planning application for residential development of approximately 550 dwellings, including provision of a primary healthcare facility and district centre [E Use Class]; sports facilities; public open space; access from Peckleton Lane and Leicester Lane with a connecting road; sustainable drainage; and associated infrastructure. All matters reserved except for access

Location: Land South Of Bosworth Academy, Leicester Lane, Desford, Leicestershire

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 11 August 2026

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutory designated sites Botcheston Bog Sit of Special Scientific Interest and has no objection.

A lack of objection does not mean that there are no significant environmental impacts. Natural England advises that all environmental impacts and opportunities are fully considered and relevant local bodies are consulted.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Botcheston Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified and has no objection.

Soils and Agricultural Land Quality

Having considered the proposals as a consultation under the Development Management Procedure Order, and in the context of national planning policy for the protection of the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land as set out in Paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy

Framework, Natural England draws your Authority's attention to the following agricultural land quality and soil considerations:

1. Based on the information provided with the planning application, it appears that the proposed development comprises approximately 42.32 ha of agricultural land

Natural England recognises that this development is not allocated within the current adopted local plan (2006-2026) but is included in the proposed draft local plan (2024-2045) as shown on the Policies Map (Regulation 19 Local Plan 2026): Desford. Natural England recommends that an ALC report is produced for this plan to determine how much BMV land is potentially lost during this development.

Soil is a finite resource which plays an essential role within sustainable ecosystems, supporting a range of ecosystem services, including storage of carbon, the infiltration and transport of water, nutrient cycling, and provision of food.

2. It is recognised that a proportion of the agricultural land affected by the development will remain undeveloped (being kept as green infrastructure, becoming SuDS etc.), and that a proportion of the agricultural land will experience temporary land loss or disturbance. In order to both retain the long term potential of this land and to safeguard all soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the whole development, it is important that the soil is able to retain as many of its many important functions and services (ecosystem services) as possible. This can be achieved through careful soil management and appropriate, beneficial soil re-use, with consideration of how adverse impacts on soils and their functions can be avoided or minimised.
3. Consequently, Natural England would advise that any grant of planning permission should be made subject to conditions to safeguard soil resources, including the provision of an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled.

Sustainable soil management should aim to minimise risks to the ecosystem services which soils provide, through appropriate site design/masterplan/Green Infrastructure. Defra has published a [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#) which may be helpful when setting planning conditions for development sites. It provides advice on the use and protection of soil in construction projects, including the movement and management of soil resources, which we strongly recommend is followed.

The British Society of Soil Science has published the [Guidance Note](#) Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction which sets out measures for the protection of soils within the planning system and the development of individual sites, which we also recommend is followed.

Other advice

Green Infrastructure

Multi-functional green infrastructure can perform a range of functions including improved flood risk management, provision of accessible green space, climate change adaptation and biodiversity enhancement.

Natural England welcomes the green infrastructure (GI) element of the proposal as set out in the submitted documents. In particular we welcome:

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment –

- 5.3 *"The objective would be to retain the existing hedgerows and footpaths within the green infrastructure network"*
- 5.5 *"A number of public footpaths pass across the site and these provide opportunities to create green corridors as movement routes for people and wildlife through a GI network. The brook that lies to the northern boundary forms a wildlife corridor and green infrastructure that is important to consider as a positive feature and for enhancements to biodiversity."*

- 6.6 *“The intention is that the majority of existing hedgerows and trees will be retained within the residential development and form the network of green corridors and open spaces.”*

To ensure high quality GI is delivered and integrated throughout the proposed development, Natural England recommends a Green Infrastructure Management Plan, which should contain specific goals of what should be achieved, how GI will be maintained and managed and the conditions to secure it. To secure the management plan Natural England would advise the attaching of a suitably worded planning condition which would allow further detail to be addressed through a subsequent full application.

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sustainable Development Team
East Midlands Area Delivery