



WOODLAND TRUST

Development Management
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub
Rugby Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire
LE10 0FR

7th August 2025

Dear Alex Jolley,

Reference: 24/00914/OUT

Proposal: Outline planning application (with all matters reserved apart from access) for a phased mixed-use development comprising about 470 dwellings (Use Class C3) and provision of 1FE primary school (Use Class F1) and associated operations and infrastructure including but not limited to site re-profiling works, sustainable urban drainage system, public open space, landscaping, habitat creation, internal roads/routes, and upgrades to the public highway. | Burroughs Road Recreation Ground Burroughs Road Ratby Leicester Leicestershire LE6 0XZ

Thank you for consulting the Woodland Trust on this application. Our comments are based on a review of the information provided in the planning application. We are an evidence-led organisation, using our policy and planning expertise to assess impacts of development on ancient woodland, veteran trees and Woodland Trust-owned sites. The Trust aims to protect native woods, trees, and their wildlife for the future. We own or manage over 1,250 sites across the UK and have 500,000 members and supporters nationwide. We welcome access into our woodlands and encourage people to enjoy nature in our green spaces. However, intense footfall does cause increased pressure on what are sometimes very delicate habitats for flora and fauna, and managed access is often the best way to protect this balance.

Summary

The Trust **objects** to this application on the basis of:-

- impact to the Woodland Trust's Pear Tree Wood (grid ref: SK 50302 06480)
- impact to the Woodland Trust's Burroughs Wood, which includes an area of ancient woodland – Ratby Burroughs (grid ref: SK 49510 06325) - designated as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)
- impact to the Woodland Trust's Martinshaw Wood (grid ref: SK 50480 06783), designated as a Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) on the AWI.

Impact on Woodland Trust Sites

The proposals would introduce a considerable number of dwellings and associated infrastructure in the vicinity of three Woodland Trust-owned sites, including areas of ancient woodland. The creation of a large residential development in close proximity to our sites has the potential to result in numerous adverse impacts on the woodlands, during both the construction and occupational phases of the development.

The north-west section of the development site boundary is directly adjacent to the Trust's Pear Tree Wood. Pear Tree Wood was planted to act as a wildlife corridor between two ancient woodlands also owned by the Trust; Raby Burroughs ASNW located within Burroughs Wood and Martinshaw Wood PAWS. Whilst Pear Tree Wood currently excels in the role of providing a bridge for fauna between the two sites, the proposed development threatens this vital lifeline between the two ancient woodlands.

In its present form, the land proposed for development acts as a protective buffer and area of undeveloped and natural habitat adjacent to Pear Tree Wood. By replacing this natural area with a residential development there will be a dramatic change in the intensity of the land use. This will expose Pear Tree Wood and the neighbouring ancient woodlands (Martinshaw Wood PAWS and Ratby Burroughs ASNW) to a variety of outside influences, also known as edge effects, which may negatively impact on the sites.

Habitat fragmentation occurs when larger, connected areas of habitat are segmented and dispersed. The introduction of housing and associated infrastructure will change the semi-natural habitats close to the woodland, potentially impacting the functioning of the woodland and its wildlife. Loss of adjacent habitat, and the partial urbanisation of green spaces, can impact habitat connectivity and integrity, affecting species' dispersal, feeding, and nesting. The applicant needs to demonstrate that the proposals will not lead to deterioration of our woodlands.

The Trust is concerned about the following impacts, particularly in relation to Pear Tree Wood: -

- Intensification of human activity close to the woodland resulting in increased disturbance to breeding birds and other sensitive fauna, vegetation damage, removal of deadwood, predation and disturbance from domestic pets, and trampling.
- Increased issues with antisocial behaviour including fires, vandalism and litter due to higher footfall through the woodland as a result of the development.
- Damage to the Woodland Trust-owned Burroughs Road during both the construction and occupational phases of the development. It is anticipated that delivery drivers and/or heavy machinery may miss the turning into the development site and venture further down Burroughs Road. Once construction is complete, the road will receive increased usage from the nearby houses - this will require additional upkeep/maintenance at the expense of the Trust.
- Access to Burroughs Wood for the public and our contractors is over a ford on Burroughs Road. The development is likely to increase surface water runoff and result in access issues for both our visitors, and the contractors who keep our woodlands safe and healthy. This also presents a flooding risk.
- Fragmentation as a result of the loss of adjacent semi-natural habitats.
- Noise and light pollution from the intensification of human activity close to the woodland.
- Residential development providing a source of non-native plants and aiding their colonisation of the Trust's sites.
- Where woodlands are readily accessible to nearby housing, there is an unfortunate tendency for garden waste to be dumped in the woodland.

The Trust **objects** to this planning application, in its current form, until our concerns are fully addressed. This includes altering the landscaping to avoid funnelling the public towards Pear Tree Wood; hydrological management to prevent adverse impacts upon the ford and our

sites; and an agreement on site access to ensure any potential damage to our site will be mitigated entirely.

We request the applicant submits revised plans demonstrating how landscaping proposals will avoid directing residents towards Pear Tree Wood. We would also like to see further details on the green space provisions for the development. We also request the applicant demonstrates that effective mitigation can be provided to ensure there will be no adverse impacts on the Woodland Trust's sites as a result of the proposals.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the above concerns. Please contact us at planningcasework@woodlandtrust.org.uk if it would be helpful to discuss any of the points raised.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Cowley
Assistant Site Manager