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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Alex

Planning consultation: Outline for mixed-use development comprising 470 dwellings, 450 dwellings & care home/extra care facility, community hub, primary school, infrastructure etc.
Location: Burroughs Road Recreation Ground Burroughs Road Ratby Leicester LE6 0XZ

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 04 October 2024 which was received by Natural England on 04 October 2024

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 designated sites 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 and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Groby Pool & Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest

The site comprises a complex of habitats and includes fine examples of alder wood, dry and wet grassland, marsh, reedswamp and open water. The plant communities are representative of those developed on neutral or slightly acid soils in the North Midlands.

The designated site is separated from the proposed development by woodland, major roads and urban areas. There are no hydrological connections. 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

From the documents accompanying the consultation we consider this application falls outside the scope of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended) consultation arrangements, as the proposed development would not appear to lead to the loss of over 20ha 'best and most

'versatile' (BMV) agricultural land.

For this reason, we do not propose to make any detailed comments in relation to agricultural land quality and soils, although sustainable soil management should aim to minimise risks to the ecosystem services which soils provide, through appropriate site design / masterplan / Green Infrastructure. Natural England would advise that any grant of planning permission should be made subject to conditions to safeguard soil resources, including the provision of soil resource information in line with the Defra guidance [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#).

Further guidance is available in The British Society of Soil Science [Guidance Note](#) Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction which we recommend is followed in order to safeguard soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the development. If, however, you consider the proposal has significant implications for further loss of BMV agricultural land, we would be pleased to discuss the matter further.

Other advice

Green Infrastructure

Natural England note and welcome the inclusion of Green Infrastructure (GI) within the proposed plans for the development, including through the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). We note this is in line with the local policy as set out in Policy 20 of the adopted Local Plan and the Hinckley and Bosworth Green Infrastructure Strategy (2020)¹. We did note that the Planning Statement refers to the 2008 version of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, and we would suggest the most updated version is used and referenced. This could strengthen GI opportunities for the proposed development to link to the National Forest, which is noted in the 2020 version of the Strategy.

We welcome the inclusion of new recreational routes connecting to the existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW). We also note the opportunity for residents to connect to the National Forest Way² via the existing PRoWs to the North and East of the proposed development. We would encourage any strengthening of these connections through signage and information boards.

We would also direct the applicant to Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework³, particularly the Principles, Standards and the Process Journeys for Developers. These give a standardised and high-quality framework for the end-to-end process of delivering GI on housing development sites.

Natural England request a GI Strategy is provided at Reserved Matters stage to detail the on-site GI, as noted within this Outline application, for further review.

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 me on 07920 881 956.

Yours sincerely

Lucy Collins
Sustainable Development Higher Officer
East Midlands Area Team

¹ [Green Infrastructure Strategy | Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council](#)

² [National Forest Way: Stage 2 Bradgate Park to Thornton Reservoir |](#)

³ [Green Infrastructure Home](#)