

**Subject:** FW: 24/00914/OUT - Burroughs Road Recreation Ground Burroughs Road Ratby -  
Consultee comment - National Forest

**From:** National Forest Planning <[planning@nationalforest.org](mailto:planning@nationalforest.org)>

**Sent:** 06 November 2024 11:22

**To:** Alex Jelley <[Alex.Jelley@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk](mailto:Alex.Jelley@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** 24/00914/OUT - Burroughs Road Recreation Ground Burroughs Road Ratby

Dear Alex,

Thank you for consulting the National Forest Company (NFC) on the above '*Outline planning application (with all for matters reserved apart from access) for a phased mixed-use development comprising about 470 dwellings (Use Class C3) or, in the alternative, about 450 dwellings and care home/extra care facility (Use Class C2/C3). Provision of a community hub (Use Class F2); 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.*'

Please accept my apologies for the delay of this response.

#### **National Forest planting**

The application documents have correctly identified the need for 30% (or 9.81ha) National Forest planting (Policy 21), based on a site area of 32.7ha. However, given the scale of this proposal, it is disappointing that the applicant/agent has not taken the offered opportunity to liaise with us prior to the submission of the application.

The illustrative framework plan suggests 17ha of green infrastructure is to be provided (noting that landscaping is a reserved matter). The Planning Statement (paragraph 4.2.20) equates this to 51% of the total site area and concludes that this meets the 30% National Forest requirement.

However, the currently submitted scheme does not comply with Policy 21 as not all of the green infrastructure shown on the illustrative framework can be considered National Forest planting. As identified in Policy 21, National Forest planting will generally involve woodland planting, which is not explicitly shown on the plans. While we welcome and encourage retained woodland and trees, this contributes to a National Forest character rather than adding to Forest cover and the National Forest planting requirement. Therefore, existing planting in addition to small areas of incidental green space and narrow linear features will not qualify as National Forest planting. Without understanding the design approach of the drainage ponds and play areas, it remains uncertain whether these areas can be included in the National Forest planting offer. This all results in a significant reduction in the green infrastructure offer that can be considered National Forest planting on this site. Based on the current plans, we are uncertain whether the National Forest planting requirement can be met on site.

Our preference is that National Forest planting will be met on site. Accordingly, the illustrative framework should be amended to demonstrate a minimum of 9.81ha of National Forest planting. This should include significant areas of woodland planting, and exclude the areas which due to size, location, lack of tree planting cannot be considered National Forest planting. National Forest planting should explicitly feature on the illustrative framework plan to provide assurances that National Forest planting has been

appropriately considered and will be met at the reserved matters stage. We will be happy to comment further on receipt of an amended plan.

### **National Forest character**

Although this is an outline application, it is not clear whether the applicant has considered the potential for achieving a National Forest character in the future design. This could be achieved by tree lined roads (we note the illustrative masterplan shows this), native hedging to demarcate public/private boundaries, timber cladding, timber gate posts and porches and timber post and rail fences to open space. Another aspect of National Forest character is sustainable design yet there appears to be little in respect of energy efficiency measures beyond standard Building Regulation requirements. We request that the provision of appropriate details to achieve National Forest character at reserved matters stage is conditioned.

### **Retained**

The impact on trees will need to be considered by the Council's Tree Officer, and all retained trees will need to be appropriately protected during construction.

### **Connections**

We welcome the network of paths and the connections to off-site paths and public rights of way.

### **Play equipment**

The NFC recommends natural play design which is integrated into the open space. This could include natural materials such as tree trunks and boulders, changes in level and access to water. Where equipment is used this should be timber based as should benches, bins and fencing. Play and exploration should be encouraged across the landscape and designating areas for play behind fencing should be avoided. Appropriately designed and located play areas, have the potential to form part of the National Forest planting offer.

### **School**

The application includes a proposed primary school. As you may be aware, over 90% of primary schools in the National Forest now provide regular outdoor learning within their grounds or local woodland settings and we are committed to supporting more opportunities across the Forest. We would encourage the applicant consider the National Forest location in the design of the building and to liaise with our education colleagues to maximise the opportunities for outdoor learning in this newly created school.

To conclude;

- The currently submitted scheme does not comply with Policy 21.
- Not all the green infrastructure shown on the illustrative framework will be considered National Forest planting.
- A revised plan clearly demonstrating a compliant amount and type of National Forest planting, should be submitted prior to determination of this outline application. We will comment further on receipt of this plan.
- It is not clear whether National Forest character has been considered. This can include play area design, street trees, the inclusion of timber in design and the inclusion of sustainable design.
- We welcome the network of paths and the connections to off-site paths and public rights of way.
- The impact on trees will need to be considered by the Council's Tree Officer, and all retained trees will need to be appropriately protected during construction.
- The applicant is encouraged to liaise with our education colleagues to achieve a well-designed and located Forest school provision.

As always, we are very happy to discuss this response with you, and look forward to be reconsulted.

Kind Regards

Eilish

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