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Alex Jelley
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
VIA Email: alex.jelley@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

18th December 2025

Dear Alex

Land West of Ratby – Response to Woodland Trust Comments (24/00914/OUT)

The following letter addresses issues raised by the Woodland Trust (WT) in their objection to the above application, dated 7th August 2025. WT comments are copied below with a response by FPCR provided in blue text where these are relevant to ecology and Landscape. The majority of issues raised relate to development in proximity to WT owned woodland rather than the proposals themselves. It should be noted that the Site benefits from draft allocation within the forthcoming Local Plan which supports the principle of development in this area.

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. –

Appropriate recommendations have been made within the Ecological Appraisal for the Site as well as within the species-specific protected species reports to limit impacts on sensitive fauna (i.e., sensitive lighting strategy for bats). Pear Tree Wood, which lies outside the Site, is publicly accessible and contains the long-distance recreation route of the Ivanhoe Trail. Pear Tree Wood and surrounding woodland is connected via Burroughs Road and can be accessed via Public Footpaths (48 and 50) that extend out of Ratby. Woodland at Ratby Burroughs contains a car park with recreational routes heading off into Pear Tree Wood and beyond. The area is already subject to an existing level of disturbance with the public actively encouraged to visit through the WT website. The application does not propose to alter any right of access that the public has over these areas, which are maintained in part to allow public access.

Proposals will include an extensive area of green space within the Site with recreational routes around the green infrastructure of the development which will provide alternative walking routes for residents and dog walkers, helping reduce recreational pressures on Local Wildlife Sites (Burroughs Wood and Martinshaw Wood) as well as local woodland such as Pear Tree Wood.

•Increased issues with antisocial behaviour including fires, vandalism and litter due to higher footfall through the woodland as a result of the development.

Landscaping proposals within the Site will encourage residents to use on-site green infrastructure for recreation with on-site walking routes for residents and dog walkers. Well managed woodlands reduce the likelihood of antisocial behaviour, and the development provides an opportunity for community engagement as well as promoting membership to the Woodland Trust.

•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.

Not an ecological issue, although appropriate signage to direct delivery drivers and machinery during construction should prevent/ limit impacts. A Construction & Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which is expected to be prepared as part of a planning condition, would be agreed with the LPA and this will ensure appropriate routes for construction.

•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.

We would defer comment on this to the flood consultants, however, flood attenuation is included within the proposals to mitigate for the increase in surface water.

•Fragmentation as a result of the loss of adjacent semi-natural habitats.

Revised proposals provide a substantial 'buffer' to existing woodland both on and off-site. This will provide a sizable wildlife corridor, enhancing connectivity to existing habitats across the site and into the wider area. In combination with the retention of the existing hedgerow network and associated mature trees, connectivity is expected to be maintained and enhanced. Areas of green infrastructure on site will also provide alternate semi-natural edge habitats of higher value to the existing arable land and agricultural grassland. The proposed Green Infrastructure comprises 17ha and will be multifunctional and varied in character and will provide long term benefits for biodiversity.

•Noise and light pollution from the intensification of human activity close to the woodland.

The proposed developed is located approximately 200m from Pear Tree Wood, which lies beyond the willow plantation included within the redline boundary. Scrub planting is proposed to buffer existing woodland, and a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented. In terms of noise, it is expected there is sufficient distant from the woodlands such that attenuation of any anthropogenic noise will occur. It is therefore unlikely that any elevation in noise levels will be significant (i.e. above the widely used 55dbA threshold),

•Residential development providing a source of non-native plants and aiding their colonisation of the Trust's sites.

Proposed new woodland on-site will 'buffer' existing woodland and be subject to a management plan as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligation and a Landscape & Ecological Management Plan which will be agreed with the LPA. Management will include the removal of non-native and invasive species, reducing the likelihood of species travelling off-site and colonising the Woodland Trust woodlands. Proposed residential development is located approximately 200m from Pear Tree and Martinshaw wood at the closest point, with the majority of species not capable of dispersing over 150m through natural colonisation (i.e., *Rhododendron ponticum*).

•Where woodlands are readily accessible to nearby housing, there is an unfortunate tendency for garden waste to be dumped in the woodland.

Pear Tree and Martinshaw Wood are both located approximately 200m from proposed development at the closest point, with Burroughs wood over 500m away. Given the distance from residential gardens, it is unlikely residents will travel garden waste to off-site woodlands, particularly as garden waste services are offered in this area by the council.

I trust the above answers the comments provided by the Woodland Trust, however, if you require further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



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