

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Daniel Callis – Principal Planning Officer
(Development Management)

From: Paul Evans – Ecology Officer
(Enforcement – Development Management)

Date: 29th April 2020

Ref: S/2020/0385/MAR Towcester Vale Phase 1 London Road Towcester – Ecology Comments

Having reviewed the submitted documents for this application I have the following comments.

The proposal should ensure that it accords with the detailed mitigation measures and enhancements outlined in the Environmental Statement and Green Infrastructure Strategy that was submitted with the outline application and the approved site wide Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (EMP) by BSG ecology dated 22nd May 2017.

The application has been submitted without any ecological information, this limits the comments and assessment I can make of the submitted proposals. Although a condition (no. 18) it would be useful for future reserved matters applications to be accompanied by the phase specific Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan that is detailed to be submitted as part of the discharge of condition 18 of the original permission. This would also ensure that the mitigation and enhancement measures are embedded in the detailed design stage rather than being considered at later stages and any required mitigation and enhancement having to be considered as an add on rather than an integral component of the proposals/development.

The submitted Detailing Planting Plan (DRWG No: P1176_24) does not identify the full extent of the 'Important' hedgerow (as defined by the Hedgerow Regulation 1997) that was identified in the original outline application and Site Wide Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (EMEP) to be retained. It only shows the northwestern section, this should continue along the woodland boundary to the spine road. It appears from the landscape drawing that the hedgerow will be lost and replaced with a cycleway and long mown grass, so clarity is required here to understand why this is so.

From the details that have been submitted it is not clear where street lighting/lighting will be present within the development. Light spill onto the existing hedgerows and woodland that border the southwest edge of the proposal boundary should be minimised to ensure minimal disturbance to commuting wildlife such as bats and badgers that utilise these habitats

The hedgerows and woodlands to be retained along the southwestern boundary should be protected during the construction phase from incursion and root damage through the establishment and fencing of an appropriate root protection zone.

In terms of the species proposed in the detailed planting plan I would recommend some adjustments are made to ensure those created habitats directly adjacent to retained habitats are planted with native species to essentially "grade into" the formal landscaping of the development where non-native cultivated varieties of plants would be appropriate.

- Native Shrub Mix remove *Sambucus nigra* and increase numbers of other species to suit
- Remove non natives from the shrub and tree mixes along the retained woodland/hedgerow edge
 - *Sorbus aria*
 - *Acer pseudoplatanus*
 - *Fagus sylvatica*
 - *Prunus avium* 'Plena'
 - *Carpinus betulus*

Replace with native trees for example *Quercus robur* and *Acer campestre*.

- Would it be possible for the crocus and narcissus bulbs to be replaced with something more appropriate for example native wildflowers e.g. cowslip.
- Replace the long mown grass with a Wildflower meadow mix similar to that proposed for application /2020/0064/MAR on DRWG No: P.1176_36 eg Emorsgate EM2 Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture or similar, in order to give a more attractive grassland for residents and users whilst providing an additional biodiversity enhancement.