From: Turner Bob
Sent: 22 January 2018 10:29
To: dcscan@sheffield.gov.uk
Subject: FW: Emailing: 17/04673/OUT Land At Junction With Carr Road Hollin Busk Lane Sheffield S36 1GH - ecology comments
Attachments: 1704673OUT Carr Road application ecology comments.docx

Please add to casefile 17/04673/OUT

-----Original Message-----
From: Harris Richard
Sent: 19 January 2018 15:48
To: Turner Bob
Subject: Emailing: 17/04673/OUT Land At Junction With Carr Road Hollin Busk Lane Sheffield S36 1GH - ecology comments

Hi Bob,

Comments on 17/04673/OUT Carr Road from ecology perspective.

Regards,

Richard

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Parks & Countryside
3rd Floor
West wing
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S1 4PL
[redacted]

Memorandum
Place - Culture and Environment
Parks and Countryside

From:	Richard Harris Ecology Unit Moorfoot Building	*To:*	Bob Turner Planning Service: Development Management
Date:	19th January 2018	*Copy to:*	
Ref:		*Ref:*	17/04673/OUT
Tel:	273 4481		

Land At Junction With Carr Road Hollin Busk Lane Sheffield S36 1GH

I have the following comments to make in regard to the above planning application:

Evidence of qualifications and experience for surveyors for each of the species groups and habitats surveyed has not been provided.

As background, surveys need to show whether protected species are present in the area or nearby, and how they use the site.

Habitats & botanical

Surveys and findings are largely acceptable. Please see comments on hedgerows below.

HEGS assessment

The hedgerow is not shown on the Phase 1 habitat plan. Scores to determine ecological value are shown but no method of how they were derived is presented? A summary only of the extent and ecological value of the hedgerow is provided in Table 6. This needs to be provided.

Badger survey

No evidence found of badger activity during the survey.

Surveys and findings acceptable.

Field Survey - Species

Paragraph 3.13 of Ecological Appraisal states:
"*Given the nature of the habitats within and immediately surrounding the site, particular consideration was given to the potential presence of birds, bats, badger, amphibians and reptiles.*"

Somewhat surprisingly there is no mention of brown hare, which is listed as a Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation under S41 of the NERC Act. This species was seen on site in March and subsequently on the adjoining land and other sites within the same 1km grid square. It is safe to say this species uses the site and has not been addressed.

Reptiles

6 surveys were completed in June, 1 in July (7 in total). The Standing Advice therefore has not been strictly followed. If this standing advice can't be followed, they should include a statement with the planning application explaining why. Details of weather conditions have not been provided e.g. rain, wind, cloud, nor time of day survey carried out (this information has been provided for the bat activity transect). This information should be submitted for consideration.

Amphibians & reptiles
The silted ponds within fox glen wood are likely to be a good habitat for other local herptiles (amphibians and reptiles) that would are likely to use the site as foraging habitat. A lack of survey results does not mean the site is not used by reptiles and amphibians. The potential use of the site by grass snake and their amphibian prey cannot be discounted.

Great Crested Newt
According to the applicant in section 5.38 No waterbodies suitable for breeding GCN were located at or within 500m of the site. Therefore, GCN are not a statutory constraint to proposals.

Surveys and findings acceptable.

Water vole
Although referred to on the citation sheet that Water vole *Arvicola amphibious*, a UKBAP Priority species which are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, have been recorded on site at Fox Glen, and on the re-survey form shown as a main interest feature for which the site is listed as a Local Wildlife Site; the vegetation is limited, the substrate is unsuitable, and no water vole is recorded from Sheffield Biological Records Centre from on or nearby the site. It is therefore concluded that no further assessment is required for the presence of water vole.

White Clawed Crayfish
Surveys need to show whether protected species are present in the area or nearby, and how they use the site. Survey for white-clawed crayfish if its distribution and historical records suggest they may be present. We do not have detailed records of the distribution of white clawed crayfish across the whole of the Sheffield region.

The report does not make any comments about white clawed crayfish. Have the possible off-site impacts of the proposed development been fully considered? Although it is felt there is a low potential for white clawed crayfish to be present in the beck in Fox Glen (Clough Dike) this should be addressed by the applicants' consultant ecologists. If; after a proportional and objective assessment, the

ecologists claim that crayfish are not an ecological receptor then we will consider this, but an assessment should be carried out. How will surface water run-off be managed to ensure no impact on the hydrology and water quality of the water course both of which could impact on biodiversity e.g. reducing flashiness in larger and smaller flood events?

Birds

The survey methodology was acceptable. Once the additional surveys were undertaken the coverage for most species was acceptable.

Lapwing were identified as 'probable breeder'. Within the site boundary the following were recorded: 1 adult present on 07/03/2017 and 07/05/2017 (EU); 2 birds on 14/03/2017 (FPCR); 5 birds on 24/03/2017 (FPCR); 2 birds on 06/04/2017 (FPCR); 11 birds on 20/04/2017 (FPCR). There was also breeding confirmed in 2017; at least two pairs nested within 100m of site boundary (EU). On the basis of the current evidence we can estimate numbers breeding on site or nearby and therefore impacted by the development to be between 2 and 4 pairs.

Meadow pipit (BoCC Amber listed species) uses the site to breed and outside the breeding season as foraging habitat. According to the applicant the species will be lost from site. How will this species be mitigated for? This species does use the site in winter and is a probable breeder.

Although most of the bird species recorded by FPCR are widespread and relatively abundant in parts of Yorkshire, some of them are classed as Red List species: lapwing, curlew, starling, fieldfare, song thrush, redwing, mistle thrush, house sparrow, grey wagtail and linnet. By definition, these species are vulnerable and undergoing serious decline across the UK.

The applicant states 'With the exception of lapwing, the residual impacts on these species is expected to be locally beneficial to negligible if a range of measures were implemented.' Therefore the applicant accepts that lapwing are not addressed by the mitigation/compensation proposals.

Of particular relevance to this Natural England's Standing advice for local planning authorities to assess the impacts of development on wild birds.

It states:

'Where birds are displaced by development, especially Section 41 birds and red and amber listed species, a suitable amount of replacement habitat should be considered.'

Lapwing is Listed as a "non-qualifying species of interest" in the citation for the South Pennine Moors Phase 1 Special Protection Area (2000); NERC Act 2006. Section 41: Species of Principal Importance in England; UK Red list species (Birds of Conservation Concern 4, 2015).

The replacement habitat provided is referenced on the Concept Masterplan SK08 January 2017 as ‘species rich grassland – greenspace managed for biodiversity and recreational benefits’. This habitat is not suitable for breeding lapwing as they like short grassland as breeding and feeding habitat and levels of disturbance associated with recreation would also make this unsuitable.

Paragraphs 5.14 to 5.17 from the Breeding Bird Survey provide a basic description of some the ways in which the green infrastructure can be enhanced for birds. There is a lack of detail here.

Natural England’s Standing Advice Protected species: how to review planning applications states:

‘Check compensation is appropriate

Ask for compensation measures to be included in planning proposals if it isn’t possible to minimise the risk to protected species. Compensation must:

- make sure that no more habitat is lost than is replaced, which means there’s no net loss
- provide for like-for-like habitat replacements, which are located next to or near existing species population (check distances in the relevant species standing advice) and in a safe position to provide a long-term home
- provide for a better alternative habitat in terms of quality or area, compared to what will be lost
- include proposals to make sure habitats are still connected to allow normal species movement

Make sure alternative sites are established far enough in advance so they’re ready for the species that will use them.’

The Standing Advice also states:

‘Promote biodiversity

You can ask the developer to consider including measures to enhance or restore biodiversity in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the biodiversity duty.

This can include habitat creation or improvement for protected and unprotected species and their wider foraging areas.’

Also of relevance Natural England’s Protected species decision checklist states:

‘• there’s a long-term management strategy for the site for the benefit of the species’

Bats

In the desk study it would have been advisable to use South Yorkshire Bat Group as they would have additional records that may have been useful and provided additional information on bat use of the site.

In 3.20 the BS 8596 (Surveying for Bats in Trees and Woodlands) was initially used to provide a list of Potential Roosting Features (PRF's) but then the BCT bat survey protocol for trees was reverted to in Table 1 " …*to allow more specific survey criteria to be used*" we have to say that this is an unnecessary complication as the BCT guidelines provide just as comprehensive a list of PRF's in para. 6.2.4. Why go to the trouble of using a combination of both methods for one tree T1 that will be retained (5.29)?

In describing the methods used in carrying out the bat activity surveys the BCT guidelines, NE and JNCC are referred to at para.3.27. At paras. 3.24 and 3.25 habitats and survey effort is described but there is no justification as to why the effort described as three surveys carried out over the spring, summer and autumn periods was selected. The survey guidance references assume that judgements are made by surveying ecologists to make the survey effort proportional and reasonable according to their assessments of the site and also that the survey design should fully assess the impacts of the proposals. Whist at 3.24 the habitat is described thus:"….*the presence of continuous treelines and hedgerows providing good connectivity in the landscape and the presence of varied habitats such as scrub, woodland, grassland and open water in the vicinity*" The survey effort used (3.25) suggests a low suitability for bats and yet the description above suggests at least a 'moderate suitability'. Whatever decision is made on survey effort and design then it should be explicitly and rationally set out with clear justifications. This has not been done.

We have no concerns about the route of the transect although as we say above, without some clear justification we consider that effort should have been based on a classification of moderate suitability which would have required one survey per month. We do have some concerns with the output of the static recording. From the interpretation of the method used (from paras. 3.32 -3.35 and 4.44 -4.49) it is stated that 3X detectors were used over the survey period and hence 3x records should have come from each of the three location over the survey year. However the **Static detector results** table in Appendix B just shows one set of results per location over three seasonal survey occasions. Surely the principle of surveys over a number of occasions over period of time (May-Sept) is to repeat them in the same location so that clear comparisons and conclusions can be drawn. The high number of registrations from Unit 1 in the spring were not followed up by recordings from that location in the summer and autumn but from locations 2 and 3 respectively. Basic survey design seems to have been forgotten about. The principle of replication in the method and comparison of data is vital to make any survey of any use at all. The high number of registrations in Unit1 in the spring compared to those of Units 2 and 3 in summer and autumn respectively are to a large degree, left hanging. There could be speculation on what repeat recordings at Unit 1 would reveal if recordings were set up for the summer and autumn, a constant high level, an increased level, a

drop in registrations. This can only be identified through repeat surveys in the same location.

Given the high numbers of bat passes identified at Unit 1 in the spring it would have been vital to the treatment of this application to be able to have sufficient information about the behaviour of bats on the site. As it is there is a large gap in that knowledge.

The BCT guidance has not been followed. Natural England's Standing Advice states: You can refuse planning permission, or ask for a survey to be redone, if:
•it isn't suitable
•it's carried out at the wrong time of year
•you don't have enough information to assess the effect on a protected species

Two of these conditions have not been met.

We object to this application on the grounds of insufficient information in respect of the use of the site by bats which are European Protected Species.

Invertebrates
SBRC holds records of wall brown butterfly from the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site. The wall brown is listed as a Species of Principal Importance for nature conservation under S41 of the NERC Act. Why wasn't it considered necessary to undertake a survey for this and other species?

Habitat mitigation and compensation

There is a conflict between local areas of play and recreation and biodiversity in the meadow area and SUDS scheme particularly in respect of birds. Is the SUDS scheme big enough to be resistant to disturbance pressures?

The applicant also states 'There is significant opportunity to improve and enhance this hedgerow including infilling gaps with other native species to improve its species richness and connectivity as well as introducing an appropriate management regime to improve its structure and form.' Infilling of the existing hedgerow is acceptable, but it should not be extended as this will discourage birds of open habitat. Hedgerows can provide opportunities for predators to pick off wader chicks.

Should consideration be given to granting permission the following should be considered.

Ecological measures could be included into the SUDS to ensure this habitat is suitable for target[1] species although its success would depend on levels of disturbance, suitability of habitat, and long-term management.

There will be additional visitor pressure on Fox Glen although it is accepted that it is unlikely to significantly adversely affect the woodland. A contribution (e.g. S106)

[1] E.g. Protected, BAP species, species of principal importance and BoCC Red and Amber listed species.

could be provided to improve footpaths, facilitate sympathetic management, and improve interpretation signage.

The retention of the dry stone walls on site is noted as a method of retaining links between habitats but unless some form of wildlife underpass is included in the design at the junction with the road, connectivity cannot be considered to be retained from a reptile or amphibian perspective.

A viable compensatory scheme could be considered but this is not provided as part of this scheme.

There is outstanding information and/or clarification to be provided. From an ecological standpoint we cannot support the proposal and therefore must object to the scheme.

Please include **Directive D091** in any decision.