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8110: GREAT WILSEY PARK INFRASTRUCTURE RMA

BRIEFING NOTE: JAKI FISHER COMMENTS 14.02.20

Introduction

1. Comments have been received from Jaki Fisher, Landscape and Ecology Officer with West Suffolk Council, in relation to the Infrastructure RMA. Principally these comprise written comments on the landscape plans – “the red pen plans” – but a number of separate points have also been raised, as relayed by Penny Mills, Planning Officer. These comments are reproduced below, together with the applicant’s response.

Hazel Dormouse

In terms of Dormouse, the key point that Jaki has raised is in relation to sections of proposed hedgerow removal which would affect hedgerow connectivity. Jaki has highlighted that it isn’t clear how this has been taken into account and whether any specific mitigation is proposed.

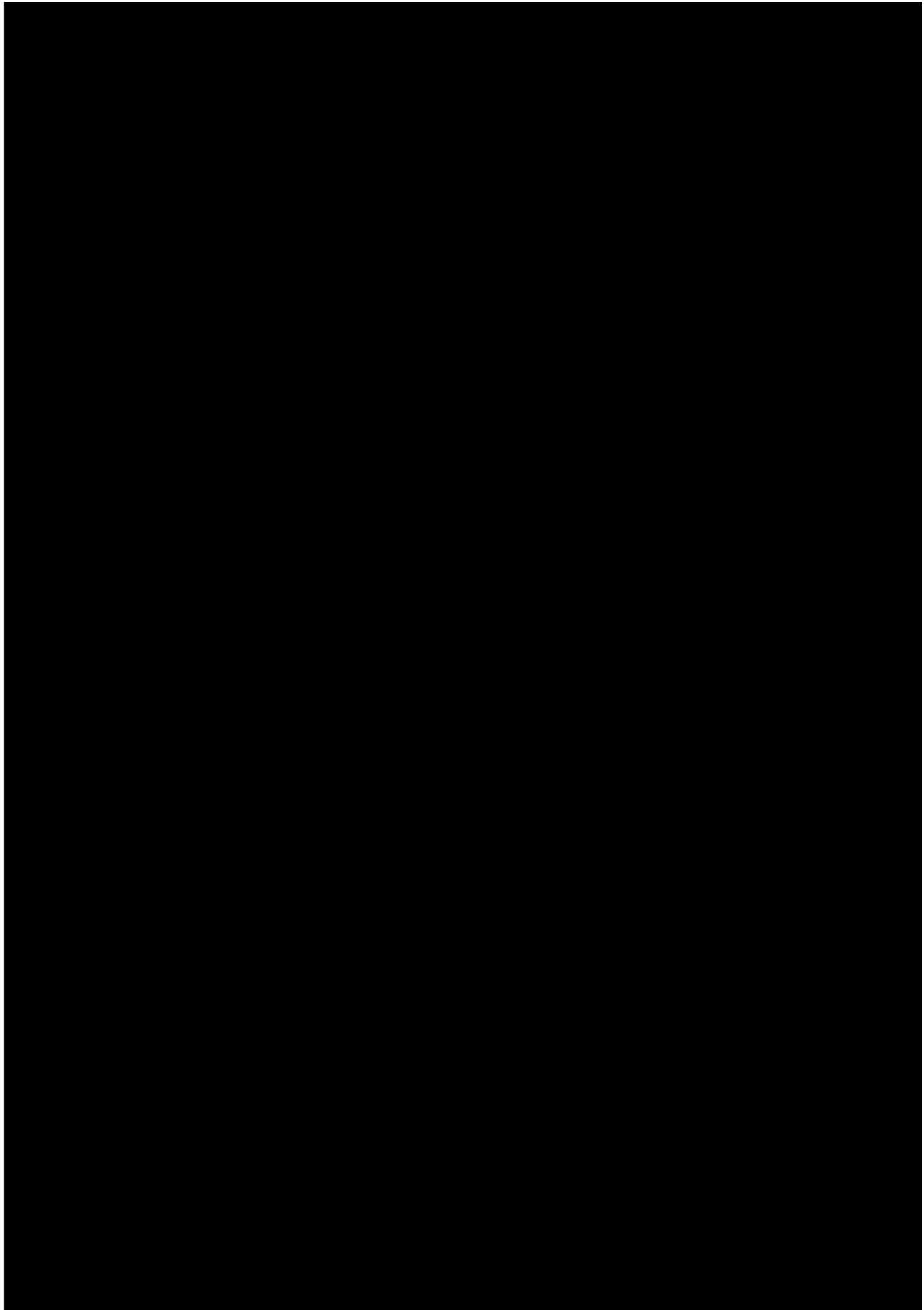
The dormouse strategy at outline stage that formed part of the ES relied on hedgerow removal being minimised to sections of 12m as does your current strategy – however, this is does not appear to be reflected in the not [sic] drawings, where removed and retained hedgerows are not always clear.

Jaki has also flagged up the need for a method statement and details of how hedgerow removal will be minimised close to headwall construction also detailing replacement planting where required.

The retention of hedgerow margins is proposed (and welcomed). However there is no drawing showing the protection fencing alignment during the construction phase.

2. The nest has been recorded in a hedgerow that is being retained. It is true that part of the spine road is being constructed to the north, as specifically allowed for in the Hedgerow Removal Plan, but full connectivity is retained to the south, with Great Field Plantation, the Southern Plantation, the hedgerows through the meadows area, and beyond.
3. The Dormouse Mitigation Strategy described in the ES was intended to account for such eventualities, and has been fully adopted as part of Redrow’s approach to the development. The methods for vegetation removal are fully set out at section 14 of the EIS.

4. Other issues of hedgerow retention / removal and protection fencing will be clarified on the next iteration of the drawings.





Bats

It is not clear from the information submitted that the bat hops will maintain a dark corridor – the light contour plans show the levels to be much higher.

The tree planting is much smaller in height that specified in the lighting strategy and it is not yet clear if SCC highways will allow 4m street lights. Alternative lighting in the GI could be considered for example solar stud lighting.

Bat boxes should not be placed on the mature oaks particularly those that already display potential bat roost features. Bat boxes are best located on trees that are of poor quality and have a relatively short useful lifespan.

12. These comments have been raised with the consultant responsible for lighting provision. Great energy has been expended to make the dark corridors and bat hops functional, but there is an overriding element of highway safety to consider. The design approach has sought to achieve a sensible compromise following SCC Highways advice given at pre-app meetings and the ES requirements for bat lighting mitigation. The positions and type of luminaires has been reviewed, and wherever possible these are positioned away from bat hops. The spacing of lights has been reviewed in the bat hop locations, with a view to maximising distance between them, and all lights are directional LEDs. It is important to recognise that the lux contour plans show the light at ground level, not above the luminaires, and upward spill is minimised. Further advice received from SCC Highways indicates that arrangements could be made to dim the lights closest to the bat hops once they are adopted.
13. Stud lighting on the cycle path through the southern meadows green infrastructure will be considered. Again, this will be subject to highways considerations.
14. Comments on bat boxes are noted, but it is not agreed that boxes should be established on trees with a limited lifespan. The point in the boxes is that they will serve as a long term enhancement. Trees with significant existing potential roost features will generally be avoided in preference to those without such features, but established trees will be selected.

Birds

Swift boxes would be better fixed to houses (relevant for dev parcel RM).

15. The provision of Swift boxes on poles as part of the Infrastructure RMA is a recognised measure that does not preclude other features being brought forward in the residential parcels, as is indeed the case with integrated Swift bricks being included in the EIS for the first Residential RMA.

Red Pen Plans

16. Several comments in relation to ecological matters have been raised on the landscape drawings. These have been discussed internally and amendments have been made. The EIS and LEMP have been amended to reflect these changes where necessary, in terms of updates to the plans and adjustments to the text where required. Further amendments have been made to reflect changes to the drainage strategy. Comments on the lighting strategy have also been addressed, subject to the further considerations noted above.

Ecology Solutions
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