

Planning Consultation Response

Application No: 23/01994/FUL

To: Planning Department

From: BDC Ecology

Date: 30/07/2024

**DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS ON SITE, AND THE
ERECTION OF A 64NO. BED CARE HOME (USE CLASS C2),
TOGETHER WITH ACCESS, CAR PARKING, LANDSCAPING AND
ASSOCIATED WORKS.
THE WOODLANDS HOTEL, COUPALS ROAD, STURMER**

Thank you for re-consulting BDC Ecology

Summary

We have reviewed the revised information submitted by the applicant including the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations spreadsheet (unsigned and undated), the Biodiversity Net gain Summary (FPCR, March 2024), Woodlands Village Green Landscape Management Plan (FCPR, March 2024), the Landscape Strategy Plan drawing 1119-FCPR-XX-XX-DR-L 0003 09, and the detailed Landscape Plan drawing 11119-FPCR-XX-XX-DR-L-0004 P02.

As a result, we have the following additional comments to make:

The revised Biodiversity metric 3.1 – Calculation Tool demonstrates that a measurable net gain can now be achieved for this development, in line with the principles of mandatory biodiversity net gains. This includes a total net gain of 3.20 habitat units (+40.11%), and a net gain of 0.10 for hedgerow units (+18.09%). We note that the trading summary has now been resolved and that the proposals include off-site provision for an area adjacent to the application site (Public Open Space – Village Green). We are satisfied that the Woodlands Village Green Landscape Management Plan (FCPR, March 2024), is broadly within the aims of the post implementation habitat condition requirements, but it would be useful for the document to refer back to the Biodiversity metric 3.1– Calculation Tool condition aims to demonstrate how this will be achieved for this application, particularly for proposed enhancement of scrub habitat which does not appear to be included.

The off-site habitat creation and enhancement will need to be secured via s.106 agreement, with this being agreed by the applicant and the local authority.

We also highlight that the submitted condition assessment sheets have assessed 'Other neutral grassland' as 'moderate' but the assessment has 3 passes indicating a 'Poor' condition. Therefore, the incorrect condition has been entered into the metric which has created a higher net gain result, and we recommend that this is amended.

We also recommend that a finalised Landscape and Ecological Management Plan which should set out the detailed management and monitoring plan to achieve the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Metric for the on-site habitats should be secured as a condition of any consent. We highlight that this should include the specific woodland management practices that are being aimed for and indicate that appropriate timescales should be provided in order to clearly demonstrate that 'Other woodland; broadleaved' can be enhanced to reach 'good condition' within the given timescales.

Further, it would be beneficial to have some further clarification on how the proposed 5 x medium trees can achieve a diameter of >30cm in a period of 27 years. This should be based on further information on planting specifications, tree vigour, geography, soil conditions, sunlight, precipitation levels and temperature. However, we acknowledge that further detail of this could be secured as part of planting specifications and / or Landscape Ecological Management Plan.

Amanda Wilkin BSc (Hons)
Ecology and Natural Environment Officer
Braintree District Council