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Reference: TT3008- Newtown Court Farm -L03-Biodiversity Metric- Letter Report – Rev00

Dear Peter,

Please find below the results and assessment of a Biodiversity Metric completed in connection with a proposed three dwelling residential development at Newtown Court, Newtown, Newbury, Berkshire (OS Grid Location SU 4763 7657). Planning Ref: 21/02301/FUL.

The Biodiversity Metric was completed by Turnstone Ecology on the 24th March 2022 and is to be used in conjunction with the Ecology Report (*Turnstone Ecology Ltd, R01-Ecology Report – Rev03; November 2021*). All habitats present on site have been detailed within the Ecology Report, a summary of these habitats can be found below. This habitat information has been used to inform the Biodiversity Metric and ultimately calculate habitat quality and predicted biodiversity change (net gain or loss) post development. Long-term monitoring for any on-site habitats will be given, in line with the Biodiversity Metric guidance and is to be detailed in full within an ecological management plan for the site.

Purpose of the Report

This report is designed to assess the impact of the proposals on the habitats and communities present on site, produce a quantifiable figure in biodiversity units for net retention, loss and gain and will aid in determining financial commitments and planning obligations of the developer under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), where required. The following recommendations have been made by Basingstoke and Deane Council:

The applicant be invited to enter into a suitable legal agreement (in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and Policies CN1 and EM4 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029) between the applicant and the Borough Council to secure a financial contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision and off-site ecological mitigation to secure biodiversity net gain.

Should the requirement set out above not be satisfactorily secured, then the Planning and Development Manager be delegated to REFUSE permission for appropriate reasons.

On completion of the legal agreement the Planning and Development Manager be delegated to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

Condition 4. Subject to appropriate off-site mitigation to secure biodiversity net gain, the development would conserve the biodiversity value and nature conservation interests of the site, and as such the proposal would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), Policy EM4 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029, and the relevant guidance contained within the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document (2018).

The letter report summarises the methods and results of surveys carried out on site to determine habitat types present on site and floral composition of these habitats. Area sizes per habitat, habitat distinctiveness and quality and local importance of these habitats have been calculated using the Defra Biodiversity Metric; Small-sites Metric to determine the habitat retention, loss and gain post development as a result of the proposed development.

Due to the scale of the works and area affected, it has been considered appropriate to present the results and assessment as a letter report, which is to be used as a supplement to the existing Ecology Report.

Ecological Context

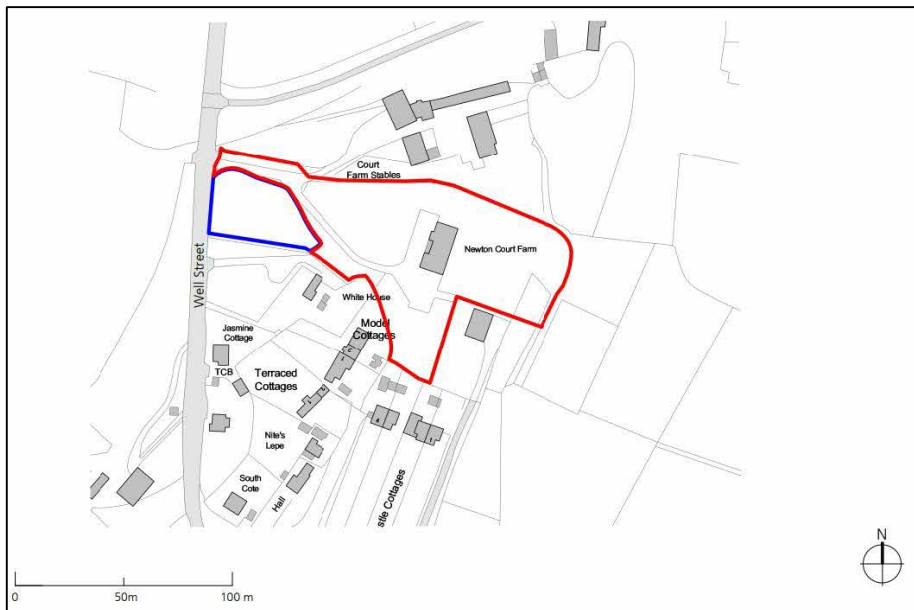
Newtown Court Farm is situated in Newtown, approximately 3 km south of Newbury. The site survey area comprises a detached dwelling with a detached garage and a large garden (*Figure 1*). The house and the garden are bordered by hedgerows or fences on all sides with trees on the northern, eastern and southern sides. It should be noted that the area that was surveyed also includes a separate application site (20/01744/FUL - Erection of detached dwelling with associated access and landscaping), at the western end of the survey area that is not part of this current application (*Figure 2*).

The property is located in a rural location accessed via Well Street, the main lane through the village. The village is immediately surrounded by agricultural land, extending slightly further to the southern and south-eastern areas of Newbury. Greenham and Crookham Commons are to the north-east, which have large areas of woodland and open heathland, and Newtown and Burghclere Commons and associated extensive woodland are to the south. The River Enborne and Newtown Pond are approximately 430m to the north.

Figure 1. Location of proposed development (© Microsoft 2021)



Figure 2. Red line boundary of site survey area (note that the footprint of a separate application - 20/01744/FUL, at the western end of the survey area is indicated in blue)



Methods

An Ecological Assessment was undertaken by Turnstone Ecology in 2021, historic data and information relating to locally designated sites was obtained. The entirety of the site and adjacent land was surveyed using methods based on the Phase 1 Habitat Survey approach (Joint Nature Conservation Committee 2010), which is a standardised method to survey main habitat types.

Following on from the production of the Ecology Report the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 tool was used to determine types of habitats lost as a result of the proposed residential development and the ecological value of these habitats. The Biodiversity Metric was used to calculate the baseline habitat data for the site, post-development on and off-site loss, enhancement, retention and succession.

On Site Habitats

General

The habitats across the whole site are fairly uniform with little variation. General habitat descriptions are given below, and specific habitat notes can be found within the accompanying Ecology Report. Phase 1 habitat types that were recorded within and immediately adjacent to the proposed development sites are listed below:

- Amenity grassland
- Buildings and hardstanding
- Hedgerow
- Ornamental planting
- Trees and shrubs
- Pond

Amenity grassland

Amenity grassland takes up the majority of the area of the proposed development site. The grassland is very well maintained and mown to a short sward, meaning it has extremely low ecological value. Identifiable plants were very common species associated with amenity grassland.

Buildings and hardstanding

A large residential dwelling is located in the centre of the site with a detached garage to the south and a wooden shed/summerhouse to the north-east. The buildings are described in detail within the accompanying Ecology Report. A large area of the proposed development site is taken up by an existing gravel entrance road and parking area, currently providing access to the site from Well Street to the west. Immediately around the existing house there is further hardstanding patio and gravel areas.

Hedgerow

Hedgerows are present along parts of the northern, southern and western boundaries of the site, as well as the fences which form the site boundary lines. The hedgerow along the northern boundary is dominated by Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) with Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Dogrose (*Rosa canina*) and the hedgerows along the southern and western boundaries are dominated by Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) with Hazel and Holly.

Ornamental planting

Around the edges of both the front and rear gardens, but mostly the rear garden to the north and north-west of the house, there are planted borders. These are planted sparsely with ornamental shrubs and having low ecological value.

Trees and shrubs

There are several mature trees around the site and numerous immature trees and shrubs, forming part of the borders of the site or as ornamental planting. There is a large mature Oak (*Quercus sp.*) tree and Holly bush immediately to the south-west of the house and a large mature Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) to the north of the house. At the eastern boundary of the site, there is a mature Beech tree, a mature Horse Chestnut tree, 5-6 semi-mature and mature Pine (*Pinus sp.*) trees and further immature trees such as Holly. There is a line of mature Leylandii (*Cupressus × leylandii*) along the border of the site to the south-east of the house and semi-mature Maple (*Acer sp.*) and Willow (*Salix sp.*) within the lawn to the south-west of the house. Within the lawn to the south-west of the house there is a group of 10 immature fruit (*Malus sp.*) trees and along the northern side of the driveway a line of 5 fruit (*Prunus sp.*) trees. Immature Hazel, Holly, Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) trees and shrubs are also around the southern border of the site.

Pond

There is a small ornamental pond just to the west the house. The pond is concrete lined and shallow, with minimal vegetation. There is a tap at the pond side and the site owner informed the surveyor that the pond is only seasonally wet (during the winter) and dries up in the spring and through the summer.

Biodiversity Metric

The habitats present on site are listed above and detailed in full within the Ecology Report. Approximate habitat areas on site can be seen below:

- Amenity grassland (5536m²)
- Buildings and hardstanding (537m²)
- Hedgerow and line of trees (750m²)
- Ornamental planting (352m²)
- Trees and shrubs (62/3174m²)
- Pond (ornamental garden pond) (16m²)

General

The proposed development will cover an area of approximately 6970m², and result in a loss of approximately 5446m² of amenity grassland habitat (modified grassland), gardens/ornamental planting, buildings/hardstanding

and an ornamental pond. The boundary hedgerows and tree lines will be retained post-development with no changes in management practices for the boundary habitats predicted.

Figure 3. Proposed development plan



Post-development retention

The hedgerows on site will remain unaffected by the proposed works, resulting in a net retention of 338m of native hedgerows. The tree lines on site which form parts of the boundaries will be retained post-development and will not be impacted by the planned works. This will result in a net retention of 413m of existing tree lines forming the northern and eastern boundaries. The existing farmhouse on site will be retained post-development and 250m² of garden/ornamental planting will also be retained.

The approved areas of construction-related groundworks will be confined to areas that will not impact on the root systems of hedgerows and trees to be retained within and around the approved development site. An appropriate buffer around all retained trees and hedgerows, as detailed in BS5837:2012, will be established prior to works commencing on site and maintained during the construction period.

Post-development creation

Post- development the following habitats will be created:

SUDs drainage: Two SUDs ponds will be created on site; these will have area sizes of 5m² and will be designed as part of the dirty water treatment works for the development. These ponds will have limited value for wildlife.

Modified grassland: 200m of modified grassland will be planted on site as buffer strips along the access road, creating verge areas which increase habitat connectivity between the site and adjacent hedgerow and tree lines. These areas of grassland planting will create connected mammal corridors on site and join to the existing boundary hedgerows and tree lines. Planting within these areas should consist of native species and include Lady's Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, found in the BSRE 100%: Restore & Enrich Wildflower Seeds mix or the BSXP 100%: Dual Purpose Wildflower Seeds which includes species such as Cowslip *Primula veris*, Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, Common St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* and Ox-eye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* (bostonseeds.com).

Hedgerow planting: 200m of native hedgerow will be planted on site, separating the new residential dwelling plots. These hedgerows will increase and improve wildlife corridors on site, with the new hedgerow planting connecting to the existing northern, eastern and southern boundary hedgerow and tree lines. These newly planted hedgerows will be subjected to annual cutting and management to ensure visibility for cars and pedestrians is maintained which limits the favourability of this habitat for wildlife. The hedgerows will offer some nesting opportunities for bird species and foodplants for birds, mammals and invertebrates. Floral species to be planted will be a mix of native species and should include a variety of any of the following flora: Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, Hornbeam *Carpinus Betulus*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Bird Cherry *Prunus padus*, Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*, Dog Rose *Rosa canina*, Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*, Elder *Sambucus nigra*, Rowan *Sorbus sp.*, Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Wild Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*.

Tree planting: Eighteen medium sized trees will be planted as part of the landscaping design using standard or heavy standard stock, these trees have a higher chance of survival once planted and offer immediate value to wildlife. These trees will be planted near to the boundary hedgerows and treelines and will be native, broad-leaved species with a mature DBH of >30cm. Species to be planted should include a mix of the following: Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, Whitebeam *Sorbus aria*, Beech, Oak *Quercus robur* or *Quercus petraea*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Downy Birch *Betula pubescens*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium* or Field Maple *Acer campestre*. Where possible a higher proportion of fruiting or nut producing trees should be used as these offer year-round food resources for wildlife locally. Management of newly planted trees will be required with rabbit guards, weed suppressing mats and regular watering carried out to ensure the trees establish and thrive. Any trees that fail to establish will be replaced with a like-for-like specimen.

1500m² of garden spaces will be created within the development, these areas will have some habitat connectivity and offer some (limited) habitat for wildlife locally and where possible native grassland

species will be planted to improve this habitat for local wildlife. This habitat has not been included within the metric calculation as guarantees over retention, management and succession of these garden areas cannot be given once the dwellings have been sold and are occupied by residents.

Figure 4. Proposed landscaping plan



Net gain summary

The proposed residential development site totals an area of 6970m² and the proposals will result in a loss of 5446m² of amenity grassland (modified grassland), ornamental pond, landscaped gardens and hardstanding/building habitats. 250m² of existing gardens associated with the farmhouse will be retained, 200m² of modified grassland around existing access/dwellings will remain and the farmhouse and existing areas of hardstanding will also be retained as part of the proposed works. No enhancement of existing habitats is planned; however the following habitats will be created/planted on site as part of the landscaping design: two 5m² SUDs drainage features, 200m² of modified grassland along the edges of the access track, 18 native, broadleaved trees of DBH > 30cm and 200m² of native hedgerow. This will result in a biodiversity net gain of 8.48% for habitats on site and a biodiversity net gain of 22.18% for hedgerows. Further habitat creation/enhancement on site will be required to meet the metric criteria, or alternatively financial compensation for 0.0736 habitat units of amenity grassland (modified grassland). The results from the metric analysis can be seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Net gain summary table; taken from headline results sheet of the metric

Site Name:		Newtown Court Farm
Sheet Name		Headline Results
Headline Results		
Headline		BNG Targets Not Met
Next steps		Scheme alterations or offsite units required
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.4091
	Hedgerow units	0.6655
	River units	0.0000
Total net % change	Habitat units	8.48%
	Hedgerow units	22.18%
	River units	% target not appropriate
Habitats units required to meet target		0.0736
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000
River units required to meet target		0.0000

If you have any questions relating to the content of this report or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Tristan Evans at [REDACTED] or Jenny Butler at [REDACTED]

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Jenny Butler
Consultant