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28th August 2026

Ref: Application DC/26/0671 – response to comments by Hampshire District Council with reference to Ecology

To Whom it may concern,

Further to queries raised against this application, I have provided a number of clarifications below. Questions raised are provided in *italics*, with responses in **bold**.

The baseline assessment of the site appears to miss individual trees present within the west of the site, where the site access is proposed. These trees, T16 – T18 (see Appendix A of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arbortrack Systems Ltd 2026) are proposed to be removed, alongside trees T21 and T21a in the south of the site.

These trees have been mapped and condition assessed, with updated calculations to follow. This will not materially alter the findings of the metric, noting the illustrated uplift of 43.77% in habitat units and 65.45% in hedgerow units. There will remain a significant uplift well above the statutory 10% requirement under the Environment Act.

Section 3.2 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (The Ecology Co-op, 2026) states that there is a ditch bordering the north-west which is dry in parts and has running water towards the western edge and is mapped under habitat classification r1e (canals and ditches) in Figure 10. The Drainage Strategy also includes discharge into the adjacent ditch and culvert (see Figures 2-4 and 2-5 in the Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy, Aqua Terra Consulting 2026). It is noted that some of the ditch is captured under the hedgerow association, however the metric user guide states that if it meets the definition of a watercourse, then it should be classified within the watercourse module of the metric instead. As such, further clarification is requested as to why this does not meet the watercourse definition of a ditch and the watercourse module is not triggered.

We have consulted with Aqua Terra and there is agreement that the ditch does NOT meet the definition of a watercourse, as it does not hold water for more than four months of the year.

It is shown on the Constraints and Opportunities Plan (Paul Hewett 2026, drawing no. 2126/PL.02) that a footpath through the south of the woodland is proposed to adjoin the nearby PROW. If a footpath here is not already existing, this is not supported given its priority habitat status, as well as the protected species found to utilise this woodland.

No footpath is presently included in the masterplan for the development in this location. No footpath proposals for the purposes of improving access to the wider PROW network would

be considered through the woodland without clear evidence to show how this could be undertaken with appropriate compensations and mitigation measures in place.

It is noted that development of hardstanding (road) is proposed within the barbastelle bat buffer. This should be relocated outside of the buffer.

This comment appears to refer to the northern end of the site, where the buffer narrows slightly. Such encroachment is marginal, amounting by our best measurement to be less than 2 metres and therefore does not significantly impact this feature. It has been confirmed by the applicants Arboricultural consultants (Arbortrack) that this road would not impact the RPA's of any trees and therefore there would be no resulting risk of tree loss as a result.

Please can clarification be sought if fencing will be installed between the woodland edge and the heathland and shrub planting. The buffer should be planted in such a way to deter pedestrian access to minimise woodland disturbance and deterioration, as well as reducing artificial light illumination.

No fencing is proposed in this location, however a continuous line of gorse planting would be included, as this forms the most effective barrier to people and domestic pets alike. Gorse is already present within the site, so its further establishment will not pose any conflict with local site character.

Please note that the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy is due for publication by the end of the June, at which point it will apply to all permissions that have not yet had their biodiversity gain condition discharged. This is likely to change the strategic significance levels currently entered within the metric.

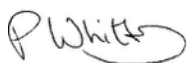
This is noted and strategic significance in consideration of the LNRS has been considered.

A full and finalised HMMP will be required as an obligation within the legal agreement, and to support the Biodiversity Gain Plan which is required to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition. It is advised to review the Natural England HMMP template, checklist, and companion document for expected content.

This is noted and a HMMP for the purposes of setting out the deliverability of site habitat enhancements and management has been produced. Under paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a Biodiversity gain Plan is however a pre-commencement matter to be submitted for your authority's approval following any grant of permission and it is assumed this comment is an advisory for a later reserved matters application. Updates to the HMMP supporting the application can however be made as requested.

I hope these responses assist and please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Sam Lunn (Sam@ecologyco-op.co.uk) should you have any further queries.

Kind regards



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