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Anthony Greaves
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17th January 2020

Dear Anthony

Land off Carr Road, Deepcar (Planning Reference Number: 17/04673).
Ecological Update & Review.

Further to your recent meeting with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) regarding the above-mentioned site, Section 1 provides a resume of the results of the updated Phase 1 Habitat survey. Section 2 provides a review of the ecological submission to the LPA during the determination period of this planning application.

Section 1: Updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey was completed on 07 January 2020 by a Senior Ecologist FPCR. The Senior Ecologist has six years post graduate experience in ecological consultancy and has achieved FISC Level 3.

Methodology

The survey followed the standard Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology[i] as recommended by Natural England, and comprised a walkover of the site, mapping and broadly describing the principal habitat types and identifying the dominant plant species present within each habitat type.

The survey was not undertaken during the April – September period but given the habitats previously recorded the survey result are adequate to confirm the habitat types present within the site and inform the resolution of this planning application.

Results and Assessment

Habitats

A description of the current habitats present within the site are provided below. The locations of the habitat described are presented on Figure 1.

Since completion of the previous survey work in May and June 2016, no significant changes were recorded to either the habitats or the management of the habitat within the site. The dominant habitat comprised cattle or sheep grazed poor semi-improved grassland. A single field compartment was semi-improved grassland which appeared to have been cut for hay. Across the site, the grassland sward was short and the species assemblages was similar to that recorded during previous surveys.

At the field margins of the south eastern field, there had been a slight increase in the extent of bramble scrub. Tall ruderal vegetation was still present within and at the edges of the bramble scrub. Scrub and tall ruderal vegetation are of no more than local level value and as such this minor change does not make a significant or material change to the previous ecological assessment submitted to the LPA over the determination period.

Fauna

The single mature tree on the edge of the Fox Glen Woodland adjacent to the northern boundary of the site identified with the potential to support a bat roost in 2016 was still present. The roost potential offer by this tree had not increased or decreased.

Given the habitats within the site were largely unchanged and the habitat management has been maintained, the potential for the site to support additional species or significant additional numbers of the species recorded over the extensive surveys completed in 2016 and 2017 was concluded to be unlikely. Therefore, the results of species-specific survey work remain valid and no new species are likely to have colonised the site in the interim period.

<u>Summary</u>

At the time of the updated survey, the habitat and the site conditions were recorded to be largely unchanged. The potential tree roost on the fringe of the Fox Glen is retained and buffered, thus the tree and any potential roost in the tree is not affected by the proposals.

As the habitat within the site have not significant changed since the previous surveys, the result of the previous species specific survey work remain valid and minor the revision to the masterplan do not require any further ecological surveys or alter the overall assessment or conclusions of the ecological submissions over the determination period.

Section 2: Ecological Review

To assist the Council to resolve the planning application the following provides a review of the documents submitted to the authority during the determination period. This review only considers documents with relevance to Ecology and Nature Conservation.

<u>Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening</u>

Prior to submission of the planning application two screening opinions were produced by DLP Planning. These screening opinions provided the Competent Authorities adequate ecological information covering all relevant ecological receptors and an outline of the proposed mitigation, where required, to reach a decision whether the application required full assessment against the EIA Regulations.

The first screening opinion was submitted to Sheffield City Council (SCC) on 11 January 2017. In terms of Ecology and Nature Conservation, this screening opinion provided a resume of the ecological works completed at the site and consideration of the potential effects of the proposals including those related to statutory and non-statutory designated sites in the zone of influence surrounding the proposed development.

The screening opinion confirmed that the proposed development had been subject to a standard phase 1 habitat survey and species-specific surveys for badgers, breeding birds, reptiles and bat surveys (including roost assessment and activity surveys).

The dominant habitat was confirmed to be species poor semi-improved grassland. Other habitats present within the site were confirmed to be limited comprising a single hedgerow, a small group of

trees to the southwest of the site and small areas of scrub and tall ruderal habitats. These habitats were reported as being of low ecological value.

In terms of the completed species-specific surveys, the opinion confirmed no evidence of badger, great crested newts or reptile's activity was recorded within the site. The only potential bat roost was recorded on the northern site boundary and the level of bat foraging activity identified was low. Whilst breeding birds were recorded within the proposed development, the assemblage was only identified as being of local level value.

From results of the completed survey work it was concluded that any potential effect to the ecological receptors recorded could be avoided with the implementation of standard mitigation including:

- the creation of species rich grassland and wetland in the balancing facility;
- the implementation of native species scrub / tree planting;
- the implementation of a range of bat and bird boxes across the site;
- the use of low-level lighting; and
- the implementation of a long-term ecological management plan within area of the public open space.

Consideration of the statutory designated sites and non-statutory designated sites within the zone of influence surrounding the site was presented in the screening opinion. The overall conclusion was that the proposals would not affect the conservation value of the statutory or non-statutory designated sites identified surrounding the proposed development area.

In July 2017 DLP Planning submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Direction Report to the Secretary of State for the Environment. The Secretary of State confirmed that no ES was required. The material submitted provided the details of the ecological submission to SCC and the results of additional bird survey work which has been requested by the Council.

The additional survey work comprised further Winter Bird Surveys completed during December 2016 – February 2017 and Additional Breeding / Passage Survey undertaken in March – April 2017. From these additional surveys, it was concluded that the site does not provide a significant recourse for species listed on the designation criteria for the SPA or the underlying SSSI designation.

Again, the overall conclusion was that the development proposals would not result in any significant effects to nature conservation.

<u>Ecological Submissions to SCC</u>

To date two ecological submissions have been made to the Council. The information contained within these submissions provides the Council adequate ecological information relating to all material ecological consideration to determine this planning application.

The November 2017 submission was a standard Ecological Appraisal and Protected Species Survey Report. This submission included the results of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and the species-specific survey work as outlined in the screening opinions detailed above. The submission included an assessment of the potential effects of the proposals and the mitigation to avoid or minimise the potential effects of the scheme. To avoid unnecessary repetition, a summary of the assessment and proposed mitigation was outlined in the submitted screening opinions and is detailed above.

The submission considered the potential effects of increased recreation in the Fox Glen LWS and other Local Wildlife Site within 2Km of the site. Given the extensive public footpaths present within the Fox Glen LWS and other publicly accessible recreational resources locally it was concluded that increased recreational pressure is unlikely to affect the conservation status of these resources. The implementation of the sensitive lighting scheme recommended for the local bat population will also avoid light spill into the Fox Glen LWS ensuring no significant effect to the conservation importance of this habitat.

Following extended discussions with the Council, supplementary ecological information was submitted to the Council in October 2018 (Land off Carr Road, Deepcar. Ecology: Additional Information Document. October 2018).

This submission provided clarification on matters raised by the Council over the determination period including:

- the qualifications / experience of surveyors;
- clarification of the location and results of the hedgerow surveys; and
- additional clarification relating to species-specific surveys.

In addition to these matters of clarification, this document also considered the potential ecological affects arising from the construction of a surface water discharge through the Fox Glen Local Wildlife Site (LWS) to the Clough Dyke. This assessment was based on Water Framework Directive (Screening Assessment), a formal habitat assessment of the proposed drainage route through the Fox Glen (LWS) in May 2018 and watervole, white claw crayfish and otter survey in the Clough Dyke. These documents formed Appendix 2, Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 of the October 2018 submission.

The water vole, white clawed crayfish and otter survey, Appendix 2 of the submission, confirmed the species were not present in the Clough Dyke.

The Water Framework Screening Assessment, Appendix 4 of the submission, assessed the potential effects of the surface water outfall into the Clough Dyke. The assessment considered the potential effects of the proposals on specific elements of the watercourse comprising: hydromorphology, invertebrates, fish and water quality including the potential effects of pollutants.

The Water Framework Directive Screening Assessment concluded that the proposals were unlikely to affect the water course or any downstream receptors with the application of standard mitigation including:

- the provision of standard surface water treatments across the site and in the balancing facility;
- the controlled discharge of water from the balancing facility; and
- the creation of an open channel with boulder breaks.

The ecological assessment of the drainage route through the Fox Glen LWS, Appendix 5 of the submission, considered the potential effects arising from construction of the surface water outfall through the Fox Glen LWS. This assessment concludes the proposals will not result in significant adverse effects to the locally designated site or the habitat or species present within the Fox Glen LWS.

The following provides a summary of the assessment and potential effects to the habitats and species listed in the Fox Glen LWS citation, as detailed at Appendix 5 of the submitted document. To avoid unnecessary repetition, this excludes comments in relation Clough Dyke as these are considered within the detailed Water Framework Directive Screening Assessment and summarised above.

Upland Oak Woodland (as listed of the designation criterion for Fox Glen LWS)

Sessile oak is not present in the affected by the proposed drainage works and this area is not indicative of upland oak woodland. Therefore, the drainage works would not involve any impact on this habitat type. The ground flora is not particularly species-diverse with a very small number of species forming the bulk of the vegetation. The overall species composition is typical of secondary semi-natural woodland and very few Ancient Woodland Indicator species were present.

There would be a permanent loss of ground flora along the line of the drainage channel, and temporary disturbance on the adjacent ground during construction. However, the survey has shown that the ground flora is not particularly species-diverse with the majority formed by a small number of common and widespread species. Following construction, it can be anticipated that the ground flora will recover relatively quickly from the temporary disturbance with no long-lasting detrimental effects.

Native Bluebell Hyacinthoides non-scripta (as listed of the designation criterion for Fox Glen LWS)

The proposed drainage works would potentially result in the intentional uprooting and destruction of bluebell. The mitigation proposed in the submission comprises the removal of bluebell bulbs within the working area and replanting in an undisturbed area adjacent to the works.

Song Thrush Turdus philomelos (as listed of the designation criterion for Fox Glen LWS)

The proposed drainage works have the potential to result in the loss of some understorey. However, the areas involved are relatively small comprising the footprint of the drainage channel and 3m either side of the channel.

Given the size of the woodland and existing habitat adjacent to the woodland any effect to this species will not be significant. Away from these areas, any loss of understorey will be temporary, and shrubs are likely to regenerate quickly forming suitable habitat which can be used by this species and the additional scrub habitats provided in the development footprint will provide further mitigation for this species.

Treecreeper Certhia familiaris (as listed of the designation criterion for Fox Glen)

As for song thrush, the minor permanent and temporary loss of woodland habitat due to the proposed drainage work would have a negligible impact on this common and widespread species.

Willow Tit Poecile montanus (as listed of the designation criterion for Fox Glen)

Willow tit have been recorded in the wider Stocksbridge area and Fox Glen has been identified as a potential site for this species. The implementation of woody debris dams along Clough Dike was specifically for this species with the objective of holding back water to create damper conditions within the wood.

The proposed drainage work would complement this habitat management work. The attenuated flow that the drainage system would operate under would ensure a controlled flow into the Clough Dike and help to maintain the damp conditions that the aforementioned management work is attempting to achieve.

The drainage works will potentially result in the loss of some understorey, but the areas involved would be small. Although some of this loss would be permanent elsewhere the loss would be temporary, and shrubs are likely to regenerate quickly. This regeneration would form young woodland and therefore have the potential to provide suitable habitat for this species. Any short-term disturbance during the construction period would be minimised undertaking the work outside the main nesting period.

As part of the wider development, additional enhancements for this species will be provided through landscape planting to create a graded woodland edge to the south west of the proposed development. The species mix and management will be subject to detailed design but if appropriate, the edge mix can include wetland species such as willow and alder.

We trust the above provides clarification of the ecological matters relating to this site but if you have any further queries or problems please do not hesitate to contact me at this office.

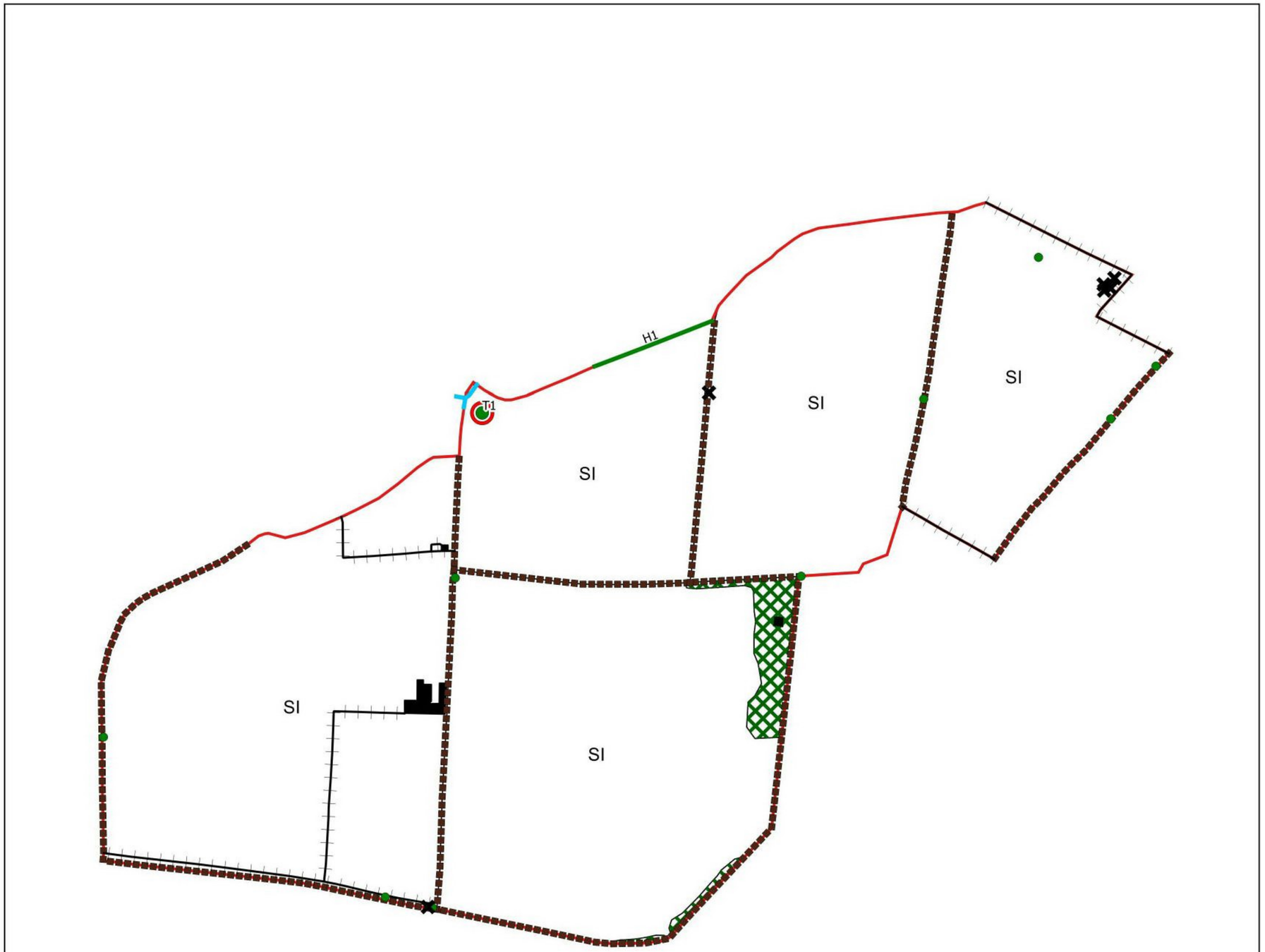
Yours sincerely

Kurt Goodman
Director
FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

[redacted]

ENCS. Phase 1 Habitat Plan

[i] Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 2010. Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat survey, A Technique for Environmental Audit.



Key

- Site Boundary
- Buildings
- Dense scrub (with tall ruderal)
- SI Poor semi-improved grassland
- Wall
- Running water
- Hedgerow
- Fence
- Scrub - scattered
- Tree with bat potential
- Broadleaved tree

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client
Hallam Land Management Ltd.

project
Land off Carr Road, Deepcar

drawing title
Update Phase 1 Habitat Plan

scale @ A3
1:1750

drawn
AJR / KDG

issue
13/1/2020

drawing / figure number
Figure 1

rev
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