

APP/21/00989 - Cabbagefield Row – Proposed Development of 150 houses

Feedback August 2022 – Following submission of additional information by PCC

Thankyou for notifying me of the revised information submitted by Portsmouth City Council (PCC) in July 2022. While I note that the layout of the development has been revised to include a 15m environmental buffer zone along the eastern boundary with the Ancient Woodland, I remain concerned that the ecological impacts of this development have not been adequately addressed to ensure that the Favourable Conservation Status of protected species and Ancient Woodland can be maintained post development. **I maintain my objection to this development on the basis that the application lacks the necessary detail to demonstrate that the significant ecological impacts have and will be addressed before development commences, and in the longer-term.**

1. The updated Landscape & Ecology Plan does not indicate that the critical tree line on the east side of the grassland SINC adjacent to the reservoir site will be bolstered by additional planting on the PCC land, plus maintained in the long-term to protect this important wildlife corridor between the Cabbagefield Row and Bells Copse woodland blocks. The provision of **additional planting and maintenance of this important wildlife corridor must be required by a legal agreement** (S106), see also item 5.
2. A **new path shown cutting through the north-south wildlife corridor** shown on the Site Access Plan (28079-PD-123) in the NE corner of the housing development and **must be removed**. The path shown is not currently present and will cause a breach in, and unnecessary disturbance to the very narrow wildlife corridor linking the Cabbagefield Row and Bells Copse woodland blocks. The access from the new housing to the path on the west side of the reservoir site should instead be connected in the NE of the grassland SINC as shown on the Ecology & Landscape Plan (28079-PD-122B).
3. The precedent has been set on other developments in the Borough to provide an environmental buffer wider than the minimum of 15m to protect the adjacent Ancient Woodland and the European Protected Species using it. The buffer zone to the woodland SINC along the west boundary has been reduced and is not even 15m. I am concerned the buffer zones will not be adequate to protect the woodland habitats and species using them.
4. No additional information has been submitted;
 - To **demonstrate how the Ancient Woodland to the east and north will be protected from increased access and recreational disturbance**. The previous information submitted proposed a scrub barrier in the east which was inadequate in isolation. It is no longer clear that even scrub will be planted. Robust fencing in addition to scrub planting will be essential. More information needs to be submitted on the habitats to be created/ fencing of the buffer zones in the east, west & north.
 - To **demonstrate that a lighting strategy can protect adjacent woodland** in the east, west and along the environmental buffer zones used by European Protected Species, especially rare bats. A zonal strategy should be adopted, with no lighting along the east and west boundary, including **no lighting along the new cycleway** shown in the east.
 - To demonstrate how rare bats are using the site. Data was only submitted for 3 trap and track surveys in one year, with nets at sub-optimal locations. Additional survey data should have been submitted to provide a clearer picture of bat usage of the site over more than one year.
 - To demonstrate that mitigation measures previously proposed will not duplicate measures already approved in association with the reservoir development. Nor how PCC will work with adjacent developers to ensure a coordinated approach to mitigation/ compensation.
 - To provide clarity on how the delivery, management and monitoring of the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures will be funded and secured in the long-term.

Not even an outline Biodiversity Mitigation & Enhancement Strategy has been submitted. A previous requirement from Natural England.

5. The reliance on management of the grassland SINC to provide mitigation for reptiles, birds, dormice and bats is completely inadequate. No information is submitted on the provision of new off site mitigation and compensation areas. The ECOSA Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (July 2022) states; *“the metric demonstrates there will be a net loss of 2.28 hectares of scrub habitat, which is of value to hazel dormouse and nesting birds. Principal 4 of the metric states that habitats important for notable species should be given broader consideration, therefore off-site compensation for the loss of scrub habitat will be required and will be discussed with the Local Planning Authority during the planning process.* That calculation relies on new/ enhanced scrub margins which are not shown on the new Landscape & Ecology Plan (see item 6). **Detail of the new off-site mitigation and compensation areas must be provided before the application is determined. The location, area, habitat enhancements required and the long-term maintenance of this off-site area(s) must be secured by a legal agreement (s106) before permission is granted.** The area of land selected should be as close as possible to the site and contiguous with the existing habitats to provide maximum benefit to wildlife displaced from the development site. PCC own a lot of land in close proximity to the site which has the potential to fulfil this requirement if managed correctly in the short and longer term.
6. The ECOSA Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Map 2 shows that they have completed the calculation on the basis of their being a significant new / retained scrub margin around;
 - The east and west side of the new housing development.
 - The east, north & west of the grassland SINC

However, these habitats are not shown on the PDP Landscape & Ecology Plan (28079-PD-122B), so it is far from clear that the scrub habitat is actually to be provided. **A more detailed Landscape and Ecology Plan needs to be submitted before permission is granted to ensure it is clear what habitats will be provided,** where, when and how they will be maintained around the housing development and at the grassland SINC. This should then be guaranteed as part of the legal agreement (s106).

Note: There is an error on ECOSA Map 2 & 3, the background aerial photo is transposed and the site is not correctly aligned so it wrongly appears to extend into the adjacent woodland to the east & north. The red line boundary on Map 1 is also wrong.

7. The human impacts (trampling, dog fouling, littering, arson etc.) and impacts of pet disturbance (dogs & cats) will adversely impact the grassland SINC to the north which is allocated as open space for this development. This will devalue the grassland habitats for reptiles and birds. **Additional grassland mitigation/ compensation habitat for these species needs to be provided off-site nearby,** in addition to the scrub habitat already mentioned above (item 5 & 6).
8. No additional information has been submitted to indicate how long PCC will continue to maintain the new and existing habitats for. The previous submission details referred to maintenance of the SINC grassland for 5 years, which is wholly inadequate. **A legally binding mechanism must be established for maintaining the habitats in perpetuity for the life of the housing development (s106).**
9. The PCC land ownership map has confirmed that they own the woodland to the west (Dunsbury Hill Wood SINC) and to the SW (Warren SINC). No new information has been provided to indicate that PCC have committed to the positive ecological management of these woodland SINCS. Given the adverse impact of the development on adjacent Ancient Woodland and SINC habitats through increased disturbance/ recreation the developer should be **required to provide a Woodland Management Plan for Dunsbury Hill Wood SINC and the Warren SINC to bring them into sound ecological management** taking into account the risks of anti-social behaviour.
10. The site has been **subject to motorcycle abuse for more than 40 years.** Specific action needs to be designed in from the beginning to prevent such ongoing anti-social behaviour. **No new information has been provided to indicate how this abuse will be prevented in the future, nor whether an alternative site will be re-provided within the PCC land holding nearby?**

For example, what barriers will be put in place to prevent motorcycle access;

- Along the northern boundary between the new housing and grassland SINC. The hedgerow shown on the Landscape & Ecology Plan is not continuous, it is not clear if it contains a more robust fence, and there are gaps where paths pass through it.
- Along the environmental buffer strips in the east and west. Certainly the eastern buffer seems to be completely open for bike access in the south and the north?
- In the NE corner of the grassland SINC where there is to be a path/ cycleway link to prevent motorbikes entering the grassland SINC from the existing bridleway.

11. A robust Habitats Regulation Assessment has not been completed. The additional

'European Site Avoidance & Mitigation Checklist' does not consider;

- Impacts on SACs designated for bats.
- In-combination impacts on protected species (especially rarer bats) with other developments including Havant Thicket Reservoir, Dunsbury Hill Farm and Land East of Horndean. The combined developments already underway or planned will have a profound impact on the landscape and habitats in the area which must be considered.

More detailed information on the issues and concerns were set out in my previous response submitted in December 2021, which I attach for ease of reference Appendix A, most remain valid.

NPPF, Circular 06/2005 and Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species, require that planning decisions are based on full, up-to-date ecological information and it is essential that all necessary survey, **assessment and mitigation information is available to the LPA prior to determination, particularly in the case of protected species, which are a material planning consideration.** This then enables the LPA to determine the application on the basis of full knowledge about the ecological impacts of the proposal and to ensure that any impacts can and will be mitigated, and are acceptable. I do not believe that the additional information provided by the developer has addressed the extensive concerns that remain about how risks to ecology and Ancient Woodland will be addressed.

If the LPA are minded to grant outline consent, then it is essential that planning conditions are applied requiring submission and approval of further details to protect the environment/ ecology before development commences of;

- A detailed Biodiversity Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Plan to be approved by NE and the County Ecologist (*the Strategy must provide sufficient detail to ensure that the County Ecologist is satisfied that robust short and long-term mitigation can be provided which will guarantee that the Favourable Conservation Status of protected species will be maintained post development, along with the mechanism for how mitigation/ compensation measures will be delivered, managed and monitored in the long-term. Answering the County Ecologists previous queries about how? by who? and when all elements will be delivered?*)
- A detailed Landscape & Ecological Management Plan, which provides more information on the detailed design and delivery of the mitigation, compensation and enhancement habitats. This should include a Woodland Management Plan for adjacent woodland areas owned by the applicant (PCC) at Dunsbury Hill Wood and Warren woodland SINC's.
- Ecological Clerk of Works to be present when any habitat is cleared and the mitigation / compensation works are undertaken.
- A legally binding agreement such as a Section 106 is signed before development commences to ensure that all of the agreed measures are completed in accordance with approved plans/ programmes, then managed in perpetuity.
- A lighting strategy (inc. ongoing maintenance) designed to minimise the impacts of light pollution and ensure lighting is not positioned in, or adjacent to the environmental buffers.
- A Construction Environment Management Plan covering in detail; ecological protection measures, protection of Ancient Woodland and other SINC habitats, hydrology, motorbike control, traffic and pollution risk management.

Appendix A

Previous Comments on Application Submitted December 2021

APP/21/00989 - Cabbagefield Row – Proposed Development of 150 houses

I wish to object to planning application APP/21/00989 for 150 new dwellings (houses and apartments) at Cabbagefield Row, north of Swanmore Road in Warren Park for the following reasons;

- The ecological impacts of the development have not been fully considered and the bat survey work undertaken is not adequate to fully assess the use of the site by foraging and commuting bats, especially the rare Bechstein's bat.
- Biodiversity net loss and gain calculations have not been provided for habitats nor species.
- More detailed information needs to be provided before the County Ecologist can fully assess the impacts of the development on Protected Species, which is a material planning consideration. It is essential that enough information is provided to demonstrate that the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of protected species can be maintained post development.
- The landscape buffer zones proposed around the existing Ancient Woodland SINC's are not adequate and are not in line with buffer zones required by LPA's at other sites. The information submitted on buffer zones is also inconsistent. Providing wider landscape buffers to provide adequate separation will have an impact on the development layout and potentially the density/ number of dwellings that can be accommodated.
- Insufficient details have been submitted on how the adjacent Ancient Woodland SINC's, grassland SINC's and protected species using these SINC's will be protected.
- The strategic wildlife corridor linking Staunton Country Park/ the Riders Lane Stream and the Bells Copse / Havant Thicket woodland is not adequately protected. Further protection and enhancement must be designed in along the eastern boundary of the site. The tree line extending north from the Cabbagefield Row Ancient Woodland to Bells Copse must be protected and enhanced by widening within the development site red line boundary.
- More information on lighting must be submitted before the application is determined.
- There is no proposal for a Woodland Management Plan, this should be addressed.
- Insufficient details have been submitted to show how ecological impacts of developing the site will be mitigated and compensated for. A Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy must be submitted and agreed with the County Ecologist before the application is determined.
- Mitigation measures proposed must not duplicate those already committed to by other developers. The applicant must work with the developers of other sites to create a more joined up and holistic mitigation and compensation strategy for the benefit of wildlife that will be impacted by this development.
- It is not clear how the delivery, management and monitoring of the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures will be funded and secured in the long-term.
- No Habitats Regulation Assessment has been undertaken. The Appropriate Assessment should include SAC's designated for bats.
- The in-combination effects of this development with other developments already permitted, or planned, has not been adequately assessed and is likely to be significant given the profound changes in the landscape which will occur following the grant of planning permission at Dunsbury Hill Farm, Havant Thicket Reservoir and Land East of Horndean. It is important that the LPA takes a very precautionary approach to any further development proposals in this area.

- The applicant needs to make legally binding commitments to create, manage and monitor new compensation habitats on land owned by Portsmouth City Council in the immediate vicinity of the site and at Rowlands Castle, to off-set the impacts of this development, especially in relation to enhancing wildlife corridors used by Bechstein's bat.
- It is not clear how the applicant will deal with motorbikes to mitigate the loss of this long-established recreational use, nor how future use of the grassland SINCS by motorbikes will be prevented. The proposal for a post and rail fence is inadequate.
- The intensity of the development and the height of the buildings (up to 4 storeys), which will be as high as the surrounding trees (if not higher), will in my view detract from the rural character of the area.

Further more detailed reasoning and information to support my objection is set out below;

1. The proposed development will result in an over intensification of use of the site which does **not** allow enough space to be provided for sufficient wildlife buffers, or other mitigation, for the European Protected and other species that already use the site. **The information currently submitted on woodland buffers is inconsistent and inadequate**, not even a 15m landscape buffer is shown on the Site Layout Plan or the Ecology and Landscape Plan along the eastern boundary with the Ancient Woodland SINCS.
2. **Biodiversity net loss and gain calculations have not been provided for habitats nor species and there is a worrying lack of detail on the proposed ecological impact, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures that will be provided. There is also a lack of information on how remaining habitats including the grassland and woodland SINCS will be protected, managed, maintained and monitored in the future to;**
 - **Protect them from direct and indirect impacts, and**
 - **Guarantee the delivery of appropriate mitigation and compensation in the short and long-term.**
3. **Inadequate information has been submitted on the ecological impacts of the development and how they will be mitigated and compensated for.** Impacts on protected species are a material planning consideration. As indicated by Natural England a **Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy must be submitted and agreed with the County Ecologist before the application is determined** this is to ensure that;
 - All impacts have been fully assessed and understood in both the short and long-term.
 - A biodiversity net gain will be delivered, with creation of nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for wildlife that already uses the site, not just provision of a lot of bird and bat boxes in an urban landscape.
 - The 'Favourable Conservation Status' of European protected species can be maintained in the short and long-term.
4. **The level of bat survey undertaken and data provided with the application for this development is disappointing and not adequate to fully understand the impacts, or design appropriate mitigation and compensation measures.** Only 3 bat trapping visits were undertaken over a period of less than 12 months and the ECOSA report confirms that traps were not optimally located in areas of suitable habitat (Ecological Impact Assessment, EIA, page 22). Surveys on nearby sites have shown that 3 trapping visits will not give a robust level of data on which to make judgements, and that surveys need to be carried out over

more than one year to build up a picture of bat foraging, commuting and roosting behaviour, especially for the rarer bats such as Bechstein's bats, as activity can vary significantly from year to year. Survey data from other sites can not be used to assess bat activity on this site as no recent trapping & tracking activity has taken place close to this development site. The nearest Bechstein's bat was trapped in association with the Dunsbury Hill Farm development but that bat unfortunately was not tracked. A precautionary approach is essential and it must be assumed that Bechstein's bats using Dunsbury Hill Farm are part of the wider meta-population also using Staunton Country Park and Havant Thicket woodland and thus that they will forage and commute over this development site. Statements made on page 47 of the EIA cannot be relied upon as they are not based on sound data. It is very disappointing that the likely use of the site by rarer bats such as Bechstein's bat for foraging and commuting is not even mentioned in the evaluation. Nor that significant amounts of the adjacent habitat being referred to and relied upon in the assessment will actually be removed as a result of the development of the Havant Thicket Reservoir and no longer available in the future, making the retention of suitable and even marginal habitats in this area even more important. See also item 15 below.

Note: Myotis bats were recorded using the site and adjacent woodland during the site surveys. These could be Bechstein's bats and a precautionary approach is needed when assessing the impacts of the development.

5. The landscape in this area is undergoing profound change as a result of large-scale developments already approved at Dunsbury Hill Farm, Havant Thicket Reservoir (HTR) and Land East of Horndean (LEOH), as a result **it is important that a very precautionary approach is taken to any further development proposals** that will further impact the habitats used by protected species in this area. The near total loss of habitat in the southern developed part of the site will have a significant impact on species using the site and should not be permitted.
6. With planning permission for the Havant Thicket Reservoir now having been granted, the **wildlife corridor along the western boundary of the reservoir site will become an even more important strategic corridor for European Protected and other species** to move between Staunton Country Park/ the Riders Lane Stream corridor and the Bells Copse / Havant Thicket woodland. **It is vital that a very robust wildlife corridor remains and is protected on the land owned by Portsmouth City Council (PCC) at Cabbagefield Row.** If the development is not done sensitively and with adequate mitigation/ compensation this development may prejudice the existing wildlife corridor as a result of a reduction in habitat, increased disturbance and light pollution. The mitigation measures proposed do not adequately protect the integrity and functionality of this strategic wildlife corridor.
7. Section 5.2 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) only proposes **a 15m buffer to the woodland in the west of the site, which is not sufficient**, it will barely extend beyond the canopy of the existing trees. The Site Layout Plan shows that the western landscape buffer zone includes a footpath, and therefore the buffer zone will be disturbed by people, dogs and is likely be lit at night reducing its value. **No reference is made to provision of a buffer zone to the woodland on the east side of the site**, the site layout Plan does not show a 15m landscape buffer zone, it shows the existing woodland tree canopy extending out over the proposed site road, this is not acceptable. **The buffer zones on both sides of the site around the existing woodland need to be extended** in order to minimise the impact and this will

affect the area of land available for housing within the site. The minimum buffer should be 35m (see item 20 below).

*Note: In several places in the EIA it states that heras fencing will be used to protect the root zones of adjacent woodland trees in the west of the site. It makes no reference to heras fencing for the east side of the site to protect the trees (e.g. Page 70 and Section 5.4.2). **The root zones of adjacent trees need to be protected on the east and the west side of the site.***

8. The EIA page 70 indicates that the woodland buffer zone will be planted with dense thorny scrub in order to deter residents from accessing the Ancient Woodland SINC's, but on the Landscape & Ecology Plan the buffer around the woodland is shown as green circles which the key states is 'species rich meadow'. **The mitigation strategy for protecting the Ancient Woodland SINC is not clear and is inadequate.** This thorny scrub is being relied upon by the ecologist undertaking the EIA to mitigate for effects of disturbance on the adjacent woodland and to provide alternative habitat for dormice and birds, but it is not currently clear that the developer proposes to provide this thorny habitat, nor how much will be provided.
9. **The in-combination effects of this proposed development in conjunction with other developments already approved, or in the pipeline, in this and the wider area has not been appropriately considered to demonstrate that there will be no significant impact on European Protected Species.** Survey work by other developers has demonstrated that there is a meta-population of the rare Bechstein's bat using this part of Hampshire and West Sussex. The adjacent SINC woodland at Havant Thicket is designated for supporting Bechstein's bat. Developments at Dunsbury Hill Farm, LEOH, HTR, Southleigh Park, Keydale Nursery, Long Copse Lane (Emsworth) are all resulting in landscape scale change to the habitats and corridors used by this species and other rare bat species. It is not credible to suggest that further loss of habitat will not have an impact. **No further loss of their habitat and existing wildlife corridors should be permitted by the LPA's until a holistic landscape scale strategy has been developed and approved** by the County Ecologist and Natural England to ensure that their Favourable Conservation Status is maintained. A way of delivering and funding the work needed to protect and enhance the remaining habitats also needs to be guaranteed before further developments are approved.
10. **A Habitats Regulation Appropriate Assessment has not been undertaken.** Natural England have drawn attention to the need for an Appropriate Assessment to cover a range of issues including impacts on the environment, water quality deterioration (nutrient balance), increased recreation pressure on the harbours/ Solent, and protected species. In line with the requirements applied to the Havant Thicket Reservoir project to be robust **the HRA must consider the impact of the development on it's own and in-combination with other developments on habitats used by European Protected bat species**, including the Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC and the Ebernoe Common SAC.
11. **There is no commitment to a Woodland Management Plan (WMP)** for the remaining woodland owned by the applicant (PCC). The LPA & NE required PCC to commit to a long-term WMP for adjacent woodland owned by HCC and Forestry England. A consistent approach should be taken and PCC should be required to commit to a robust WMP for adjacent woodlands. **The funding needed to deliver the WMP in the long-term should be guaranteed through an appropriate legal agreement such as a Section 106.**

12. The applicant (PCC) owns a lot of land in the vicinity of the site at Warren Park, Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle, the LPA should do more to secure legally binding commitments to habitat compensation and enhancements, such as woodland and scrub planting to provide a more robust package of mitigation and compensation for the loss of this site, if they are minded to permit this development. **Adjoining or nearby land owned by PCC should be identified for additional mitigation and compensation measures that create guaranteed larger buffer zones between remaining key habitats and existing / new development, plus enhances wildlife corridors between remaining woodland habitats.** The current reliance on using the small grassland SINC to the north as the mitigation area for this development is woefully inadequate, as it is already a good wildlife habitat in it's own right.
13. The development will be occupied by more than 500 people and their pets. It is inevitable that this will have an adverse impact on the adjacent grassland SINC and Ancient Woodland SINC. It will only add to the existing problems of disturbance to wildlife, pets killing wildlife (birds, reptiles and small mammals), littering, fly tipping, fires and other anti-social behaviour. **The mitigation set out on page 70 of the EIA will not be adequate to address the impacts and therefore the conclusion of 'no significant residual effects after mitigation' in Section 5.3.3 and 5.4.3 are not credible. The LPA should be expecting compensation for residual effects on the SINC grassland and woodland.** PCC have other land close by that could be used for appropriate grassland and woodland compensation which should be secured by the LPA through a legal agreement. **The enhancement to the grassland SINC proposed in 5.3.5 is not clear but it is highly unlikely that it will offset the impact of the development on the grassland SINC.** In addition, the monitoring is only proposed for 5 years, yet the impact will be permanent and long-term. **A more robust legally binding long-term monitoring agreement is needed.**
14. Light pollution from the development in this rural landscape is inevitable and even with the application of best practice will have a significant adverse impact on existing wildlife at night. The main access road(s) which have been located alongside Ancient Woodland will have to be well lit, especially given existing police concerns about anti-social behaviour in this area. The police highlight in their response to the application the need for good lighting. The police ask for a condition requiring that; The design of lighting scheme must comply with BS 5489-1:2020 and discharge any liabilities attached to that standard. This is not mentioned in the applicants lighting strategy. **Good lighting for site security and low level lighting to minimise the ecological impacts are not likely to be compatible. The extremely narrow buffer between the roads and the Ancient Woodland in this area will not be adequate to protect the woodland edge from adverse impacts and will certainly impact bat foraging.** The canopy of the woodland trees are shown on the Ecology and Landscape Plan to extend out to (and over) the road so it is very difficult to see how street lighting would not impact the woodland edge. Presumably the path shown in the woodland buffer zone on the west side of the site would also require some form of lighting and thus the landscape buffer would not provide a dark corridor, which Section 5.5.2 of the EIA assumes will be present when assessing the impact on bats. Security lights and garden lighting added post occupation by residents that cannot be adequately controlled through planning conditions will add further to the problem of light pollution. **The conclusion in the EIA at 5.5.3 that there will be no residual impact on bats given the information submitted with the planning application is not credible. The need for wider buffers, more mitigation and additional**

compensation should be considered further. I support the County Ecologist request for more detail on lighting to be submitted before any determination in order that the ecological impacts can be robustly assessed.

*Note: "For apartments the lighting strategy states; Fittings shall be switch via daylight sensors and shall remain illuminated **throughout all hours of insufficient natural daylight.**" **Indicating that lights will remain on all night.** The apartments are located adjacent to the woodland in the east of the site, where there is currently no adequate buffer zone, so impacts are inevitable. The balconies to the apartments will also have lighting fitted which presumably will be under the control of residents, so in reality there will be no control over this lighting.*

15. Section 5.5.6 indicated that no further monitoring is proposed for bats. **Given the current lack of trap and track data for the site further monitoring should be requested before the determination is made, and certainly before the detailed mitigation and compensation strategy is submitted at the reserved matters stage.** More information is needed to better understand how the site is used and how the existing wildlife corridors around the site are utilised.
16. The developer has not provided any significant area of public open space for recreation within the main development site and is presumably relying on the grassland SINC to the north to provide the main area of public open space for residents. **Use for uncontrolled recreation will have an adverse impact on the grassland SINC. It is not realistic to expect the SINC grassland to provide a recreational use and to be a robust ecological mitigation area.**
17. At least 7 dormouse (including juveniles) were found to be using the site during the ecological survey in 2019. Section 5.7.2 refers to mitigation for dormice being to place appropriate nest boxes in adjacent woodlands. However, dormouse boxes are already being provided in the woodland to the north and east of this site as a part of the mitigation for the Havant Thicket Reservoir which has already been granted permission. **A separate and bespoke mitigation strategy is needed for this development which does not conflict with the strategy of other sites.** PCC should be asked to provide information on the number of dormouse boxes that will be installed and where they will be sited in order that the County Ecologist and Natural England can confirm that they are satisfied the impacts of scrub clearance on this site will be mitigated and that an EPS Licence can be achieved. Boxes will need to be installed at height and over provided due to the risk of vandalism in this urban fringe environment. The ecologists working for PCC need to work closely with the ecologists working for P.Water and the LEOH developer to ensure a more robust strategy for wildlife mitigation in the wider area. The need for this wider strategy is highlighted by Natural England in their comments on this application.
18. There has been a long-established use of this site by motorbikes dating back to before the 1980's. While the use of the site by motorbikes and resident's concerns about this anti-social behaviour is noted in the Design and Access Statement on page 14, **it is not clear how the loss of this recreational use will be mitigated by the developer, nor how future use of the grassland SINC by motorbikes will be prevented.** The Design and Access Statement plan 7.2 on page 24 and Section 7.7 refer to a post and rail fence along the northern edge of the housing, but experience in this area has shown that even metal fences erected by PCC have

not stopped motorcyclists accessing the site in the past. **Will alternative provision be made nearby for motorbikes? What will be done to manage the change in use so that the problem is not just moved elsewhere** to adjacent remaining high quality habitats being relied upon for mitigation and compensation for this and other developments already approved. If there is not a strategy in place the grassland SINC will continue to be used as a motorbike scramble track and as a result;

- The new residents will justifiably complain to the Council about the motorbike noise (as the existing residents of Warren Park do already)
- The commitment to enhance the grassland SINC habitat will not be achieved.

19. The development is not in keeping with the rural fringe location. **The intensity of the development and the height of the buildings (up to 4 storeys), which will be as high as the surrounding trees (if not higher), will detract from the rural character of the area.** I believe that the scale and intensity of this development will adversely impact on the rural character of the approved Havant Thicket Reservoir Site by further urbanising the landscape around the boundary of the site.

20. It is very disappointing that the Ecology Landscape Plan submitted **does not show any enhancements along the woodland edge, nor any fencing to protect the woodland from open access, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour.** Specific additional mitigation measures that should be considered for incorporation into the mitigation strategy are;

- Providing much wider buffers around the existing Ancient Woodland. A precedent has already been set at other development sites for much wider buffer zones than the minimum 15m to protect Ancient Woodland trees where rarer bats/ EPS species are present. For example, for the Long Copse Lane planning application the developer's consultant has recommended a 35m wide buffer around the woodland, this would be a more appropriate buffer width around the woodlands and tree lines in this sensitive location. **The developers bat surveys have confirmed the use of the eastern boundary by bats and this emphasises the need to protect these strategic wildlife corridors with robust buffers.** Not even the minimum proposed 15m landscape buffer is currently shown along the eastern woodland boundary on the Ecology and Landscape Plan.
- Retaining existing scrub/ dense thicket in a wider buffer zone around the existing woodland to help provide a barrier to public access, and to retain habitat suitable for dormice.
- Having a double deer fence line spaced at least 15m apart outside of the woodland on the east and west side of the site, with a very closely planted thorn scrub hedge between the two fence lines, with native fruit (rowan, cherry, crab apple, elderflower etc.), nut trees like hazel and honeysuckle planted on the housing side of the buffer strip to help protect the woodland from informal access and provide an inaccessible replacement biodiverse habitat suitable for nesting birds and dormice. **These buffers should be planted before the development commences to allow it to become fairly established before the dwellings are occupied.**
- North of the Cabbagefield Row woodland there is a tree line between the PCC land and the P. Water land that extends up to the Bells Copse Woodland. **This tree line along the eastern red line boundary should be widened and thickened on the PCC owned land side to provide a more robust tree corridor, which can perform a better function as a strategic wildlife corridor for protected species including bats and dormice.**

- Existing trees and tree clumps on the site should be retained as a part of the development.
- Providing more open space wildlife meadow habitat around the edge of the site as part of the woodland buffer zone.

The mitigation strategy needs to recognise that the new housing proposed will result in a lot more recreational pressure on the grassland SINCE to the north, particularly as there is very little open space within the main development area. Therefore, any planned enhancement to improve the botanical condition of this grassland will be lucky to maintain its existing biodiversity value. It certainly will not mitigate for the loss of habitats where the houses are to be built. Nor for impacts on dormice, birds, reptiles and bats. It is essential that additional mitigation and compensation measures are secured by the LPA if development on this site is to be permitted.

21. If after the submission of the missing additional information needed to address Natural England (NE) and the County Ecologists very real and valid existing concerns the LPA are minded to grant outline consent, then it is essential that planning conditions are applied requiring submission and approval of further details to protect the environment before development commences of;

- A detailed Biodiversity Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Plan to be approved by NE and the County Ecologist (*Note: As indicated in item 3 above and in NE comments the Outline Strategy should be submitted now before any permission is granted to ensure that the County Ecologist is satisfied that robust short and long-term mitigation can be provided which will guarantee that the Favourable Conservation Status of protected species will be maintained post development, along with the mechanism for how mitigation/ compensation measures will be delivered, managed and monitored in the long-term. Answering the County Ecologists queries about how? by who? and when all elements will be delivered?*)
- A detailed Landscape & Ecological Management Plan, which provides more information on the detailed design and delivery of the mitigation, compensation and enhancement habitats. This should include a Woodland Management Plan for adjacent woodland owned by the applicant (PCC).
- Ecological Clerk of Works to be present when any habitat is cleared and the mitigation / compensation works are undertaken.
- A legally binding agreement such as a Section 106 is signed before development commences to ensure that all of the agreed measures and management have to be delivered in perpetuity.
- A Construction Environment Management Plan covering in detail; ecological protection measures, protection of Ancient Woodland and other SINCE habitats, hydrology, motorbike control, traffic and pollution risk management.

22. The recent response submitted by the developer to the County Ecologist very valid comments and concerns is very disappointing. It fails to recognise that the level of appropriate mitigation and compensation for the significant impacts this development will certainly have on biodiversity need to be resolved as a material planning consideration before the application is determined. Particularly, to reduce the ecological impact of the development the width of the buffer zones around the woodland will have to be increased and this will have an impact on what can realistically be delivered by way of the number of dwellings and the density of the development. These matters can not be dealt with at a later

stage by planning condition. The level of mitigation, compensation and enhancement to be delivered must be adequately outlined now to ensure that;

- a net gain in biodiversity is achievable, and
- the favourable Conservation Status of species is protected, taking into account the impacts of this development and the in-combination effects with other developments.

Once more robust measures are agreed in outline and secured by the LPA through a legally binding agreement including; long-term delivery, funding and monitoring, the greater level of detail can then be dealt with by planning conditions for reserved matters, requiring more detailed information to be submitted and approved before the development commences.

Extra response put on HBC planning portal 7/01/22;

Further to my previous comments made on this application, I would recommend to the applicant and the LPA case officer that they have a look at the details submitted with the planning application for housing at Land North of Long Copse Lane, Emsworth (APP/21/00893), where the developer has taken more of an ecology/ landscape led approach. For that application the developer;

- Has commissioned bat trap and track surveys over a number of years to enable a better understanding of the use of the site to be established.
- Proposed 30-35m landscape buffer zones around the existing woodland boundaries, including thicket planting to protect the Ancient Woodland.
- Permanently wet SUDS proposed for the benefit of biodiversity.
- A zoned lighting strategy to ensure buffer zones remain dark for use by bats.
- Additional tree planting at the bottom of gardens to screen the impacts and create dark edges (this is in addition to the buffer zones).
- Guaranteed the delivery of large off-site mitigation/ compensation woodland planting by working with a nearby land owner to plant new woodland and widen wildlife corridors known to be used by bats.
- Planted wider buffers along hedgerows/ tree lines known to be used by bats in order to protect strategic commuting routes.

While any development will have impacts, this shows that a more strategic biodiversity led approach can be used to meet the needs of the local wildlife and the developer. It demonstrates that Portsmouth City Council (PCC) as a major land owner in Warren Park and Rowlands Castle, who has development aspirations, should be looking to create additional on-site and off-site mitigation and compensation areas if they wish to develop the site at Cabbagefield Row for housing. PCC are going the extra mile to try and ensure the development proposed is sustainable, the LPA need to ensure that PCC goes further and to develop a more landscape/ biodiversity led scheme. If the private sector can do it for the Long Copse Lane development then a public authority must also deliver more mitigation and compensation to off-set the impact of the development.