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Response to HCC Ecology comments on Kingscroft Farm, Havant (APP/22/00669)

Following the initial application of the Kingscroft Farm site in Havant which comprised an outline application for the development of up to 140 residential dwellings with access from Meyrick Road, comments have been received by HCC ecology (provided from Tristan Norton). These comments are outlined below and responses (in red) provided as to how they are being / have been addressed.

“The proposed development will occur within the large open areas of grassland in the eastern half of the surveyed area. These areas are stated as comprising grazed, species-poor grassland. Section 5.2.1 of the report states ‘subject to further botanical investigation the majority of the site shows limited ecological value,...’. I am unsure if this means that further assessment is proposed or not and would welcome clarification.

Apologies this was a typo, a more detailed assessment of the grassland was carried out and this information provided in the submitted PEA (this was an artefact from a pre-submission version before further surveys were undertaken).

The fields immediately west of the site are botanically interesting, and are best described as floodplain pasture with saline elements. These pastures are mapped as the Priority Habitat Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh. There are a number of interesting plant records from these grazed fields, indicating a species-rich grassland flora. Although not included within the proposed development area, I am concerned that development could affect local hydrological conditions and result in botanical changes and it is not yet clear whether this has been considered. The botanical interest of these fields is maintained through the underlying geology and hydrological conditions but also crucially by continued grazing.

In terms of potential impacts to the hydrology of the western more botanically rich field, the drainage consultant has provided the following information:

The fields immediately to the west of the site are shown to be impacted by both tidal and fluvial flooding originating from the Hermitage Stream to the west of the fields. The fields are also shown to be affected by surface water flood risk but this does not appear to be significantly

contributed to by the site. The proposed development will have no impact on the floodplain which is almost entirely outside of the site boundary except in extreme events. Groundwater monitoring was undertaken within the site as part of the proposed development and this found groundwater levels to be at approximately 2-3 metre below ground level. As there are no subterranean development proposed it is considered that there will no impact on the groundwater levels. On the basis of the above, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any significant impact on the hydrological characteristics of the adjacent fields.

The indicative proposed surface water drainage strategy incorporates sustainable drainage (SuDS) features designed to treat surface water runoff from the site including permeable paving and attenuation basins. To minimise the amount of runoff from the development flowing into the Hermitage Stream, approximately half of the development is proposed to drain to the Southern Water drainage network instead of the watercourse. The surface water drainage strategy, and SuDS features, would be considered in further detail as the layout is developed.

With regards to the ongoing management of this habitat, my understating is that there would be no objections from the client to it being grazed although further details on this can be provided at the RM stage (such as a full management strategy).

The northern/western boundary of the site is adjacent to the Hermitage Stream, a valuable watercourse of high ecological value. There is potential for development proposals to result in impacts (direct and indirect) on the stream and its riparian habitats and the species associated with them.

An 8 m buffer has been proposed along the edge of the stream (as confirmed by the drainage consultant) and it is considered this would be sufficient to mitigate any operational effects of the development this area can be planted up as well to enhance its buffering capabilities).

The application is lacking detail on ecological avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancements. Whilst this is indeed an outline application it is essential that the framework for ecological mitigation is provided now in order that ecological impacts can be assessed by the Local Planning Authority.

An updated PEA will be issued making appropriate recommendations for ecological enhancements.

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 will enable 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.

The Dormouse surveys and bat activity survey work has now been complete and the results of these surveys written up into stand-alone reports to support the application.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to get in touch



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