

Our Ref: 7695/JS/003.let.aa
Your Ref: 192054

02 October 2020

Alison Amoah
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Dear Alison

RE: READING INTERNATIONAL LOGISTIC PARK – ECOLOGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE (PLANNING REF: 192054)

Following the conference call held between members of the applicant's team yourself and Giles Sutton on the 28th September 2020, I provide some additional detail as requested, and provide some further comments on a number of points made during the call. The below should be read in conjunction with my previous letter on ecological matters dated 15th May 2020 and supported by the drafted Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan.

In respect of the sought additional detail on the completed reptile presence / absence surveys, I provide the below table showing the dates, times and weather conditions of the seven separate visits.

Survey Number	Date	Time	Cloud cover (%)	Temperature (°C)
1	07/05/2020	11:45	0	16
2	11/05/2020	10:00	30	10
3	15/05/2020	17:00	20	16
4	19/05/2020	10:30	10	17
5	26/05/2020	09:10	10	15
6	29/05/2020	18:30	0	20
7	03/06/2020	10:30	90	15

As can be noted all surveys were completed during favourable weather conditions and according to set guidelines and were completed both in the morning and afternoon / evening to address any prevalence to shading in the surveyed area. The surveys did not record any presence of common reptiles and hence the likely absence of this partially protected group has been ascertained.

In regard to the outstanding points of disagreement, I once again would like to detail that due to self-set willow scrub across the former car park (with tarmac remaining across a large area of this part of the site) we cannot



ECOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Part of the ES Group

Ecology Solutions Limited
Cokenach Estate | Barkway
Royston | Hertfordshire | SG8 8DL

DIRECTORS
Josef Saunders
Peter Hadfield

01763 848084
east@ecologysolutions.co.uk
www.ecologysolutions.co.uk

Registered in England No. 5276191

also at:

Farncombe House | Farncombe Estate
Broadway | Worcestershire | WR12 7LJ

01451 870767
info@ecologysolutions.co.uk

68 Quay Street
Manchester | M3 3EJ

0161 4703232
mcr@ecologysolutions.co.uk

accept that the area in the south-east of the site is priority habitat lowland deciduous woodland as has been suggested by Giles Sutton. Our position is supported by the detailed surveys that have been completed and the encapsulated by the enclosed photographs (Photographs 1, 2 & 3).

We also support the position that a betterment to the watercourse is being provided as part of the proposed development with a net increase in the landscape buffer to ensure a landscaped buffer is being provided. Further information of the buffer and proportion of new habitat providing an overall betterment to that of the current situation is illustrated in the comprehensive set of landscaping plans prepared by Macgregor Smith, which support the planning application. The current watercourse supports a narrow band of self-set trees adjacent to the palisade and chain-link fence and existing hardstanding beyond albeit with some bramble and other scrub encroaching on the hardstanding. I provide some further photographic evidence of the current situation to show the limited vegetation present between the existing areas of hardstanding and the watercourse (Photographs 5 & 6). The aim of removing some of the scrub and self-set trees would be to improve light conditions to watercourse and seek to improve the overall diversity of the watercourse and associated channel. New wildflower grassland, marginal planting and new native tree planting shall complement the retained habitats. Any timber from the removed scrub / trees would be retained as a dead-wood resource to benefit saproxylic organisms.

It is understood that the position of the retention of the main bat foraging and dispersal corridor is accepted, and that local bat population shall be as detailed retained at favourable conservation status.

The concerns on entomology now seem to be centred on the perceived mosaic of habitats in the south-east of the site, which itself conflicts with the position that this area is dominated by purported lowland woodland, and the partial loss of this mosaic to the proposed development. The proposed development shall create new habitats of high interest for invertebrates, such as wildflower grassland, whilst complementing the retained habitats of considered interest. The drafted and submitted EMMP details how the various habitats to be created and retained will be subject to sensitive management to ensure their interest is maintained and opportunities provide for a range of species, particularly invertebrates.

Overall, it is considered that whilst the site is allocated, and is in receipt of planning consent the proposed new development would ensure the functionality of the woodland and watercourse is both maintained and enhanced. The proposals include a diverse range of planting to complement the retained features of noted ecological value and will offset the limited losses that shall occur to facilitate the proposed development.

I trust the above and enclosed are both clear and of assistance. If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely

Josef Saunders
Director

Encl.

PHOTOGRAPH 1: Hardstanding dominating ground across scrub area in the south-east of the site suggested as being lowland woodland by Giles Sutton



PHOTOGRAPH 2: Additional view of Willow scrub with hardstanding dominating the ground with some moss growth



PHOTOGRAPH 3: Re-colonising ground in east of the site



PHOTOGRAPH 4: A further image of hardstanding dominating ground conditions beneath some opportunistic scrub growth



PHOTOGRAPH 5: Small watercourse with narrow band of scrub and trees to the right adjacent to the proposed development site



PHOTOGRAPH 6: Palisade / chain-link fencing marking boundary of existing development site and proximity to the watercourse and current buffer

