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Ecological Consultants  
Environmental and Rural Chartered Surveyors

Your Ref:

Our Ref: AWG/4568

James Ellis  
Rural Solutions  
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Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 1DR

Tuesday, 03 April 2018

Dear Mr Ellis

**RE: LAND OFF BROAD MEADOW, CHIPPING- BIODIVERSITY OFFSETTING**

Further to our recent conversation, I understand development of the above would require that it lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting in line with NPPF Para 55.

In respect of biodiversity, defining enhancement proves problematic as "valuing" the natural environment requires a standardised methodology and baseline values against which to compare a site before and after.

Biodiversity offsetting using Defra matrices has attempted this and is currently the accepted method of valuing ecological habitat.

Defra metrics is complicated, and is highly sensitive to the type and condition of the habitat being lost, and the type and condition of the habitat being created on-site in mitigation and also off-site in compensation. Differences in habitat type and condition can make a large difference to the amount of offsetting required.

The assessment hereafter is in accordance with and follows the methodology reported in "Biodiversity offsetting Pilots Guidance for Developers (DEFRA, 2012)"



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## Habitat

Three habitat types were identified on site in accordance with DEFRA, 2012

1. GPO - Grassland possibly improved
2. URO - Built up areas and gardens
3. LF26 - Fence
4. LF11Z - Non-important hedgerows
5. LF1Z - Other hedges / Line of trees

## Site area

The total site area has been measured as comprising an area of 0.57ha.

Offsetting habitat types are shown on Figure 1.



## Distinctiveness

The species and habitat types present are widespread and common both in the local area and nationally. GPO, URO and LF1Z are habitats categorised as low distinctiveness band. LF26 has no distinctiveness band and LF11Z has a high distinctiveness band.

## Condition

None of the habitats within the site can be condition scored under the Natural England 'Higher Level Stewardship Farm Environmental Plan (FEP)' manual as these habitats are not included within this scheme.

Given the nature of current use of the site, we would however consider their condition to be poor.

## Units to be lost

Using the above information, the number of biodiversity units on site are calculated as below;

Habitat	Distinctiveness	Condition	Hectares	Number of Units on site
GPO	Low - 1	Poor - 1	0.537	0.537
URO	Low - 1	Poor - 1	0.031	0.031
LF26	0	0	N/A	N/A
LF1Z	Low - 1	Poor - 1	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>			<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.57</b>

*Table 1- Pre-existing value*

LF11Z is omitted from this calculation as this hedgerow is to be retained and remain unaffected by the proposals.

LF1Z is measured in meters; hectare calculations for this habitat type are therefore not applicable. The habitats within the site identified as LF1Z comprise two coniferous tree lines in the South-west of the site and a species and structurally poor hedgerow in the South-east. C.17m of hedgerow will be removed from this habitat.

Using the biodiversity off-setting guidelines, compensation/ mitigation requirements are thus

## Compensation/ Mitigation

For every meter of hedgerow to be removed as a result of the proposals, three meters of new hedgerow planting should be undertaken. To adhere to guidelines, at least 51m of hedgerow should be incorporated into the design.

It is proposed that a total of c.323m of hedgerow is planted around the site. This includes replacement of the hedgerow to be removed.

New tree lines will also be planted around the site to a total of c.64m.

0.57Ha will become Built Up areas and Gardens (URO)

Habitat	Distinctiveness	Condition	Difficulty of creation	Hectares	Discount Multiplier	Number of Units on site
Built Up areas and Gardens (URO)	Low - 1	Moderate - 2	Low- 1	0.57	0	1.14
<b>Total</b>				<b>0.57</b>		<b>1.14</b>

*Table 2- Post construction value*

URO New Garden total area 0.57 HA. These habitats have a habitat classification of URO (Built Up areas and Gardens).

These are considered to have a Low distinctiveness and will be Moderate condition. The difficulty of recreation/ restoration is Low. These habitats will occur immediately upon completion of the scheme and as such no discount is applied for them to reach target condition. These will be subject to design by the architect and ecologist who will specify the species to be planted and their management/ maintenance to ensure rapid establishment.

The total of recreated habitat onsite is 1.14 Units

$(1*2*1*0.57 = 1.14\text{Units})$

LF112 Hedgerow (New planting) total c.323m. New hedgerow planting will incorporate a range of native and wildlife friendly species and greatly increase the potential for a range of species to commute over and seek refuge at the site.

LF112 (Non-important hedgerow) has a high distinctiveness (3) will be of at least moderate condition (2) and have a low difficulty in creation. The proposals will result in an additional length of 306m of this BAP habitat being present on site post development.

LF12 Line of trees (New planting) total c.64m. New tree planting will improve the vegetative structure and diversity across the site, further improving the ecological value of the site post development.

### Summary

Using the DEFRA Matrics calculations for habitat types, distinctiveness, condition and difficulty of creation the site pre development is 0.57 units, post development the site will be 1.14 units.

The post construction ecological value, allowing for establishment of newly created habitat is therefore **0.57 units better (100% increase)** than existing resulting in enhancement of the immediate setting in line with NPPF Para 55.

There will be an increase in the length of hedgerow of 306m. This is against a loss of 17m. **Hedgerow is therefore increased by 1900%.**

Yours Sincerely



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