



[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

**FAO Principal Planning Officer**  
**Ribble Valley Council**  
**By e-mail**

5<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

**App 3/2025/0095 Land at Higher Road Longridge**

Thank you for consulting the Ecology Unit on the above planning application.

**Ecology Survey Effort**

I am satisfied with the ecological survey effort undertaken to inform the planning application. I would not consider that further surveys need to be carried out prior to deciding the application.

**Impact on designated sites**

The development proposal will not affect any sites designated on the basis of their nature conservation value in isolation, although it does lie within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). AONBs are primarily a landscape designation, although they are also regarded as special places for wildlife. The wildlife value of the site is capable of being conserved, should permission be granted.

**Impact on Habitats**

The proposals will predominantly affect areas of semi-improved agricultural grassland, with broadleaved woodland and mature hedgerows to the site boundaries. Short lengths of hedgerow will likely be lost to facilitate access to the site.

Compensation is offered for the loss of grassland areas by enhancing remaining areas of grassland.

Compensation for the loss of hedgerows is offered by proposals to create new lengths of hedgerow and by enhancing retained hedgerows.

## Impact on protected and priority species

Surveys have shown that the development is likely to affect foraging bats and nesting birds. Bats and nesting birds are specially protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Given that –

- It is proposed to retain, or replace, the most important habitats for bats and birds (hedgerows and trees) *and*
- New landscaping will be introduced to the site *and*
- It is proposed to introduce new bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities into the site

I would not consider that the proposals will cause long-term harm to the local nature conservation status of either bats or birds, but some measures are advised to prevent disturbance -

- Avoiding any vegetation clearance during the optimum time of year for nesting birds (March to August inclusive),
- Felling any trees / removing lengths of hedgerow with care, with the possible presence of bats and nesting birds borne in mind,
- Designing detailed lighting plans to avoid unnecessary light spill, and avoiding direct lighting of retained hedgerows and trees,

Signs of badgers were recorded during surveys of the site, although no badger setts will be affected by the development. Badgers are mobile in their habitats, and I would therefore advise that, in addition to measures proposed below for other species,

- A pre-construction precautionary survey of the site for badgers should be required to be carried out as a Condition of any permission which may be granted to the scheme.

If during the course of any works the presence of any specially protected species is suspected, works must cease and advice sought from a suitably qualified person.

## Other Species

The site could be used by hedgehogs and amphibians. I also note that deer use the site. Deer are not specially protected, although precautions will need to be taken during the course of any development to protect the welfare of deer.

I would advise that –

- No construction works should be permitted during the hours of darkness,
- Precautions should be taken during the course of any construction period to avoid harm to mammals, including –

- Covering deep excavations overnight,
- Leaving gaps in any boundary fencing during site clearance to enable mammals to move off the site,
- Keeping construction sites tidy, avoiding the creation of potential refuges for mammals.
- A Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS) for avoiding harm to amphibians should be required to be prepared and implemented during vegetation clearance and development works due to the risk of amphibians using the site for commuting and/or foraging. The RAMS should set out the working methods that will need to be adhered to avoid impacts on any amphibians that may be encountered during the works.

All of the above measures could be incorporated into a Construction Method Statement (Biodiversity), which could be required by Condition.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

I would accept that the development could achieve at least a 10% Net Gain in Biodiversity through the creation and enhancement of habitats on-site.

Since the extent and types of habitat to be created and/or enhanced is regarded as significant, I would advise that the long-term management and monitoring of the biodiversity net gain is secured by means of a S106 planning obligation. The use of an S106 would enable the planning authority to monitor the biodiversity gain in the long-term.

A 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will be required to be provided pre-commencement of any development by applying the statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition to any permission which may be granted to the scheme.

### **Conclusions**

I would not raise any overall objections to the proposals on Ecology grounds, although a number of Conditions will need to be applied to any permission which may be granted to the scheme to protect nature conservation interests.

I hope that these comments are useful. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

██████████  
██████████