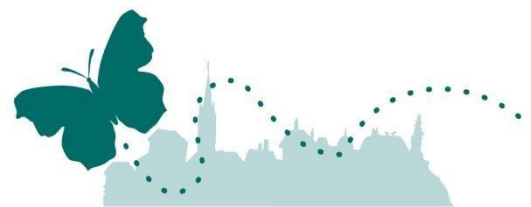


Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
Dukinfield Town Hall, King Street
Dukinfield, SK16 4LA



**Greater Manchester
Ecology Unit**

Principal Ecologist:
Derek Richardson BSc Hons MPhil

**FAO Principal Planning Officer
Ribble Valley Council**

3rd August 2026

By e-mail

Dear Sir/Madam

Outline Application 3/2025/0997

Description - Outline application for the erection of up to 115 dwellings, including affordable housing, with public open space, landscaping, sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access. All matters reserved except for means of access.

Location - Land off Henthorn Road Clitheroe BB7 3BY

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

Ecology Survey Effort

A range of ecology surveys and assessments of the site have been undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists to inform the application. I would regard the survey information as sufficiently current to inform the application, but additional surveys may be required to inform a future, detailed reserved matters application and/or pre-commencement, should the outline application be approved.

Impact on designated nature conservation sites

I would accept that the proposals will not affect any sites specially designated for their nature conservation importance.

Impact on notable habitats

The proposals will predominantly affect areas of modified agricultural grassland of limited diversity, although there are habitats on and near to the site with local value, including an area of recently designated planted ancient woodland to the west, hedgerows, individual trees and watercourses.

At least some of these habitats are capable of being retained as part of the overall development, and I note that the current outline plans show watercourses and hedgerows as retained and enhanced, and a planted buffer zone between built development and the area of planted ancient woodland.

I would advise that to protect retained habitats and nature conservation interests during the construction of the development a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) is required to be prepared and implemented by Condition.

Suggested Condition - Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity)

No development shall take place (including ground works and vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) must include the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements)
- d) The location and timings of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- e) The times during which construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs if applicable.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: to protect biodiversity

No access should be permitted between the application site and the area of planted ancient woodland.

Reason: to protect trees and woodland and to protect biodiversity.

Impact on Notable Species

Bats

No known bat resting places will be lost to the development, but the application site supports foraging habitat of value to bats. High numbers of bats of various species have been shown to use the site for foraging and commuting.

The development will result in some losses to bat foraging habitats, although habitats present on site and nearby which are of most value to bats (hedgerows, woodlands and watercourses) will mostly be retained, and new landscaping can be introduced which could benefit bats. Nevertheless, all UK bats and their resting places carry a high level of legal protection and therefore other measures to conserve bats are recommended.

The development should avoid overly intrusive lighting of habitats of most value to bats and should incorporate new opportunities for bat roosting (bat boxes and integrated features for bats).

Suggested Condition - Lighting Design Strategy for Biodiversity

Notwithstanding the submitted details, and within 6 months of any approval, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" in accordance with ILP Publications' "Guidance Note 8 Bats and artificial lighting" shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for all existing and proposed lighting within the development hereby permitted. The strategy shall:

- a. identify those areas /features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and other nocturnal wildlife that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b. show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy.

Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: to protect biodiversity.

Final landscape plans for the development should incorporate new features of value for roosting bats (e.g. integrated bat bricks, bat boxes etc.).

Otters

Otters have been shown to use nearby watercourses and may occasionally use the application site. While no significant areas of habitat of most value to Otters will be lost to the development, some disturbance to Otters may be caused both during the construction and operation of the development. Given the high level of legal protection given to Otters, precautions to avoid disturbance effects are justified.

I would advise that a dedicated Method Statement is required to be prepared and implemented giving full details of the measures to be taken to avoid any possible harm to Otters during the course of any development.

Reason – conservation of protected species

Protection of Nesting Birds

Precautions will need to be taken throughout site clearance works and groundworks to avoid harm to nesting birds, including ground nesting birds. I would advise that no vegetation clearance required to facilitate the proposals should be undertaken during the optimum time of year for bird nesting (March to August inclusive) unless nesting birds have been shown to be absent by a suitably qualified person. All nesting birds their eggs and young are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

A range of bird nesting boxes (including nesting boxes suitable for Swifts) should also be provided throughout the site as part of any final landscape proposals as a useful biodiversity enhancement measure.

I note that it is planned to move a barn owl nest box as part of the scheme. Barn owls carry a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The new location of barn owl nesting provision should be included in any detailed landscape plans which may be prepared for the development in subsequent detailed proposals.

Badgers

Although no signs of badgers have been recorded on site, the site supports habitats suitable for use by badgers, and badgers are mobile in their habits. I would advise that a precautionary survey for badgers is undertaken within 1 month of the commencement of any approved groundworks. If badgers are found, measures will need to be taken to avoid any possible harm to badgers. Badgers and their setts carry a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Reason – conservation of protected species

Amphibians

I would accept that any risk to amphibians is low, but not negligible. I would advise that a Method Statement is required to be prepared by Condition, giving details of the measures to be taken to avoid any harm to amphibians during the course of any ground clearance and construction works.

Other wildlife

The recommended CEMP (biodiversity) will go some way to protecting other wildlife during the course of any construction works, including brown hares, foxes, deer and hedgehogs.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Enhancement

I would accept that the development could likely achieve a required 10%+ net gain in biodiversity through on-site landscaping and improvements to existing habitats.

The biodiversity metric provided to inform the application was completed before the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was adopted. Once an LNRS has been adopted, all on-site habitats should be classified as having 'low' strategic significance. In this case, woodland on the site has been classified as having moderate-high strategic significance. On the other hand, the metric has correctly classified some habitats to be created on the site as having high strategic significance because they will contribute to the overall aims of the LNRS. Changes to the classification of the strategic significance of existing habitats on the site will not significantly affect the overall calculation of biodiversity gains, and changes to the biodiversity metric will inevitably be made during the preparation of more detailed landscape plans for the site.

I would advise that a final version of the biodiversity metric will need to be provided alongside the Biodiversity Gain Plan which will be required by the deemed (statutory) Biodiversity Gain Condition. The Biodiversity Gain Condition will apply to any permission granted to this application.

I would regard the on-site habitats to be created to be significant, and therefore a long-term (30 year) Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will need to be required to be prepared and implemented. To provide necessary resources for the Council to be able to monitor BNG provision I would advise that the Council enters into an S106 agreement with the applicant to secure BNG provision and monitoring in the long-term.

Biodiversity enhancement for species should be incorporated into any detailed landscape proposals which may be prepared for the scheme (for example, hedgehog highways, native planting which would benefit pollinating invertebrates).

I hope that these comments are useful

Yours

Derek Richardson
Principal Ecologist