

MEMORANDUM

From:	Duncan Fisher Ecology Officer	To (Case Officer):	Connie Davis
Service	WBC Ecology	App No:	241901
Address:	Barkham Farms, Barkham, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 4EX.		
Type of Development:			
Proposal:	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 211081 dated 21.01.22 and NMA 241264 dated 08.07.24: Condition 5 (partial discharge) relates to landscaping details; 6 to landscape management; 7 to tree protection; 9 (partial discharge) to archaeological investigation, 10 (partial discharge) to rights of way details; 15 to landscape and ecological management plan; 16 to ecological permeability		
Site Visit Made:	Yes/No		

Summary Of Recommendations

- ☐ Recommend approval but with condition(s) & reason(s) **stated below**;
- ☐ Recommend approval with no conditions
- ☐ Recommend refusal for the reason(s) **stated below**;
- ☒ **Negotiate the amendments stated below; or**
- ☐ Request further information before determination as **stated below**.

Comments On Proposal

This response is made after review of the following submitted documents:

- Landscape General Arrangement Sheet 1 of 2 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3001 P04)
- Landscape General Arrangement Sheet 2 of 2 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3002 P04)
- Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 1 of 2 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3011 P04)
- Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 2 of 2 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3012 P04)
- Planting Schedule (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3013 P04)
- Landscape Details Sheet 1 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3021 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 2 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3022 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 3 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3023 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 4 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3024 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 5 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3025 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 6 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3026 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 7 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3027 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 8 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3028 P03)
- Landscape Details Sheet 9 of 9 (BFSF-RAMB-XX-DR-L-3029 P03)

- NBS Landscape specifications for Landscape and Planting P05
- Landscape Ecological Management Plan P05

Condition 5 – Landscape Details

I do not recommend discharge of condition at this stage. This is based on the following concerns:

1. The hedgerow proposed alongside the greenway adjacent to fields 8 and 6 (as shown in both Landscape General Arrangement Sheet 2 of 2 and Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 2 of 2) and field 4 (as shown in both Landscape General Arrangement Sheet 1 of 2 and Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 1 of 2) is too close to the greenway. This means that they have no growing space. It will not be possible to follow the LEMP management prescription of cutting the hedgerow only every other year because of the pressure to maintain an open greenway. There needs to be greater separation between the greenway and the line of the hedgerows.
2. The greenway through field 2 (as shown in both Landscape General Arrangement Sheet 1 of 2 and Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 1 of 2) is too close to the existing hedge on the southern edge of the field. This is confirmed in the cross section shown in Landscape Details Sheet 2 of 9 where the hedgerow is shown growing into the space above the greenway. It will not be possible to follow the LEMP management prescription of cutting the hedgerow only every other year because of the pressure to maintain an open greenway. There needs to be greater separation between the greenway and the line of the hedgerow.
3. The Planting Schedule includes the species *Prunus padus* (Bird Cherry) and *Quercus petraea* (Sessile Oak) within the RUK Wet Woodland Understory mix. These species are not native to this part of the country and are not suited for this mix and location. I recommend swapping them for *Frangula alnus* (Alder Buckthorn) and *Rhamnus cathartica* (Buckthorn).
4. The Planting Schedule includes the species *Tilia cordata* (Small-leaved Lime) within the RUK Woodland Core mix. This species is inappropriate for the soil conditions in the locations proposed for this mix. I recommend that it is removed from the mix with the percentages of the other species increased.
5. The Planting Schedule includes the species *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder Rose) within the RUK Woodland Edge mix. This species is inappropriate for the soil conditions in the locations proposed for this mix. I recommend that it is swapped for *Rhamnus cathartica* (Buckthorn).
6. The RUK Woodland Edge mix numbers and RUK Woodland Core mix numbers given in the Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 2 of 2 do not match up with those given in the Planting Schedule. The Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 2 of 2 appears to be double counting the area by giving full weight to the whole of both mixes for the entire area that will be a combination of the mixes. The planting plan needs to be corrected.
7. Both the Landscape Planting Plan Sheet 2 of 2 and the Planting Schedule give tree planting numbers that do not match the staggered grid spacing that is set out in Landscape Details Sheet 5 of 9. The spacing given in Sheet 5 of 9 is not 1.5m centres referenced in the Planting Schedule. These three specification sheets need to be coherent. As the Woodland Edge mix is specified for the same location as the Woodland Core mix, Sheet 5 of 9 should detail how to distribute these two mixes within the locations specified.

8. The proposed spacing shown in Sheet 5 of 9 could be considered acceptable if the ongoing management of the woodland is on a short-term coppice rotation. The LEMP proposes coppicing as a management operation and specifies a relatively short-term cycle. However, the planting mixes proposed do not match this objective. If coppice is to be the preferred management option, the proportion of *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) needs to be much higher, at about 75% with the remaining 25% being split over the other species. If the preferred management option is to generate an uneven, lower intervention woodland, the planting density should be greatly reduced – circa 3m centres, if the current % mixes are to be used.
9. Landscape Details Sheet 3 of 9 and the Landscape Specification includes tree protection measures for 1+1 transplant sized trees. I am concerned that there will be a high failure rate for these trees because they have a spiral guard only and will be prone to browsing damage. I recommend that 1.2m tree guards are used, perhaps with a slightly larger tree size. It is better to establish a lower density of trees well, than have high failure rates of densely planted trees with inadequate protection.
10. Landscape Details Sheet 3 of 9 does not include a specification for light standard and branched trees as specified in the Planting Schedule for the trees in the RUK Woodland Core mix. I question whether this size of tree is required at the planting density proposed. Should a slightly smaller tree size be specified (still with the 1.2m tube protection)?

Condition 6 – Landscape Management

From an ecology perspective, I do not recommend that this condition is discharged. Please see my further comments in relation to condition 15 as a single document has been submitted to cover both condition 6 and 15.

Condition 7 – Tree Protection

No comment.

Condition 9 – Archaeological Investigation

No comment.

Condition 10 – Rights of Way Details

No comment regarding details but rights of way relevant comment made in relation to condition 5.

Condition 15 – Landscape and Ecological Management Plans

From an ecology perspective, I do not recommend that this condition is discharged.

If the following concerns are addressed, I would be able to recommend discharge of the condition:

1. It is good that monitoring of the habitats is proposed and the target years indicated in paragraphs 8.0.4, 8.4.16, 8.4.27, 8.4.39, and 8.4.49. These have not been transferred into Table 10.1 as actions in the first five years. In particular it needs to be shown when in the year the monitoring is required in order to best assess whether management is on target (this potentially being different for different habitats). Please can this be added.

2. It is unclear what the end type of woodland proposed to be created on the southern edge of the site is. Paragraph 8.4.7 indicates an uneven aged woodland would be sought. Paragraph 8.4.5 proposes coppicing. The planting density would be right for coppicing but the species mix is not correct for this. The LEMP needs to be clearer. If coppice woodland is desired then the species mix at planting needs to be adjusted. The LEMP should then set out proposed coupes to allow a degree of rotational coppicing – the whole block should not be cut in one go. If an uneven aged woodland is desired then the planting spacing can be increased (total number of trees required to be planted is smaller) and some guidance should be given as to frequency and patch size of intervention over the following 30 years to help introduce the structural heterogeneity. I recommend the LEMP is updated to be clear about the woodland type objective and the steps to get there.
3. The LEMP does not refer to any biodiversity net gain habitat condition assessment criteria and associated targets to achieve. This may well mean that actions required to establish to a certain biodiversity net gain condition score will be missing. I recommend that the LEMP includes reference to target habitat condition for biodiversity net gain and reviews the proposed actions in light of these targets.

If the above matters could be addressed within the LEMP, I would be able to recommend discharge of the condition.

Condition 16 – Ecological Permeability

I can recommend that this condition is discharged.

Conditions & Reasons (if required)			
n/a			
Date:	8 November 2024	Signed:	D. Fisher