

Nick Hirst  
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council  
Development Management

**Our ref:** RA/2023/145993/03-L01  
**Your ref:** 2023/91491

**Date:** 15 January 2025

By email: [dc.admin@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:dc.admin@kirklees.gov.uk)

Dear Nick

**ERECTION OF 61 AGE-RESTRICTED APARTMENTS WITH ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION INCLUDING SEPARATE RESIDENTS LOUNGE AND MANAGER FACILITIES AND ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL WORKS, INCLUDING THE ERECTION OF ACCESS BRIDGE AND RIVERSIDE WALK FEATURING TWO PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES (WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA) (AMENDED PLANS SUBMITTED). PRICKLEDEN MILLS, WOODHEAD ROAD, HOLMFIRTH, HD9 2JU**

Thank you for re-consulting us on this application following submission of amended plans, which we received on 20 December 2024.

We have reviewed the following documents submitted by the applicant:

- Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment prepared by Acumen Designers & Architects Ltd, reference 2568, dated December 2024
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and River Condition Assessment prepared by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd, reference CW20-810 RPT 001, dated November 2024
- Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) prepared by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd, reference CW20-180 RPT 004, dated November 2024

These assessments do not provide adequate detail to alleviate our concerns as detailed in our previous letter dated 21 July 2023, and therefore, we maintain our objection.

To overcome our objection, we require the following:

**WFD Assessment**

- The WFD Assessment appears to have been written by an architecture firm, rather than a suitably qualified ecologist or geomorphologist. We expect WFD Assessments to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional, as with any other ecology report.
- The WFD Assessment does not provide any detail and subsequent assessment of the temporary and permanent physical works associated with the proposed development that may impact the waterbody. The impact of each activity of the works needs to be assessed against the WFD quality elements to allow conclusions to be drawn on the impact of the proposal on the WFD aims for the waterbody.

- We therefore request that the WFD Assessment is re-completed by a suitably qualified professional and details:
  - Full and clear assessment of all activities that will be carried out
  - Each stage of the activity, for example construction, operation, and decommissioning
  - The waterbody the activity is in and all waterbodies that could be affected
  - Mitigation for works negatively affecting the river, to include:
    - Any WFD measures that can be delivered as part of the scheme, and
    - Specific scheme mitigation – e.g. sediment management plan during weir removal to prevent sediment pollution.

**Lack of detail regarding works affecting the river and its riparian zone**

In our previous response we raised the need for a WFD assessment, as well as more detail “*on the proposed development – specifically, information relating to the proximity of any built development to the River Holme and any proposals relating to the modification of the riverbed and/or banks*”.

There is still a lack of information regarding the proposals relating to the modification of the riverbed and banks.

We require further information on the points below which the WFD assessment/BNG report refer to:

- Gabions and “rickrack”
  - We disagree with the statement that “*the provision of gabions and “rickrack” would provide areas of marginal backwater, with a corresponding slower flow, and allow for siltation, and establishment of plants and improved riparian habitats. Gaps between boulders would also allow for safe foraging and feeding locations for fish fry and prey*”. These new physical modifications need to be considered and assessed in the context of any existing natural or semi-natural habitat. We therefore require the applicant to provide detailed information on the existing habitat at the location proposed for these physical modifications.
    - We require plan-view and cross-sectional view drawings showing the extent of the proposed physical modifications on the bed/banks of the river.
- Bridge crossings
  - The site plans show two new bridge crossings over the River Holme, the applicant still has not provided any detailed information on the design of the proposed bridge crossings and associated riverbed/bank reinforcements that are required.
  - For both bridges, please provide detailed plan-view and cross-section view drawings showing their design and any associated reinforcement.
  - To ensure minimal ecological disruption, we require bridge crossings to be a clear-span (no in-channel supports) design with abutments that are sufficiently set back from the riverbank. Where possible, please show that these requirements have been incorporated into the design.

- Culvert removal and channel “softening”
  - The WFD assessment and BNG reports state *“An area of river approximately 0.09km long will be enhanced with the removal of the weir, and provision of “softer” channel re-enforcements in place of the concrete culverts that extend significantly into the watercourse.”* As far as we are aware, there are no culverted sections of the River Holme, or any other watercourse, in the proximity of the site. Please provide the following information:
    - Plans/drawings showing the location/s of the culverted sections of watercourse
    - Details for the proposed softening/de-culverting, including plan-view and cross-section view drawings for their designs.
  
- Weir removal
  - The BNG report states *“The average coarseness of the river substrate was “cobbles”, and a small weir is present across one section. This weir was not considered substantial enough to impact species dispersal but has been recommended for removal as part of enhancements to the river”.*
  - We support proposals for weir removals, however, we require further information. Please provide:
    - The exact location for the weir that is proposed for removal, there are 3 weirs within the vicinity of the site.
    - Detailed designs for the weir removal/modification and any associated remedial works that may be necessary.

All physical modifications outlined above need to be considered in an updated WFD assessment and we request that we are consulted and given the opportunity to comment.

Our objection is supported by paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which recognise that the planning system should conserve and enhance the environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

In our previous response, we also recommended that a scheme for the provision and management of, at least, an 8-metre-wide undeveloped buffer zone alongside the River Holme water body should be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The buffer zone scheme should be free from all built development, including lighting and domestic gardens. As a minimum, the scheme should include:

- plans showing the extent and layout of the buffer zone;
- details of any proposed bank regrading / bank ‘softening’ / habitat improvement
- details of any proposed planting scheme (for example, native species)
- details demonstrating how the buffer zone will be protected during development and managed over the longer term including adequate financial provision and named body responsible for management plus production of detailed management plan.

### **Planning Advice Service**

Please advise the applicant that if they would like to get further specific advice on how to overcome our objection, they can take advantage of our planning advice service. We can offer services including meetings, telecons and reviews of revised information prior to formal submission. We encourage the applicant to contact us directly to discuss this further.

We currently charge £100 plus VAT per officer per hour. We will provide you with an estimated cost for any further discussions or review of documents. The standard terms for our charged for service are available [here](#).

If you need any clarification or further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Bev Lambert**  
**Sustainable Places - Planning Advisor**

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