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OUTLINE STATEMENT REGARDING POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE & ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT OF THE EXISTING GRASS OPEN SPACE STRIP ON BRUNSWICK STREET TO IMMEDIATE WEST OF DEVELOPMENT SITE

This statement is in response to LPA request to increase BNG and Public Open Space on land within the clients ownership, and hence reduce financial contributions for shortfalls within the current landscape and ecological enhancement proposals.

As there is limited available space within the development site itself to include further ecological enhancement and open space than that already proposed, an area of discussion with the LPA was the strip of land just to the west of the main development site, Brunswick Street, which according to the deeds our client would own up to the midpoint.

This linear space is currently an open, non-vehicle space, with a small pedestrian tarmac path on the western edge and grass for the rest, and two mature trees on the southern boundary. The eastern boundary comprises a low dry stone retaining wall, retaining in places particularly to northern end, which will have the development boundary fence installed above it.

One suggestion was that the space owned by the client (approx. 480m²) could be developed to possibly contribute to either the 'Parks & Recreation Grounds' and/or 'Allotments' categories.

As the approximately 5.5m grass strip within client ownership is largely overshadowed by mature Ash trees and scrub on the development site boundary above the stone wall/ retaining wall, up until approximately mid-day re its north south orientation with trees to immediate east, it is felt that the strip does not lend itself to 'Allotments' category.

As such the strip would lend itself to informal ecological enhancement under the 'Parks and Recreation Grounds' category, and could gain BNG points by enhancing the biodiversity of the existing potentially 'relatively poor' grade grassland (grading subject to further Ecology survey)

Enhancement proposals would comprise retaining the existing grass sward, checking for and removing any over vigorous weeds within the sward, then scarifying approximately 50% of the existing grass area to create bare soil areas, and introducing wildflower seed mixes and native woodland edge bulbs to the exposed locally cultivated areas.

A woodland/ hedgerow grassland wildflower mix could be seeded to the shadiest zone immediately next to the dry-stone wall, say 2.5 metres wide e.g. Woodland & Heavy Shade Wildflower Seeds LW8M by Landlife, (24 wildflower species & 6 grass species).

Native woodland bulbs could be added too for additional biodiversity, including Wood Anemones, Ramsons, Snowdrops, Bluebells, Native Primrose, Lesser Celandine.

The outer sunnier strip, say 3 m wide could be seeded with a more open aspect mix as will get afternoon sun eg Butterflies & Bees Blooming Marvellous Wildflower Seed Mix LWBM by Landlife (20% native wildflower /80% slow growing native meadow grasses).

The enhanced existing grassland, as wildflower meadow areas, would be subject to a long-term maintenance and management programme, to ensure establishment and with a reduced mowing regime to once or twice annually as applicable to each mix, TBA to allow the wildflower mixes to establish and flourish annually.

The possibility of including a native hedge beneath/ next to the existing dry-stone wall was discussed as was potential intermittent tree planting. However, due to the potential presence of a gas main running north south approximately 1m west from the dry stone wall, and a potential water main running down the centre of the existing grassed area, native hedge planting and tree planting could be problematic as a hedge would sit over / immediately next to the gas main, and the trees would need to be located in between both stats services which would not meet the Stats authorities safety requirements.

As such enhancing the strip as a managed wildflower meadow zone seems the most logical solution and will generate additional BNG points.