

Planning ContactCentre

From: Katie Smart
Sent: 24 April 2025 08:38
To: William Simcock
Cc: Planning ContactCentre; Nick Hirst
Subject: RE: New consultation - 17 Whitehall Road West - 2024/92281

Categories: Emma H

Hi William,

Thank you for your email.

Yes, the Biodiversity Net Gain report and accompanying excel metric are acceptable. All items, including degradation have been considered.

Just to note that:

It is also noted that there is a net loss of 1.92 habitat units and 0.07 hedgerow units. At least 2.50 habitat units and 0.14 hedgerow units will be required to achieve a net gain of 10%. The report shows no plan to make up for the shortfall.

We recommend the applicant provides at least an outline of the intended route to achieving off-site net gain.

It would be good to have this information in advance of a planning decision because, if offsite gain is required, it will need to be secured with a section 106 agreement. If a section 106 agreement is needed, we recommend the applicant provides sufficient information for the heads of terms of an agreement prior to determination of the application

In addition to the information already provided, this information would comprise:

- A plan that follows the UK Habitat Classification showing the spatial locations of the habitats represented in the enhancement and/or creation tabs of the biodiversity metric (i.e. the target habitats).
- The georeferenced spatial data used to create both above plans (in either .shp or .gpkg format) and written permission to share this data with West Yorkshire Records Centre.
- A 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Hope this helps.

Many thanks,

Katie

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From: William Simcock <William.Simcock@kirklees.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 April 2025 17:44

To: Katie Smart <Katie.Smart@kirklees.gov.uk>

Subject: New consultation - 17 Whitehall Road West - 2024/92281

Hi Katie,

I would like to notify you of a new consultation on an application as I feel it's important to give you some background to it.

The proposal is for 23 dwellings and was validated late August last year. The ecological information submitted with it was very limited and in fact it shouldn't have been validated as they had provided two separate biodiversity metrics, both in 2.0 format, which were based on the PEAs done for the respective permissions for the northern and southern halves of the site (ref 2020/92802 and 2019/91534). It was in December or January that I formally reviewed the BNG situation and discussed it with Nick. Our conclusion was that, ideally, the application should have been supported by a new PEA since those detailed above cannot be considered up-to-date. But that given that the northern half of the site has an extant planning permission and moreover, the site was completely cleared of vegetation (other than the belt of mature trees near the southern boundary) in 2024 before the application was submitted, a further field study would be unlikely to provide any further useful data since it would have to be based on aerial photographs. In the light of these factors we accepted that it would be sufficient for the applicant to provide a new BNG Metric to current standards, using the old survey data, thereby complying with minimum national validation requirements.

For context, the site is in a mainly built-up area and has poor connectivity with other semi-natural habitat, as noted in the previous PEAs.

This was duly submitted in early April, but a further issue was spotted – the new BNG metric did not count the trees as a separate habitat type. The old BNG metrics also failed to, I'm not sure why this was accepted at the time. Nick and I decided this was unacceptable since, even though the existing tree belt at the southern end of the site was unaffected, it would contribute to the baseline value. We advised the developer of this, and that the BNG Metric must also take into account the other trees (visible on aerial photographs) that were lost when the site was cleared.

The developer's ecologist has now produced an improved BNG Metric, plus a habitat conditions survey and a short written statement (Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment). All are now indexed. As expected, the inclusion of the trees as a separate habitat type has resulted in a very substantial increase in the baseline value – from 2.37 to 5.75 habitat units. One thing that struck me as odd is that it doesn't recognise any loss of trees – I asked the developer's ecologist about this, and he said it was because the two lines of trees were classed as hedgerows.

So, to sum up, I do not think there would be any benefit in requiring the applicant to do more field survey work at this stage, but I need to ensure that the BNG metric is sound and of a professional standard and I would very much like your input on this. If you have any questions or specific concerns, maybe you could have a chat with Nick about it?

I am now off work for two weeks, back 05-May.

Kind regards

William Simcock

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