

Planning Application Response

Ecology

To: Mary Hudson

From: Beccy Micklem, Principal Biodiversity Officer, Oxfordshire County Council

Site: Land at White Cross Farm, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Detail: Notice of Submission of Further Information in relation to Application for Planning Permission Accompanied by an Environmental Statement

Reference: MW.0115/21

Date sent: 27/06/2022

Recommendation: Further information required

Comments

Having reviewed the letter provided by Windrush Ecology Ltd. (06/06/2022) and the updated biodiversity metric, I still have some concerns that the trading rules for a high distinctiveness habitat – coastal floodplain grazing marsh (CFGM) - have not been met through the proposed restoration scheme for the site.

CFGM is a key priority habitat within the [Thames Wallingford to Goring Conservation Target Area](#) (CTA). Whilst I appreciate that the proposed restoration would result in a slight increase in the area of coastal floodplain grazing marsh (CFGM), the current amount of CFGM creation and enhancement proposed does not deliver sufficient biodiversity units to compensate for that which would be lost under the proposals.

Therefore, I would ask if the applicant could review the restoration plan to consider options for increasing the amount of CFGM provided so that the trading rules are met. Under the current proposed restoration scheme this would require a further 9.82 units of CFGM. If it is demonstrated that this is not possible on-site, then off-site options for creation or enhancement of CFGM within the CTA should be considered.

Additionally, I request that the river units within the metric calculation are reviewed. The site contains a wet ditch, as well as including the riparian zone of the River Thames; these features should be accounted for within the metric calculation, and it should be demonstrated that a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain is also delivered for river units.

I note that there is a phased scheme proposed for extraction and restoration; could the applicant please clarify whether there are any expected delays in starting habitat creation, and reflect this within the biodiversity metric calculation (or equally, whether any habitats can be created in advance).