

Our ref: 201215 L JCD0064 VoGC Ecology

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Date: 15 December 2020

Mr Ceiri Rowlands
Senior Planner
Planning and Transportation Services
Vale of Glamorgan Council
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Via Email

Dear Ceiri,

LPA Ref: 2019/00871/OUT – Land at Model Farm

I write further to my recent on-site meeting with your colleagues from the Council's Ecology and Countryside sections. At the meeting, which included a site walkover of the proposed extension to Porthkerry Country Park, options for mitigation and enhancement were discussed, alongside how the scheme, if consented, might seek to address the initial ecology comments issued in January 2020.

With regard to mitigation and enhancement, I enclose the following:

- Proposed Wildlife Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy (RPS Drawing No. ECO01271-002 Rev A)

I also address the initial ecology comments in the table overleaf and these should be read in conjunction with the Strategy.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the information to relevant colleagues and make it available on the Council's Public Access system.

I trust the information will address the outstanding issues in relation to ecology but if you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd

RE Lees

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Enc: as above

Issue	Proposal
1. Address farmland / ground nesting birds – secure new breeding habitat	<i>The rewilding of hedgerows and fields will help to achieve habitat enhancement for farmland birds – for example through allowing hedgerows to mature increasing width and height while maintaining dense cover. This will increase food availability as the hedgerow will be associated with a higher abundance of invertebrates and will produce much larger crops of fruits and berries in autumn into winter.</i> <i>The rewilding of existing grassland will involve a general cessation of management. This will create a tall tussocky neutral grassland on land that is currently short grazed by livestock. In two fields (3ha and 3.3ha in extent) targeted grassland management will be adopted to benefit nesting skylark. Five plots of shorter grassland will be created and maintained in both of the fields. Each skylark plot will be 25m² (5mx5m). Every plot will be located over 24m from the hedgerow field boundary and at least 30m apart. Targeted grassland management will be designed to maintain short and patchy vegetation cover in each of the plots. It is anticipated that they will need to be cut to 10cm above ground level annually in March.</i> <i>Wild bird food crops will be sown annually as a target measures to increase food availability, especially overwinter – areas/strips of spring sown arable with ruderal plants will provide supplementary food for farmland passerines throughout winter.</i>
2. Provide details of replacement waterbodies	<i>The loss of the concrete sided cattle drinking pond will be mitigated by the creation of wetland/marshy grassland in the base of the three new attenuation basins. This will create a larger area of alternative wetland habitat – although not ‘like for like’ replacement. Subject to approval from the airport authority (due to a perceived increased risk of bird strike) a new wildlife pond could be created in a suitable area of low-lying ground in the centre of the country park extension as a further biodiversity enhancement.</i>
3. Provide details of replacement hedgerow	<i>A series of new native hedgerow will be planted within the country park extension. This will include new hedgerows on the northern and eastern boundaries, and along the northern side of the watercourse (set back by 5m). Further new hedgerows will sub-divide fields to create more variation in field size. Three gappy/defunct hedgerows will be enhanced through additional native shrub planting. All the hedgerows would be subject to initial maintenance during establishment and will then be allowed to mature.</i> <i>The length of hedgerow creation and enhancement will be greater than the extent of loss.</i> <i>The proposed new hedgerow creation in the country park is c1240m while the total hedgerow loss is c1420m. In addition, 583m of poor quality hedgerow is to be enhanced and this as an appropriate balance.</i>
4. Do not erect bat boxes on ash trees (due to Ash dieback)	<i>New bat boxes would be installed on mature trees of species other than ash within woodland blocks and along the stream corridors close to the proposed development.</i>
5. Replacement habitat for ground nesting birds	<i>The proposal under Point 1 will also cover Point 5. Mitigation would be broadened out to benefit an assemblage of farmland birds targeted at species that do not frequent urban areas.</i>
6. Liaise with VoGC Drainage Engineer re SUDS features	<i>To be picked up at detailed design stage.</i>