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ECOLOGY

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Planning Control
North Hertfordshire District Council



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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Explanation of revisions to the Biodiversity Metric hedgerow calculation

Planning reference: 17/01955/1 - Ickleford Mill, Hertfordshire

MKA Ecology Ltd has prepared this letter to explain the difference between the hedgerow unit results presented in the previously submitted (3.0) and updated (4.0) iterations of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the proposed development at Ickleford Mill, Hertfordshire.

Iteration 3.0 of the metric identified a post-development value of approximately 0.91 hedgerow units, equivalent to an increase of approximately 0.61 hedgerow units, or 198.23%, relative to the baseline. Following a detailed review of the updated landscape proposals, the calculation has been refined and now identifies a post-development value of approximately 0.38 hedgerow units, equivalent to an increase of approximately 0.08 hedgerow units, or 25.7%, relative to the same baseline.

The reduction in the calculated hedgerow units is primarily attributable to refinements in how the proposed hedgerows have been measured, classified and incorporated within the metric.

The following refinements have been made:

1. Hedgerows within private residential curtilages

The earlier calculation (3.0) incorporated proposed hedgerows throughout the development. Following further review and clarification of the proposed management arrangements, hedgerows that are located within the private curtilage of individual dwellings and would be managed solely by individual householders have been excluded from the updated calculation (4.0).

This provides a more precautionary assessment because the long-term retention and management of hedgerows within private gardens cannot be secured or relied upon to the same extent as hedgerows located within communal land or public open space and managed under an agreed long-term management arrangement.

Proposed hedgerows associated with communal areas, public open space and land to be maintained by the management company have been retained within the calculation where appropriate. The updated metric (4.0) therefore reflects the hedgerows for which long-term delivery and management can reasonably be secured.

2. Revision to proposed native hedgerow composition

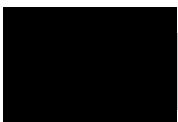
Iteration 3.0 of the metric was based on the assumption that the proposed native hedgerows would comprise at least three native woody species and would mimic a traditional native hedgerow. The subsequently updated planting specification identifies these hedgerows as single-species Beech hedgerows. They have therefore been entered into the metric using the corresponding lower-value habitat classification ornamental and non-native hedgerow, resulting in a lower unit contribution than was assumed previously.

These changes account for the difference between the hedgerow unit results in iterations 3.0 and 4.0. The revised calculation provides a more accurate and precautionary assessment based on the current planting specification, clarified land-management responsibilities and refined measurement of the proposed hedgerow lengths.

Importantly, the baseline hedgerow value has not changed and the updated landscaping plans for the development continue to provide an overall increase in hedgerow biodiversity value, with a net gain of approximately **0.08 hedgerow units, equivalent to 25.71%**, and the applicable trading rules remain satisfied.

We trust that this clarifies the reasons for the change in hedgerow units between the metric iterations.

Yours faithfully,



Suzanne Dry BSc, MSc, ACIEEM,
Consultant Ecologist
MKA Ecology Ltd

