

Date: 02 February 2012  
Our ref: 43910  
Your ref: 12/00107/MFUL



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## BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Sanders,

**Planning consultation:** Use of land for siting of a temporary agricultural worker's dwelling for a period of 5 years together with an agricultural barn with PV array, W.E.T. waste water treatment system, bore hole and alterations to existing highway access and private ways as part of a scheme for new entrants to ecological agriculture.

**Location:** (Greenham Reach) Holcombe Rogus Devon.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 24 January 2012 , which was received by Natural England on 24 January 2012 .

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

### Local authority biodiversity duty and opportunities for enhancement.

Under section 40(1) of the *Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006* a **duty** is placed on public authorities, including local planning authorities, to have regard to biodiversity in exercising their functions. This duty covers the protection, enhancement and restoration of habitats and species.

[Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity & Geological Conservation](#) also expects local authorities to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological interests. Part (vi) of the Key Principles makes it clear how the government expects the council to consider planning decisions that could lead to harm to biodiversity and geological interests. Section 10 on ancient woodland and section 12 on networks of natural habitats describe how these particular biodiversity features should be protected from development.

The ecological survey submitted with this application has identified that there will not be any significant impacts on statutorily protected sites, species or on priority Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats as a result of this proposal. However we do support the recommendations made in the ecological report particularly the following, 'In view of the potential use of the site by otters it is recommended that the riparian vegetation is not altered and that the secluded nature of the river is preserved'.

When considering this application the council should maximise opportunities in and around the development for building in beneficial features as part of good design in accordance with the duty on the council described above and in paragraph 14 of PPS 9.

The Town and Country Planning Association's publication '*Biodiversity By Design*' provides further information on this issue and the publication can be downloaded from <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/biodiversity-by-design.html>

Examples of biodiversity enhancements that can be widely incorporated into development proposals include:

**Green/brown roofs.**

The use of alternative roofing (turf, aggregate, brown and green roofs) can make a significant contribution to biodiversity, attenuation of rainfall, and energy efficiency as they can provide a high degree of insulation.

**Landscaping.**

Native species of plant should be used in landscaping proposals associated with development, unless there are over-riding reasons why particular non-native species need to be used. The nature conservation value of trees, shrubs and other plants includes their intrinsic place in the ecosystem; their direct role as food or shelter for species; and in the case of trees and shrubs, their influence through the creation of woodland conditions that are required by other species, eg the ground flora.

**Nesting and roosting sites.**

Modern buildings tend to reduce the amount of potential nesting and roosting sites. Artificial sites may therefore need to be provided for bats and birds. There is a range of ways in which these can be incorporated into buildings, or built in courtyard habitats. Their location should provide protection from the elements, preferably facing an easterly direction, out of the direct heat of the sun and prevailing wind and rain.

**Sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS).**

Many existing urban drainage systems are damaging the environment and are not, therefore, sustainable in the long term. Techniques to reduce these effects have been developed and are collectively referred to as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). SUDS are physical structures built to receive surface water runoff. They typically include ponds, wetland, swales and porous surfaces. They should be located as close as possible to where the rainwater falls, providing attenuation for the runoff. They may also provide treatment for water prior to discharge, using the natural processes of sedimentation, filtration, adsorption and biological degradation.

Yours sincerely

James Hughes  
Customer Service Consultation Team