

Response to Comments from Havant Tree Wardens Group

This note has been prepared in response to the deputation of Havant Tree Wardens Group which was sent directly to Metis Homes by HTWG for consideration via email on 09th November. Metis Homes have also replied directly to HTWG.

The submitted deputation from Havant Tree Wardens Voluntary Group infers that the Metis Homes planning application is professionally and technically deficient. This response provides clarity that the application has been prepared by a team of competent professionals and follows industry practice in all regards.

Assessment of the Development relationship with Retained Trees

We are aware of the NPPF statement (section 175c) on the loss of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees) and the development has been designed in accordance with this principle. Consequently, all the important oak trees around the site are scheduled for retention and these will be fully protected during the construction phase in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations*.

Bat Survey Work

In response to the assertion that bats have not been appropriately assessed through the planning application I would like to draw the committees attention to the field survey work undertaken to assess the potential impact of the development on bats. This included a survey of bat activity in and around the site, an emergence survey to assess whether any bats are using the existing building or any of the trees and a specific inspection of the building and a number of the trees for any evidence of bat presence. These survey findings have informed a comprehensive ecological report, alongside other protected species surveys which includes a number of recommendations for ecological mitigation and enhancement to be delivered through the planning process.

Lighting Strategy

In response to the concern that light pollution can result in a harmful impact on protected species I would like to make clear that a lighting strategy is one of a number of supporting documents which forms part of the planning application. A baseline lighting survey has informed a detailed lighting strategy which ensures that the development will represent no harmful impact on surrounding residential properties, and that identified bat foraging/commuting routes around the periphery of the site are respected.

Summary

I trust that the above will provide the committee members with confidence that the Metis Homes planning application has been prepared by a team of professionals and accords with the respective technical industry requirements. All of the technical submissions referenced above have been independently assessed by statutory consultees through the planning process and found to be acceptable.

The comments from the Tree Warden Group do not suggest that the application should be refused, but rather tree protection and ecological enhancements are properly considered and delivered through the planning process. I would like to re-assure the Group and Members of the Committee that the development has been designed to safeguard all mature trees and deliver significant biodiversity enhancement and that these matters will be controlled through both planning conditions and the S106 agreement.