

Response to Cllr McAuliffe

19 August 2026.

Following receipt of comments from Cllr McAuliffe dated 20 July, please find below response prepared with input from the wider design team

- **Protection of existing groundwater conditions:** Existing groundwater levels within the Ancient Woodland are not anticipated to materially change as a result of the development, as the proposed construction works are located outside the woodland and its designated buffer zone. The development will therefore not directly intercept groundwater within the woodland or materially alter the existing groundwater regime.
- **Retention of existing surface-water inputs:** Existing surface-water inputs and drainage pathways towards the woodland will be maintained. The Ancient Woodland buffer zone provides a physical separation between the development and the woodland, within which existing ground levels, ground profiles and surface-water conditions will be retained. Changes to levels, earthworks and drainage arrangements within this area will be avoided, preventing unnecessary disruption to existing runoff routes and shallow subsurface flow paths.
- **Infiltration and groundwater recharge:** Where groundwater levels, soil conditions and geotechnical constraints permit, unlined rain gardens, permeable paving and other infiltration features will be maximised within the development. Clean roof water can also be directed towards suitable infiltration or recharge features located between the development and the woodland, helping to maintain local recharge without introducing concentrated flows to the woodland.
- **Diffuse drainage along the woodland interface:** Where appropriate, linear infiltration trenches, filter drains, swales or recharge strips can be incorporated along the woodland interface. These features would provide a more diffuse mechanism for managing water and, where infiltration is

appropriate, help maintain existing patterns of groundwater recharge rather than introducing new concentrated discharge points.

- **Protection of the woodland buffer and existing flow paths:** Permeable landscaped areas within the woodland buffer will be retained wherever practicable. The design will avoid unnecessary drainage infrastructure, significant earthworks, service corridors or foundations within the buffer that could intercept or redirect existing shallow groundwater or surface-water flow paths. The retention of the existing levels and ground profile within the buffer is a key measure in maintaining the current hydrological relationship between the site and woodland.
- **SuDS configuration and controlled discharge:** The lining, underdrain and outlet arrangements of the proposed SuDS features will be refined to allow infiltration in locations where ground and groundwater conditions are suitable, whilst retaining controlled overflow and exceedance routes for larger rainfall events. This provides flexibility to manage water appropriately without relying on infiltration where it may present a risk to groundwater or woodland conditions.
- **Control of discharge rates and erosion risk:** Drainage outfalls will be designed to discharge at controlled rates, including the relevant greenfield runoff rate/QBAR where applicable. This ensures that the development does not introduce materially increased rates of discharge towards the woodland that could result in erosion, scour, waterlogging or other adverse hydrological effects. Controlled discharge also ensures that the receiving system is not subjected to concentrated flows significantly greater than those arising under existing conditions.
- **Protection of water quality:** Water quality reaching the woodland is not anticipated to deteriorate as a consequence of the development. The immediate area adjacent to the Ancient Woodland will retain its existing levels, ground condition and runoff characteristics within the protected buffer. In addition, runoff generated by the development will be managed

through the proposed SuDS treatment train, providing appropriate treatment before water is discharged or allowed to infiltrate.

- **Construction dewatering and temporary works:** Construction dewatering is not anticipated to materially affect groundwater or water levels within the woodland. Construction activities will be controlled through a Construction Surface Water Management Plan (CSWMP), which will address temporary drainage, dewatering, surface-water management, ground compaction and protection of existing drainage pathways. The CSWMP will be subject to regular monitoring and inspection by an appropriately qualified consultant, with additional measures implemented if monitoring identifies an unexpected change in hydrological conditions.
- **Avoidance of construction-related disruption:** Construction activities will be planned and managed to prevent temporary works, site compounds, haul routes, excavation, compaction or temporary drainage from unnecessarily interrupting groundwater movement or surface-water flow towards the woodland. Any temporary drainage arrangements will be designed to maintain appropriate water management throughout the construction period rather than relying solely on the permanent drainage strategy.
- **Monitoring and adaptive management:** Where considered necessary, monitoring points and adjustable drainage controls can be incorporated into the drainage strategy to provide an opportunity to monitor groundwater or surface-water conditions and confirm that the agreed hydrological objectives are being maintained. This provides an adaptive mechanism whereby additional mitigation can be considered if monitoring identifies an unexpected adverse change.
- **Overall impact on the Ancient Woodland:** Taking the above measures collectively, the development maintains a clear physical separation from the Ancient Woodland, retains existing levels and ground profiles within the buffer, maintains appropriate surface-water inputs and flow paths, provides opportunities for continued infiltration and recharge, controls

discharge rates and water quality, and manages construction-phase risks. On this basis, the development is not anticipated to result in a material change to groundwater levels, surface-water inputs, water quality or the hydrological conditions supporting the Ancient Woodland.

