

Jill Thwaite,
Countryside Partnerships Yorkshire,
1 Red Hall Avenue,
Paragon Business Village,
Wakefield, WF1 2UL.

By email

Date: 04/05/2023

Dear Jill,

Re: Update ecology assessment at Former Akzo Nobel Site, Hollingworth Road, Littleborough

This letter reports the results of a walkover to investigate current ecological conditions at the above Site. Its purpose is to inform pre-commencement planning conditions for the Site (application 21/01146/FUL) with regard to two potential ecological constraints: badger *Meles meles* and invasive non-native plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Our findings are summarised as follows:

1. We found no evidence for any change in the use of the Site by badgers and no evidence of recent presence of badgers within the Site.
2. We found no invasive non-native species of plants growing within the Site.

Our recommendation is:

1. Mitigation for the presence of badgers has already been put in place and existing plans should be maintained and carried forward.

Site Visit

A Site walkover was undertaken by Envance senior ecologist Dermot McKee (ACIEEM) on the morning of 22nd March 2023. Weather conditions were good (9°C, wind 14 mph south-westerly, patchy cloud with sunny intervals) and there were no access limitations.

Badgers

Pre-commencement condition 9. *No development shall take place, including any vegetation, earth moving or removal of hardstanding, until a badger survey to encompass the whole site plus a 30 m buffer has been undertaken and the survey report submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The survey shall provide details of any changes in site usage and the need for any additional mitigation or a licence. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.*

Previous surveys identified the presence of an active main sett and an active single-hole annexe sett within the Site (Pell Frischmann, 2020; Envance, 2021). As a result of findings and recommendations from these surveys the annexe set was closed, under license, in 2022. A two-hole artificial sett has been constructed within the Site as mitigation, an exclusion zone will be established around the remaining main sett and a wildlife corridor will be established around the perimeter of the Site which badgers may use.

The site walkover was undertaken from the within the site and public rights of way and enabled assessment of all land within 30m of the site boundary. During the Site walkover, no evidence for the recent presence of badgers was found. No new setts or holes were discovered. All holes at the existing main sett appeared to be disused, with leaf litter and other debris in and around the entrances (**Photograph 1**), and no footprints or worn pathways were evident. Closure of the annexe sett appeared effective, with no evidence that badgers had tried to re-establish a sett in the area (**Photograph 2**). The artificial sett appeared to be disused, again with debris and plant growth around the two entrances (**Photograph 3**). There was possible old foraging activity close to the entrance of the artificial sett (**Photograph 4**), but no other foraging signs or latrines were found anywhere else within the Site.



Photograph 1. Typical entrance hole at main sett.



Photograph 2. Annexe sett closure area.



Photograph 3. Artificial sett.



Photograph 4. Possible old foraging marks close to artificial sett.

Invasive Non-Native Plants

Pre-commencement condition 10. *No development (including any site clearance or preparation works) shall take place until a method statement for removal/control of any invasive plant species, including Japanese Knotweed, within the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The method statement shall include measures to prevent the spread of invasive species during any operations (e.g. strimming, soil movement or land remodelling works) and to ensure that any soils brought to the site are free of the seeds, root or stem of any invasive plant, and a timetable for its implementation and shall include a Method Statement, to include as a minimum:*

- *Detailed mapping of the distribution of the plant across the site.*
- *Suitable signage and protection from vehicle tracking and/or earth moving. This is usually 7m from above growing parts of the plant.*
- *Treatment programme.*

- *Biosecurity protocols for machinery and soil handling & storage.*
- *Monitoring and retreatment programme for minimum of 5 years post site clearance.*

The development shall thereafter be carried out in strict accordance with the details and timescale contained within the duly approved method statement.

During the Site walkover, no evidence for the presence of invasive non-native species of plant was found within the Site. This supports previous survey findings (Pell Frischmann, 2019). It will not be necessary to provide detailed mapping of invasive non-native species of plants within the Site for the Method Statement because there currently are none.

Kind regards,



Dermot McKee
Senior Ecologist

References

Envance (2021). Land at Hollingworth Road, Littleborough. Badger report - confidential. Report reference: 0043CBR.

Envance (2021). Land at Hollingworth Road, Littleborough. Breeding bird survey report. Report reference: 0043BBS.

Natural England (2011). Illustrated guide to managing farmland for lapwings. Technical Information Note TIN090.

Pell Frischmann (2019). Former AKZO Nobel Site, Littleborough. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Report reference: RE103012V001/A.

Pell Frischmann (2020). Former AKZO Nobel Site, Littleborough. Protected species survey report: badgers, bats, breeding & wintering birds, butterflies and reptiles. Report reference: RE104223V001/P03.

Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021). The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 114: 723-747.