

Appendix E

Report on the Effects of ROF Development on Woodland, Flora and Fauna

Bishopton Action Group

Objection to the Report of the effects of the ROF Development on Woodland, Flora and Fauna

1. Community Woodland Park.

We would question the exact area “available to public”. On page 17 of the Environmental Statement it states that the remaining 75% of the site will be *Woodland Park (range of opportunities for informal countryside recreation)*. However, after looking at the maps in figures 3.10 and 3.11, it will be seen that the “woodland park” includes the following:

- The Environmental Test facility which has no public access.
- The hazardous landfill site which has no public access.
- Large areas which will have controlled public access including Barochan Moss (the latter cannot be decontaminated because of its ecological value).
- Agricultural land – presumably the farmers would not appreciate the general public on their land.
- Of the remaining area, a large portion of it is described as “potential flood meadow and wetland”.

When you add the above facts together, and take into account the areas of “no access” or “limited access” the so called “opportunity for informal countryside recreation” is very much reduced.

In addition, the following questions must be answered before an Outline Planning Application can be considered:

- Where will financial support be provided for future upkeep of the Community Woodland Park? Which bodies and/or authorities will be involved?
- Will exact details be provided of mature and significant trees and details of any proposed removals given. Can we have details of principles of new planting to be established beforehand (local provenance and native species).
- Where will the new areas of scrub be located and what will be the change in areas of scrubs before and after?
- We require details of proposed grassland habitat and details of long-term management.

Trees

In Table 1 below we have listed the estimated tree loss likely to occur as described in section 4.8 of Masterplan Statement. This level of loss of trees is unacceptable. The effects of the tree removal will decimate wildlife habitats and will destroy a thriving wildlife resource. It is also unacceptable that no details are given about tree loss at waterside planting.

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Category	Name	Description	Loss within Village Expansion Area	Loss within Community Woodland
1	Historical Woodland and Planting	Age 100+ years	10%	10%
2	Other Mature Broadleaf Planting	Age 50 -75 years	50%	50%
3	Softwood Planting	Age 10-40 years	80%	80%
4	Scrub and Mixed Woodland Planting	Age 0-50 years	95%	75%
5	Waterside Planting	Age 0-50 years	No details given	No details given

Table 1: Estimated Tree Loss

How many trees will be left in the part of the community woodland park where there is **uncontrolled** public access? Given that Barochan Moss and the Environmental Test Facility, where there will be controlled/no public access, are likely to have least number of trees removed, it would seem that the bulk of tree removal would be from the community woodland park where there is uncontrolled access. The applicant must provide exact details of tree removal in each of the zones in the community woodland park so that the environmental impact of tree removal can be properly assessed.

2. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's)

These are not specifically identified on the maps provided. (Policy Enc. 3 Page 9).

3. Surveys

There is insufficient information. The first report in 1996 recommends that further surveys be carried out at various seasons of the year. Further reports in 2004, 2005 and 2006 indicated that there was "limited access". Refer to *Environmental Statement Appendix 14.1 Outline Ecological Assessment, Georgetown Renfrewshire Report Robert Stebbings Consultancy – March 1996*. In *Environmental Statement Appendix 14.6 Badger Survey and Bait Marking Report (2003) JDC Ecology* it states that further "in-depth survey" required before planning application is considered.

4. Badgers

The Robert Stebbing Survey 1996 states (page 31 of *Environmental Statement Appendix 14.1 Outline Ecological Assessment, Georgetown Renfrewshire Report*) that the main sett is partly beneath an old building base, and similarly other setts are in places with substrates which may need decontamination. It concludes that "a carefully planned operation will be required to establish badgers in a safe place with adequate access to feeding areas". In addition, "Relocation and maintaining sufficient foraging habitat during a development programme will necessitate a long period to execute (e.g. two years)".

However, in the Environmental Statement, there is no timescale mentioned. We note also that a licence is required and that only "restrictive works" can be carried out during the

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period December to June, i.e. the breeding period. What guarantee is there that the developers and construction workers will adhere to these conditions? Will these considerations be specified as part of any planning determination?

5. **Bats – Nocturne Environmental Surveyors Limited for CASS Associates**

In *Environmental Statement Appendix 14.9 Bat Survey Nocturne (2005)*, the Nocturne survey states that “Copies of two previous bat surveys by C Balling in 2002 and R Stebbings in 1995 were requested but were unavailable”. These reports will be required prior to resurveying in Spring 2006. Has a resurvey been carried out?

6. **Environmental Statement**

Major physical changes are engendered by site remediation. This will destroy valuable wildlife habitats and refuges. See sections *14.4 and 14.5 in Environmental Statement*.

7. **Flora**

In *Environmental Statement Appendix 14.1 Outline Ecological Assessment, Georgetown Renfrewshire Report* Robert Stebbings Consultancy Ltd March 1996 states that most plants will be growing or flowering in mid May or June so a full survey should have been completed at that time. Has this survey been carried out?

i. **Barrochan Moss**

This site is very densely covered with rhododendron. It is very likely that clearing only a part of this site will be a temporary measure – are there any plans for improving the whole site with regard to rhododendron?

8. **Fauna**

We understand that there are species and habitats protected by legislation and the primary body responsible for protection is the Scottish National Heritage. The Environmental Statement does not give a clear indication of how things will look after the development e.g. an indication of natural areas, wildlife reserve areas etc. This is a large site which has become a very rich wildlife area due to the nature of the previous use and to the time which has elapsed since work reduced and then ceased.

Given the size of the area and the drastic changes which will take place, this statement is greatly lacking in detail. More thought and consideration should be given to any proposed development, what the development will look like and a firm commitment should be given to plan and emplace the “long-term” work on creating and managing the wildlife aspects of this site. Particular points are as follows:

i. **Otters**

The conclusion is that there will be significant impact. However no real explanation is given of the estimated changes in numbers, breeding areas, feeding areas etc

ii. **Badgers**

There are no details of avoiding damage to habitat and disturbance to this species during the works. In addition, there is no indication of the long term effects of the total development on numbers of setts and individuals.

iii. **Water voles**

How, and for how long, will a trapping and removal of mink take place in order to protect the water voles?

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- iv. **Bats**
It is likely that the bat numbers will reduce dramatically due to these changes. Where will the preservation of main feeding corridors be? What kind of new roost sites and hibernacula will be created?
- v. **Fish**
This should not be a problem providing water quality is preserved during construction works. How will this be achieved? Will there be involvement of SEPA?
- vi. **Amphibians and Reptiles**
We would require details of the remediation work and the new habitat creation since there is no evidence of long term commitment to new habitat creation. Is there any endowment to be made for this work?
- vii. **Invertebrates**
This is a very large group of animals. How intensive has the survey work been and has it been carefully staged through the seasons to maximise information?
- viii. **Barn Owls**
How many are there now? How much work is required by the mitigation proposals in order that the residual impact will be zero as declared?
- viii. **Other Birds**
If large areas are going to have their woodland and grassland vegetation removed, how does this result in the statement that there is “unlikely to be residual impact”? Also the reference to the impact of cats is evasive - while it may be “not certain” it is very likely to be significant in terms of numbers of birds killed. More consideration should be given to this problem.

Finally, a quote from a Bishopton resident which sums up the view of the Community:

“Highly conscious of our environmental stewardship and ecological footprint, Renfrewshire Council through its actions, shows that it is paying lip service to the environment, by supplying household boxes for paper and glass recycling, when it approves destruction of established woodland with its flora and ecosystem through pollution and congestion for economical benefits.”

We demand that Renfrewshire Council rejects the Outline Planning Application on the grounds that the development will cause massive destruction of both woodland and wildlife habitats. Significant doubt exists whether certain wildlife species will survive the intrusive nature of remediation and development activities. In addition, survey information is scant and incomplete, and further work requires to be carried out before a judgment on the overall effects of the development can be made. The Outline Planning Application and associated reports do not give enough detail on the potential effects of the ROF development on woodland, flora and fauna nor justify the massive negative impact which will result. The application should therefore be rejected.

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