

OBJ/229&230/ECO/001

**The Network Rail (East West Rail  
Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order**

Transport and Works Act 1992

The Transport and Works  
(Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004

**Summary of  
Proof of Evidence of Dr Dan Simpson**

**Ecology**

On behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd:  
Objection References OBJ/229 & OBJ/230

February 2019

# 1 Summary of Proof of Evidence

- 1.1 Ecological Compensation Site (ECS) B10, within Route Section 2B, overlaps with land allocated for housing within the submission version of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (forming part of Site WIN001). Accordingly, I have been asked by Gladman Developments Ltd, who act on behalf of interested parties, to review the background information relating to the East West Rail Phase 2 project, in particular the ecological mitigation strategy and associated compulsory purchase (under the Transport and Works Act Order) of approximately 1.8ha of land for ECS B10.
- 1.2 Based on the description contained within the environmental information supporting the TWAO and subsequent clarification provided by Network Rail, ECS B10 is primarily intended to provide mitigation for impacts on Great Crested Newts (GCN). In addition, ECS B10 is intended to contribute towards the overall route-wide mitigation in terms of other fauna, ecological connectivity and habitats.
- 1.3 In relation to GCN, I note that no ponds or other waterbodies supporting GCN are to be lost in the proximity of ECS B10. Across Route Section 2B as a whole there will be a net gain of eight waterbodies for GCN and project-wide there will be a net gain of 33 ponds. In terms of terrestrial habitat loss, there will be negligible impact within the core area (50m radius) of GCN ponds 72, 456 and 501 and even in the absence of ECS B10 there will be a significant net gain in terrestrial habitat for GCN within Route Section 2B (15.4ha) and project-wide (31ha). In addition, I consider that alternative ECS could be utilised for the translocation of GCN and the desired mitigation / enhancement in terms of general connectivity. I therefore conclude that ECS B10 is not essential to mitigate for the effects of the project on GCN at this location.
- 1.4 In terms of other fauna, I note the habitats proposed to be created within ECS B10 would be capable of supporting Badgers, bats, birds, Otters, reptiles and terrestrial invertebrates. However, I consider these to be side-benefits and therefore not an essential mitigation requirement at this specific location.
- 1.5 Regarding designated sites, I note the minor loss of habitat within Old Quarry Winslow Biological Notification Site (BNS) will be fully compensated by habitat creation and reinstatement outside of ECS B10. In addition, I note the aspiration to better connect the BNS to Woodland Copse off Magpie Way Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is proposed as an

enhancement, rather than mitigation. Accordingly, I conclude that ECS B10 is not required to mitigate impacts on designated sites.

- 1.6 In terms of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI), such as deciduous woodland, the proposed habitat creation and reinstatement within Route Section 2B is likely to provide a net gain in habitat, even in the absence of ECS B10. As such, I do not consider that ECS B10 provides essential mitigation for HPI at this specific location.
- 1.7 In conclusion, I consider there is insufficient justification for the proposed extent or specific location of ECS B10 and in my view there is no ecological reason why the compensation purported to be delivered by ECS B10 could not be provisioned elsewhere.