

Planning Inquiry Tuesday 24th September 2024

3 minutes take 3 or 4 copies?

I am producing three maps. Map 1 is a map of the area that this planning application encompasses. It shows the boundary of the development ~~always~~^{right} up against the ditch on the left. Map 2 is taken from the DEFRA website which shows the boundary of Biddle Street SSSI. This map includes the ditch, and six metres either side of the ditch which are designated as part of the SSSI according to DEFRA. Map 3 shows the proposed development if built. This shows the encroachment of the development ~~of the development~~ onto the SSSI.

The current consultation for the revision of planning rules across England (which ends today) is considering using some green belt land as a last resort to enable 1.5 million new homes to be built over the next five years. This consultation specifically rules out national parks and Sites of Special Scientific Interest for building homes. (The Guardian, 7th Sept 2024: 'Untouched parts of England's green belt at risk as council's face pressure to hit housing targets'). This proposed reform of planning regulations will make it easier to build on green fields – but still states that the SSSIs should not be part of any development.

SSSIs are designated according to section 28 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Biddle Street has been designated a SSSI since 1994. According to the Woodland Trust a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a formal conservation designation. Usually, it describes an area that's of particular interest to science due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains - or even important geological or physiological features that may lie in its boundaries. This is the case with Biddle Street SSSI. I do not have time to talk about the nationally important species, or the wider landscape that make this patch of land so significant.

SSSIs have high conservation value, and need to be protected. The Woodland Trust states that the designation of an area as a SSSI gives it even more importance and offers more security than other designations such as being an Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty. (source SSSI Definition and Value to Conservation - Woodland Trust; September 2024)

Natural England's objective is to achieve 'favourable condition' status for all SSSIs. Favourable condition means that the SSSI's habitats and features are in a healthy state and are being conserved by appropriate management. (source www.gov.uk: Sites of special scientific interest: managing your land)

The 2002 North Somerset Levels and Moors and Severn Estuary Coast Wildlife Enhancement Scheme states, for example, that in order to be considered in a favourable condition that ditch banks should be gently sloping with a variety of plants and some poached marshy areas, not the site of a tree planting scheme to shield new build housing. The management instructions include that land managers should leave a 6m (20 foot) uncut strip alongside all ditches, rhynes and ponds. The policy includes detail about how the land on Biddle Street SSSI should be managed, how often the ditches should be dug out and about the access requirements to enable the work to be carried out to the ditches, including the ditch on this plan. The plans of this housing development include a wooded area to be planted on a strip of 5 metres out of the 6 metres of Biddle Street SSSI closest to the actual housing and within the development area. The trees would not be allowed under the terms of Natural England's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme in themselves and also would restrict access to the ditch. This planning application includes destroying part of one of the 4,100 most valuable areas for wildlife in England. Biddle Street SSSI is in the middle of the three SSSIs covered by the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme which governs its management. Degrading Biddle SSSI will have implications for the rest of the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme area.

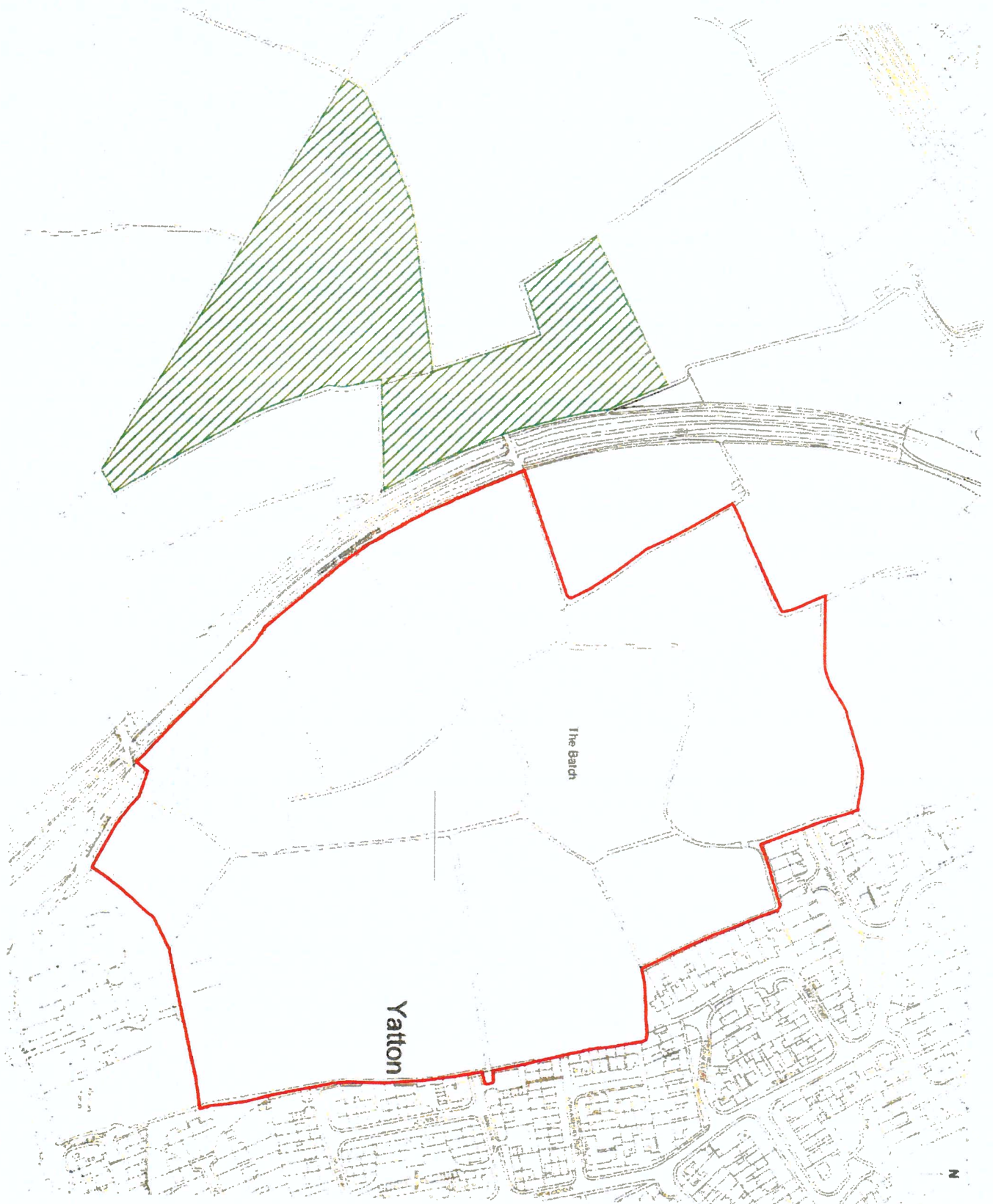
'Mitigation' means to make less harsh, to alleviate, to soften, diminish or moderate according to my dictionary (Cassell's Concise English Dictionary). Part of the mitigation ^{for this scheme} consists of an area within the planned housing development. This will be for open access for residents of this housing estate and others. 36% of households in the UK (World Animal Foundation 2024) own at least one dog. 26% of households own a cat. This ~~is~~ will not become an area of wildlife benefit with so many dogs and

cats having access to it. Any wildlife that survives the building project will either move out or be killed by the new inhabitants' pets. The only way to preserve this area within the developed area would be to install cat proof fencing and to keep out all dog walkers. The 'Ecology Zone' is not mitigation for the destruction of an important wildlife habitat, this is purely the provision of a recreational area to make the development more attractive to potential buyers.

The small area of 'mitigation' on the further side of the Strawberry Line is proposed as being managed with a wildlife friendly hay cut – this is already an area that is cut for hay or silage (as allowed by Natural England). I don't understand how this can be mitigation as nothing will change, nothing will be given in compensation for what is lost. There is no alleviation or moderation of the impact of this new housing development whatsoever.

I have lived in Yatton for 27 years. I am in favour of more housing being built and have not objected to any of the large housing estates that have been built since 2017. I am opposing this housing development as it will be detrimental to the village and extremely bad for wildlife.

Juley Howard



 Site boundary (13.3ha)
 Bad Migration Land

Location
 Pershmon Homes Severn Valley
 Project title
Land at Rectory Farm (North),
Yatton, North Somerset
 Drawing title
Site Location Plan

Date: 21 March 2023
 Drawn by: PDA
 Checked by: GSH
 Scale: 1:1,250 @ A1
 Project Ref: 2023_00030

MAP 1

MAP 2

MAGiC

County of Dorset

Map navigation toolbar: Home, Search, Measure, Layers, Settings, Print, Share, Help, etc.

OSGB36 1:5,000

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MAP 3

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset Illustrative Masterplan



date 14 MARCH 2023 - drawing number edp7842_0003g - scale 1:1.250 @ A1 - drawn by OSh - checked GHo - 04 PDA

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