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Patron: Dame Judi Dench

10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Examining Authority,

**Ref: Response to ExA request for comments regarding possible Replacement Land options**

Surrey Wildlife trust (SWT) has considered the ExA's letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> July regarding possible Replacement Land options.

The view of SWT is that the replacement ratios proposed by the Applicant are appropriate for the scheme. These are independent of the habitat mitigation and compensation ratios described elsewhere.

Public space across the country, and especially around London has received exceptionally high visitor numbers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Footfall on the reserve is noticeably higher. Car parks have been full and visitors have been parking on surrounding roads or accessing on foot. The present levels of recreational use of the areas being taken by the scheme were discussed at the hearing on the 17 June 2020. Whilst this is worthy of consideration there is an opportunity for the scheme to increase both the area and the quality of recreational land available to the public. Land that is suitable and correctly placed will attract visitors. This is of benefit for those users but also for the SPA bird population which may experience decreased disturbance.

As such we would comment that the ratios of 2.5:1 for Common Land, 2.1:1 for Open Space and 1:1 for the permanent acquisition of rights over the Special Category Land (SCL) are appropriate.

If the ExA are minded to recommend a different ratio, then SWT would prefer a ratio of 2:1 and that as much replacement land is retained as possible.

Of the proposed areas, it is clear that the land at Park Barn Farm offers the greatest value in replacement terms. This is due to its location close to the nearest major residential area at Byfleet whose inhabitants could access via the pleasant riverside route. If the ratios are to be altered, we would suggest that it is this land that is prioritised within the scheme.

Kind regards,



James Adler

Director of Biodiversity (Surrey Wildlife Trust)