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Thank you for consulting Norfolk Wildlife Trust on the Mattishall Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16 consultation). We are very pleased to see the high priority given to the environment and are fully supportive of this approach. We would like to acknowledge and thank you for including in this Neighbourhood Plan our suggestions at Regulation 14 for policy wording. Please see our response below:

Policy ENV3: Trees, hedgerows and boundaries

Trees and hedgerows are natural solutions to tackle the climate crisis as they sequester carbon. They are important in providing a safe habitat for wildlife, increasing biodiversity, preventing soil erosion and form valuable green corridors for wildlife, reducing fragmentation of habitats.

We welcome the inclusion of the following policy wording:

'At least 2 trees should be planted, in suitable locations and as appropriate, up to an optimum level, to replace every tree that is removed. (Not suitable for ancient woodland or veteran trees as these are irreplaceable.)'

Policy ENV4: Open and Local Green Space

We fully support the nine designated Local Green Spaces.

Policy ENV6: Tranquillity and Dark Skies

We welcome the inclusion of the following additional policy wording:

'Development proposals should demonstrate compliance with best practice guidance for avoiding artificial lighting impacts on bats: (<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>). Where lighting cannot be avoided altogether in proposals then it must be designed to avoid light spill onto wildlife roosts, foraging habitat, and commuting routes for bats, birds, and other species.'

Policy ENV7: Biodiversity, ecological networks and habitat connectivity

We particularly welcome the inclusion of the following suggested wording regarding the aim to achieve 20% net gain as this will provide greater confidence in genuine gains for biodiversity to aid the successful recovery of nature in Norfolk:

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'In accordance with national policy provide at least a 10% increase net gain, but to ensure successful recovery of nature in Norfolk aim to achieve a 20% net gain, in biodiversity...'

We fully support the policy wording in clause 4 and particularly welcome inclusion of the following additional wording:

'...opportunities should be sought to improve habitats.....this includes:

a. improving continuity along hedgerows and between trees – this should be achieved by appropriate planting in gaps to create safe corridors of movement with good continuity and cover for wildlife moving through the landscape and reducing fragmentation of habitats;

d. Incorporating green roofs and/or green walls to buildings where appropriate and possible.

Policy ENV9: Flood Risk and drainage

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) are extremely important in reducing flood risk, reducing pollution downstream and locally, increasing biodiversity and when used effectively can provide habitat connectivity. Above-ground components in particular can significantly contribute to creating and maintaining biodiversity, in addition to providing public amenity and other benefits.

We therefore support the updated policy wording with reference to the four pillars of SuDS (which includes biodiversity).

Technical edit in clause 3: '...preferred method of surface water disposal on all proposals and, in line the national policy. (the word 'with' is missing after the word 'line'?)

Yours sincerely,

