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EEL546 Yarnbrook Road, West Aston – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by Stone Developments Wiltshire Ltd. to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for an area of land at 133 Yarnbrook Road, West Ashton, Wiltshire, BA14 6AF ('the site'). It is proposed to develop the site to provide residential properties ('the proposed development').

The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 86853 55020 and has an area of approximately 0.2ha. The site is characterised by an open field and associated boundary features including hedgerows and a wet ditch located adjacent to a residential property. Habitats recorded on the site include semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedgerow, wet ditch, scattered scrub and fence. The site is enclosed by the A350 to the south and east, residential properties and their associated gardens to the north, and further residential properties and an open agricultural land to the west.

It is considered that the proposed development of the site is below a de minimis threshold and therefore exempt from the current BNG regulations. This exemption is designed to ensure that BNG does not apply to either very small-scale development or development which does not impact habitat, through loss or degradation within the red line boundary. Within the site there are no priority habitats present that will be impacted by the proposed development.

In addition, it is considered that the proposed development is further exempt as it is a 'Small Scale Self-Build' and 'Custom Housebuilding'. This exemption is designed to support smaller developers, applies to this development as it consists of no more than nine dwellings and is on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares (the site is approximately 0.2ha).

Despite being exempt from the current BNG regulations, the proposed development can provide some net gain through the proposed plans which seek to enhance the development through the of additional biodiversity improvements for the site which will include:

- The installation of bird and bat boxes to provide suitable nesting and roosting habitat;

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- The plantation of native trees, shrubs and fruit trees to provide important resources, especially for early season pollinators, other insects and birds;
- The plantation of wildflower areas to benefit a large number of species including pollinators, small mammals, birds and other invertebrates; and
- The use of wildlife-friendly lighting to reduce the light disturbance for the local wildlife, including bats.