Q13.2 Are policies 30, 31 and 32 consistent with national policy and will they be effective in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity? In particular:

a) The requirement in policy 30 for all proposals to deliver a net gain for biodiversity and protect, create, maintain and enhance the Borough’s ecological networks

Policy 30 Ecology Networks states
Proposals will only be supported which deliver a net gain for biodiversity and protect, create, maintain and enhance the Borough's ecological networks by:
A) being of an appropriate size, scale and type in relation to their location within and impact on the ecological network;
B) maintaining, strengthening and bridging gaps in existing habitat networks;
C) planting native species and creating new, or restoring existing, national and local priority habitats and/or species; and
D) working with strategic partnerships to deliver conservation projects at a landscape scale where appropriate.

Development of Site 001 contrary to all of the above therefore not consistent with National Planning Policy

b) The approach in policy 31 to internationally and nationally important habitats, sites and species.

Policy 31 Valuing Biodiversity and Geodiversity
The Borough has a range of internationally, nationally, and locally important habitats, sites and species that will be protected through the following principles:
A) Proposals which may harm designated Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites, Priority Habitats, Priority Species, protected species or non-designated sites or features of biodiversity interest.

Development in this area Re Site 001 contrary to the above therefore not consistent with NPP development of this site will totally destroy habitats that live and hunt on it.

c) The approach in policy 31 part A, policy 32 and Appendix 8 to protecting local wildlife and geological sites and features.

Appendix 8 gives the criteria of what is required with regard to Habitat Character, the sites that meet this criteria will be eligible for Local Wildlife Site designation, with regard to Site 001 where is the assessment carried out by Doncaster council to determine if Site 001 meets this criteria and therefore eligible to be a Local Wildlife Site Designation?

Doncaster Opus 3 Biodiversity Map for this area shows it as an NIA it also shows Nightjar Foraging Area which is in quite a large area of this agricultural land. Parts of Thorne and Hatfield Moors are designated Special Protected Areas as the area regularly supports a population of Nightjar during the breeding season this site is the most northerly site designated an SPA because of the presence of breeding Nightjar, they can forage up to 6km away from their breeding ground. Thorne Moors lies approximately 3km from this site, if
developed the foraging area for this protected bird under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 would be destroyed. In particular Nightjar are recorded using this area for feeding and they are very sensitive to disturbance. One of the main factors currently affecting Nightjars is the loss and fragmentation of suitable nesting and foraging habitats.

Humberhead Levels Character Area
Site 001 is within the Humberhead Character Area. The Humberhead Levels Character Area is an internationally renowned, unique network of wetlands in a predominantly agricultural landscape. The Humberhead Levels Partnership, a group of twelve organisations, are aiming to deliver a step change in delivering a more connected environment for people and wildlife, the end result being a more valued and robust natural environment.

The engagement of large scale industrial developments in this partnership is critical to optimise the opportunity for associated habitat creation and restoration and to prevent further fragmentation of the Humberhead Levels Character Area and it’s priority habitats and species. Commitment from local businesses, landowners, communities and other organisations to achieve sustainable land management practices in an ever-improving landscape, rich in wildlife and human heritage, offers significant potential to deliver wider ecosystem services including food and fuel production, flood attenuation and biodiversity enhancements on a landscape scale. Such work is in accordance with the NPPF and its aims for sustainable development, most notably Paragraphs 9, 109 and 118.

Due to Site 001 location within the Humberhead Levels Character Area any development would have a significant effect on any of the Humberhead Levels target habitats or priority species and would significantly impact the ecological connectivity of the character area.

Critically there is an area of Lowland Fen habitat adjacent to the proposed development site at SE 67442 15197. Fen is a priority habitat for the Humberhead Levels partnership and is particularly sensitive to changes in the hydrological regime thus any development in this area could be potentially damaging to this rare habitat.

The proximity of Site 001 to the Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve and Thorne and Hatfield Moor Special Protection Area (SPA)/ Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also a concern. The largest expanse of Lowland Raised Bog in the UK the Humberhead Peatlands NNR is a key breeding ground for many rare UK species.

Site 001 is immediately adjacent to North Doncaster Levels Living Landscape project area. This area is a reclaimed fenland landscape that includes ancient meadows, wetlands and washlands within the River Don embankments. Work within this area has also included improving habitat for willow tits, which is a key priority species of the area and a UK BAP priority species.

Q13.4 Are the requirements of Policy 34 relating to landscape character and landscape features justified and consistent with national policy? Is the councils suggested change necessary to make the plan sound?

Policy 34 Landscape (Strategic Policy)
Proposals will be supported that take account of the quality, local distinctiveness and the sensitivity to change of distinctive landscape character areas and individual landscape...
features, in particular Thorne and Hatfield Moors. Development will be permitted provided that it conserves, enhances and, where possible, restores:
A) the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area including its historical, biodiversity, cultural character and its tranquillity;
B) the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, settlements and buildings and the landscape including important views;
C) the nature conservation value of the area including the pattern of woodland, forests, trees, field boundaries, vegetation and other features;
D) the special qualities of rivers, waterways, wetlands and their surroundings; and
E) the topography of the area including sensitive skylines, hillsides and geological features.

A major development in this area of distribution centres, warehousing is contrary to Policy 34 so therefore can not support such a dramatic change in the landscape, the quality, local distinctiveness and the sensitivity to change of this distinctive landscape character area and individual landscape feature will be totally different and most certainly not for the better, Major Development will not conserve or enhance the area, non of the above in policy 34 would be supported.

Explanation
10.50. Landscape setting is an important element contributing to local character and quality of life. It is concerned with the positive, distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that make each landscape and settlement different. The policy is needed to protect, maintain and enhance the distinct character, identity and setting of existing settlements. This in turn will help to support local distinctiveness, regeneration and foster community pride by maintaining and enhancing a sense of place for people living in different areas. This policy will help the Borough to grow but in a manner that is sensitive to its landscape. The tranquillity of significant areas of undisturbed countryside also contributes substantially to the quality of the countryside and its enjoyment.

If Site 001 developed it would be contrary to the above extracts, the character of this area now is undisturbed Countryside it is far more pleasing and contributes much more enjoyment to residents, visitors as it appears now, it has its sense of place for wildlife, land which is desperately needed to protect and maintain the wildlife. To cover it in distribution centres / warehousing will neither protect, maintain its character nor contribute to the quality of the Countryside and the tranquillity and enjoyment it provides.