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Contact: Bernie Fleming
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Date: 18 September 2024

Dear Paul,

[24/01808/DOC](#)

Details reserved by condition 20 (Soil Management Plan) of planning permission reference no 21/03380/FP granted 11.03.2024

Land to the North and East of Great Wymondley, Arch Road, Great Wymondley, Hertfordshire

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Overall Recommendation

- ☒ Further information regarding aftercare and management is required.

Supporting documents

I have made particular use of the following documents in providing this advice:

- Wymondley Transforming Station LWS: Soil Management Plan, avian ecology, 31 July 2024 (or SMP), and
- Wymondley Transforming Station LWS: Walkover Survey Summary, avian ecology, 31 July 2024

Comments

Thank you for your letter of 28 August 2024 which refers, and for consulting Herts LEADS (Ecology).

Condition 20 is set out in full in Appendix 1.

The Soil Management Plan, informed by the Walkover Survey, provides adequate information to satisfy most of the requirements of Condition 20 in that it provides clear, pragmatic advice that brings with it adequate confidence it will be effective in safeguarding the existing soils/substrate.

I say this in the understanding that the cable will be drilled, rather than excavated, underneath the perimeter woodland.

However, I note that Condition 20 specifically requires details of *aftercare and management* to be provided. I take this to mean the aftercare and management of the vegetation (see my letter of 6 May 2022) yet, beyond the following statements in the SMP and walkover survey, I could find no mention of this important topic:

Areas of vegetation have been sporadically removed and appear to have re-colonised again within a few years.

As such, it is considered that the habitats will re-establish quickly following any ground works required to facilitate the cable route

And, solely in the SMP:

The topsoil will be left to recolonise naturally from adjacent, unaffected habitats within the LWS.

Whilst this course of action may be appropriate, I consider further justification is required and, as an absolute minimum, should consider the relative merits of repeat surveys, spot spraying/weeding, strimming and so on. This should be presented in a new 'Aftercare' section; it need not be exhaustive.

Consequently, I recommend that **prior to determination, the SMP is amended accordingly.**

If satisfactory, this will allow me to recommend that Condition 20 can be discharged.

Yours sincerely,

Bernie Fleming
Ecology Advisor
Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.

Appendix 1

Condition 20

No excavation of trenches for cabling within Wymondley Transforming Station Local Wildlife Site (LWS) shall take place until a soil management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soil management plan shall include the following:

- i) An ecological survey of the route across the LWS.
- ii) Details relating to the lifting, storage and replacement of turves, including the season when this will take place.
- iii) Proposed aftercare and management.

The works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved management plan.

Reason - To minimise the impact upon the ecological and biodiversity interest of the Wymondley Transforming Station LWS in accordance with Policy NE4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.