



Hertfordshire LEADS
Hertfordshire County Council

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Contact: Chloe Weingarten
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Date: 20/11/2024

Dear Melissa,

Application: Erection of stable block

Address: Land Adjacent To Ashley Lodge Rabley Heath Road Codicote Hertfordshire
AL6 9UB

Application No: [24/01120/FP](#)

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting this office on the above application.

Overall Recommendation:

- ☒ Further information required prior to determination.

Summary of Advice:

- Protected species informative.
- The BNG baseline has not been adequately completed. This should be amended **prior to determination**.

Supporting documents:

- UKHab Survey Report (Daniel Ahern Ecology, 06/08/2024).
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Daniel Ahern Ecology, 15th July 2024).
- Biodiversity metric.

Comments:

Given the small scale of the proposals, I do not consider this application will have any ecological constraints, **however the following informative should be added to any permission granted:**

“If European Protected Species (EPS), including great crested newts, or evidence for them, are discovered during the course of works, work must stop immediately, and advice sought on how to proceed lawfully from an appropriately qualified and experienced Ecologist or Natural England to avoid an offence being committed.

To avoid creating refugia that may be utilised by wildlife, materials should be carefully stored on-site on raised pallets and away from the boundary habitats. Any trenches on site should be covered at night or have ramps to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape, and this is particularly important if excavations fill with water. Any open pipework with an outside diameter greater than 120mm must be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering / becoming trapped”.

Biodiversity Net Gain: This application is subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain. A biodiversity metric has been submitted in support of the application which outlines the baseline habitat units of the site, and the proposed net gain.

The metric outlines that the baseline habitat units stand at 3.90BU. The total net unit change for this group is 1.34BU which equates to a biodiversity net gain of 34.37%. This net gain is owed to the enhancement of the other neutral grassland from poor-moderate condition, which delivers 3.40BU.

However, it looks as if the habitats within the blueline boundary have been included in the metric, as currently there is 0.96ha of other neutral grassland, 0.01ha of ruderal/ephemeral, 0.003ha of developed land, and 0.01ha of unsealed surface present. This contradicts the statement in the UKHab 2.0 Survey Report document whereby it outlines that the only habitat present onsite is an area of Arrhenatherum neutral grassland (g3c5). This may be due to a change in the redline boundary since the assessment was conducted, however as it stands, the redline boundary is limited to a small area at the southeast of the site, and then the blueline boundary covers the rest of the grassland and hedgerows. Because of this, the current baseline has not been adequately described, and whilst this means the required net gain is significantly overestimated, given the minimum requirement for determination is an adequately completed baseline, the baseline should be amended.

There are no hedgerows present in the redline boundary, therefore no net gain for hedgerows is required.

Consequently, I advise that the baseline in the metric should be amended to just include the habitats in the redline boundary and this should be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to determination.

I trust these comments are of assistance,

Regards,

Chloe Weingarten
Assistant Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS

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