

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist

Ref: 25/02816/FP

Date 10/12/25

Att: Melissa Tyler

Ryefield, Stevenage Road, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7PE

Erection of two detached dwellings and one detached garage to serve plot 2 following demolition of existing detached garage including parking, landscaping and extension of existing vehicular access off Stevenage rd

Consultee comments;

Thank you for consulting me, having looked at the submitted documents I would have no ecological objection to the proposal.

The provision of the August 2025 Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) and July 2025 Biodiversity Net Gain Statement are welcomed. The site is garden land and the submitted Statutory Metric identifies the biodiversity baseline as 0.99 habitat units and 0.75 hedgerow units with the post-development habitats of the site valued at 0.56 habitat units and 0.73 hedgerow units. Representing a loss of 44.4% of habitat units and 3% loss of hedgerow units, this is reflected in the Biodiversity Net Gain statement where an expectation for an off-site solution is advised. Information on the off-site, third-party provider would need to be clarified in the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

The EIA makes recommendations for biodiversity enhancements and, in conjunction with North Herts Local Plan policy NE4, the following condition is advised;

No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee boxes in buildings/structures, and hedgehog holes in fences has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure development is ecologically sensitive and secures biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the North Herts Local Plan policy NE4.

The case officer should note Biodiversity Gain condition wording should be added to the decision notice, the biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition having its own separate statutory basis and is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England. To ensure the applicant is clear about this distinction the biodiversity gain condition should not be included in the list of conditions imposed in the written notice when granting planning permission but should remain separate.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been

*granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition)” that **development may not begin** unless:*

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be North Herts Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.