

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist

Date 29/05/2026

Ref: 26/01198/FP

Att: Melissa Tyler

Land South Of Long Acre, Luffenhall, Hertfordshire,

Erection of one detached single storey dwelling house including solar roof panels, air source heat pump, soft landscaping ,and electric vehicle charger following removal of chicken sheds and stables.

Consultee comments;

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

The submission of the February 2026 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PEA/PRA) is welcomed. The site is identified as a dilapidated chicken shed and stables/feed store, modified grassland with trees, scrub, and hardstanding access track.

It lies in an amber risk zone for great crested newts and two waterbodies are present within 250m of the site. The report claims it is unlikely that great crested newts will be impacted by the works due to the small area of vegetation clearance required but a precautionary approach to site clearance is recommended. To guide this a Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement is advised as follows;

No development shall commence until a Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) Method Statement for Great Crested Newts has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the Method Statement shall include the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), pre-commencement site searches, phased vegetation clearance, and procedures to be followed should Great Crested Newts be encountered. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter

The submitted Statutory Metric identifies the site biodiversity baseline as 3.59 Habitat Units with the post-development habitats of the site valued at 3.34 Habitat Units, a loss of 6.88%, which means that the development is unable to meet the mandatory requirement for 10% BNG on site. The May 2026 Planning, Design & Heritage Statement refers to off-site compensation and says in 5.54 'Off-site additional habitat can be provided within adjacent land to the east owned by the applicant.'. If this is the intention, as habitat gains are classified as off-site, they will need to be registered on the Natural England Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Site Register.

Whilst there is no ecological objection to the principle of development at this site, information would need to be clarified to satisfy a Biodiversity Gain Plan.

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

North Herts Council,

PO Box 10613, Nottingham, NG6 6DW

www.north-herts.gov.uk

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 the new dwelling has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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.