

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist
Date 02/06/25

Ref: 25/00719/FP
Att: Melissa Tyler

North Hertfordshire Leisure Centre, Baldock Road, Letchworth Garden City,

Decarbonisation works, including: the provision of insulated rendering to external walls, air source heat pump and associated enclosure, a substation, and photovoltaic panels on roofs.

Consultee comments;

Thank you for consulting me, I would have no ecological objection to the proposal.

Having read through the submitted documents the preliminary ecological appraisal advised further bat roost assessment and this has been undertaken and no bat interest in the building identified.

The March 2025 Statutory Biodiversity Metric records the site as achieving a 13.76% gain in Habitat Units, thereby meeting the mandatory requirement of 10%.

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.