

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist
Date 12/01/2026

Ref: 25/02868/FP
Att: Thomas Howe

Porters End House, Porters End Lane, Kimpton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8ER

Erection of two dwellings following demolition of two existing barns including hard and soft landscaping, parking, and two electric charging spaces, two air source heat pumps, bin storage and installation of fences/gates. Alterations to existing access.

Consultee comments;

Having read the submitted documents there would be no ecological objection to the proposal. The August 2025 Preliminary Roost Assessment did not find any evidence of bats in the barns to be removed but does advise a precautionary method of working to avoid disturbance to bats and birds when undertaking works to the barns or trees/ vegetation.

The submitted Small Sites Metric identifies a net gain of 18.35% thereby meeting the statutory requirement for a 10% gain. The proposed site plan shows an area to the east to be planted with 35 new trees but the spacing for these would appear to be less than 5m spacing. To achieve true biodiversity gains tree planting should really provide sufficient space for trees to mature which would be at least a 7m spacing. Additionally, it is not clear how this part of the site would be accessed and how it will be maintained. Is it part of plot 2, details of which will need to be detailed within the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

In addition to mandatory BNG the North Herts Local Plan also advises development should consider the inclusion of integrated features in the built fabric of dwellings such as bat, bird and bee bricks.

Taking the above points into account the following conditions are advised;

Biodiversity Method Statement

No development shall take place (including any ground works, site clearance) until a Biodiversity Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Statement shall include:

- a) Review of site potential and constraints.*
- b) Details of any necessary working methods to prevent harm to wildlife.*
- c) Persons responsible for implementing the works.*

Ecological Enhancements

No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as hibernacula, 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.

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.