

From: [Kate Dewey](#)
To: [Johnston, Christopher](#); [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Cc: AbsoluteEcology@hotmail.co.uk; [Sammons Ltd Planning](#)
Subject: Re: SMD/2021/0674 83 Lilac Grove Farm
Date: 17 March 2022 17:20:54

Dear Chris and Teresa,

Quick comments having reviewed the additional information and your queries.

Regarding BNG, hedgerow and habitat area units are separate units and it is best practice to achieve net gain in both- I think we weren't as aware of that with the Cheddleton Park site at the time. The use of the metric is, in any case, for now at the discretion of the ecologist, so we try to make decisions to suit the individual site.

In the case of Lilac Grove, I would be happy to condition some off-site habitat enhancement of grassland on the applicant's land, as long as that could be secured long-term. Looking at aerial photos, I would say that an area near to the field boundary and other semi-natural habitat would be best, either to the east where there is an area of scrub, or adjacent the marshy grassland to the south. This area would need to be confirmed on a map now, and the existing habitat confirmed so that we know it's possible to get the gain. The detailed could be provided via condition, with an updated metric.

However looking at the site layout, and given the small deficit in units, I think there could be an alternative option if desired, which could be easier to secure and maintain. The garden of Plot 3 is larger than all the rest, and half or more of it could potentially be enhanced as a meadow or traditional orchard with species-rich grassland beneath. It could be used by residents but would need to be retained and managed as the correct habitat for the life of the development (or 30 years). If that is a workable solution I would need to see the metric updated now, as it might be quite tight on space.

While we would ideally like to see a 10% net gain, and that would be much easier off-site, without specific policy in place we can only ask for 1% net gain as a minimum.

Regards species and on-site mitigation- the advice in the PEA can be conditioned.

Regarding your query about unit costings Teresa, SMDC do not have a policy as yet or a register of sites or standard costings, although there are some opportunities available to enhance some council owned amenity sites. At the moment any off-site payment requirement is determined on a site-by-site basis.

Regards,

Kate Dewey BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

Senior Planning Officer

Planning consultations- please send to planning@staffs-wildlife.org.uk

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On Mon, 10 Jan 2022 at 08:00, Kate Dewey <k.dewey@staffs-wildlife.org.uk> wrote:

83 Lilac Grove Farm, Folly Lane, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7DA
Demolition of existing dwellings and outbuildings and erection of 8 dwellings.
0.36 hectares

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been asked to review the above application as part of a service level agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to provide ecology advice regarding planning and development management functions.

Due to reduced capacity at this time we can offer brief comments only on this application.

SUMMARY

Holding objection- further information required.

Required prior to determination:

1. Preliminary Ecological Assessment including habitat survey of the site and check for other protected species e.g. badger, great crested newt
2. Biodiversity Impact Assessment using Defra metric 3.0 or small sites metric
3. Surface and foul drainage proposals

Secure via condition should approval be granted:

4. Recommendations of Bat Report
5. Landscaping and species enhancement features.

HABITATS

The proposals are likely to result in a net loss of grassland habitat, although hedgerows would be increased. A metric is required to measure any deficit and ensure this is addressed within the site design or offset elsewhere.

A sustainable drainage system may offer opportunities to create wetland habitats or ditches/ swales within the design. Drainage details are required so that impacts and compatibility with landscaping can be determined.

SPECIES

The Activity Survey for Bats by Absolute Ecology dated september 2021 found no bats to be using the buildings, but potential for nesting birds. A Barn owl was observed hunting nearby. As part of overall biodiversity enhancements, some bird and bat features should be incorporated into new buildings, including a barn owl loft or a pole or tree-mounted box on the edge of the property.

No other species or habitats were considered in the survey, therefore a habitat plan and checks for other species issues is required.

Regards,

Kate Dewey BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

Senior Planning Officer



07494852383

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