

Bob Phillips

From: Planning For Nature <planningfornature@staffs-wildlife.org.uk>
Sent: 27 February 2023 19:18
To: Bob Phillips; Planning Comments (SMDC)
Cc: Steve Massey
Subject: SMD/2022/0249 Land Off, Cheadle Road, Upper Tean

SMD/2022/0249**Land Off, Cheadle Road, Upper Tean, Staffordshire**

Full Planning Application for residential development of 67 houses with a mix of two and two and a half storey dwellings consisting of new access to Cheadle Road, new public open space, sustainable urban drainage, landscaping, pumping station and associated works.

3.6 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.

SUMMARY –No objection subject to conditions.

Secure via condition should approval be granted:

1. CEMP including species protection measures for amphibians, bats and birds
2. BNG metric and habitat compensation plan
3. LEMP covering details of habitat compensation/ enhancement and long-term (30 years) management and monitoring.
4. Bat-friendly lighting plan
5. Revised SuDs design with more integrated surface features across the site.

DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

None impacted. The more diverse areas of the site have been assessed against Local Wildlife Site criteria and do not meet them.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy NE1 in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Adopted September 2020, expects that 'all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative'

The proposals do involve the loss of some wet woodland, and marshy grassland in the centre of the site. Ideally this would be minimised by amending the layout slightly to avoid losses as far as possible.

The proposal may be able to deliver a net gain within the site, as the habitats to be lost are in the lower value areas, and there are significant areas of greenspace available for enhancement – however, these are already of higher diversity, so this will be a challenge. In order to inform detailed habitat enhancement for retained areas, and enable monitoring, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment using the latest Defra metric should be secured via condition, along with a habitat mitigation/ enhancement plan. Should there be a deficit in habitat units, off-site compensation may be necessary.

Hedge 2 was found to be of some diversity- this should be fenced out of domestic curtilages so that it can be managed but not adversely affected by new garden owners.

When creating SuDs features, existing turf and plant material from marshy areas should be stripped and saved, to line the new features, as the wetland vegetation already has some diversity and this will aid revegetation.

All felled timber/ brash from site clearance must be retained on site as habitat piles, placed within existing scrub, woodland, grassland and wetland edges.

There are potential opportunities to enhance the banks of the River Tean by creating backwaters or small ponds, and thinning some trees.

Any trim trail should allow the majority of the retained habitats to be undisturbed, utilising a circular route around the development

In order to maximise wildlife value of landscaping, the following should be included in detailed specification: Short flowery lawn mix for amenity grassland, climbers, fruit trees, new native hedges on boundaries, enhancing existing hedges with trees/ additional species.

Drainage

While the Sustainable Drainage Statement and proposed SuDs design appears to demonstrate adequate balancing of rainwater, it is rather over-reliant on the 'pipe and pond' approach. The proposed attenuation basin is within an area of more diverse marshy grassland / swamp vegetation where impacts should be minimised. Given the green space available, we would expect a more integrated design, making the most of water in the landscape; with storage and infiltration/ filtering performed by surface features such as roadside swales/ rain gardens, and open channels rather than pipes as far as possible, to obtain multifunctional benefits for biodiversity and amenity. This would spread storage more evenly across the site and reduce the size of the basin needed. Specifically more water storage swales could be included along the main access road and west of plots 26- 33.

Water butts are not mentioned in the Sustainable Drainage Statement- these should be included on every dwelling as further water storage and to assist garden irrigation.

Given such a design would appear possible within the layout proposed, we feel that a more optimised design could be secured via an appropriately worded condition.

SPECIES

Bats

The Bat Report January 2023 found 14 trees to have bat roost potential, but only one of these appears to be near to developed areas- T1 in the Ecological Appraisal, part of G5 in the Arboricultural Assessment. This is near to the proposed footpath so needs to be adequately protected.

Great Crested Newts, Amphibians

Survey results showed no GCN to be present.

Reptiles

The Reptile Report January 2023 found no reptiles on the site, however Common Toad is present, which is a priority species. A method statement for amphibian protection during site clearance and construction is required secured via condition. Formation of log piles/ refugia for amphibians from felled material on site should be included in a CEMP/ LEMP.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The orientation of dwelling roofs should be a consideration with regards to maximising potential for solar gain and solar panels. Either roof design or orientation of homes within plots could be altered for those with no south facing aspects.

The layout appears to have minimised road-ways and integrated footpaths which is welcomed.

Regards,

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Senior Planning Officer



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Please note, ecology advice is provided to SMDC 2 days per week- working days are normally Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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



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