
From: Johnston, Christopher
Sent: 19 April 2023 17:26
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: FW: SMD/2023/0084 Overton Farm

Categories:

From: Planning For Nature
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SMD/2023/0084

Overton Farm, Fole Lane, Overton, Hollington, Staffordshire, ST10 4HW

Extension to existing stable block and formation of Manege

1.12 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. Biodiversity enhancement plan to include habitat mitigation, appropriate BNG metric and bird box.
2. Amphibian method statement

HABITATS

The areas impacted appear to be improved grassland of poor wildlife value, however this will entail an overall loss of green habitats and biodiversity. A substantial area of cut and fill is proposed to form the manege. A section of hedgerow will also be taken out to form a new gateway.

Given that there is sufficient area within the application site or the wider landholding to provide compensatory habitats we consider that a suitable pre-commencement condition can be applied, requiring a landscaping/ biodiversity enhancement plan accompanied by a BNG metric showing the relevant biodiversity gain. The habitat baseline will need to be recorded before any work commences. An area of existing grassland and any disturbed areas should be enhanced to a species-rich sward using a suitable seed mix for the soil type. Subsoil is ideal so should be kept on the surface if possible. Some additional hedge planting or hedgerow enhancement with additional native species could provide a hedgerow gain.

Any material from removed hedge section should be retained on the landholding and used to form log/ brash piles near to the existing ponds.

SPECIES

Great crested newts

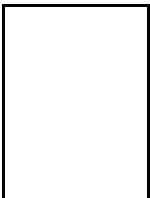
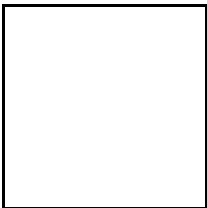
There are several ponds within 250m of the site, the closest being around 15m away from the site boundary. It is not clear how far construction will impact from the manege. Habitat within 50m of a pond is the most critical to newts, and if this zone can be avoided by adjusting the position of the manege this would be welcomed. As the intensively managed grassland within the development areas is not ideal newt habitat, and given the good habitat around the ponds, any newts present are less likely to venture into neighbouring fields. As an area of improved grassland and a short section of hedgerow will be impacted, it is considered that Reasonable Avoidance Measures to protect and avoid amphibians would be the most effective measure here rather than surveys and fencing/ trapping. An amphibian method statement should be secured via condition.

Birds

The field is of a size that might be used by ground nesting birds such as skylark, but the overhead powerlines and trees on the boundaries reduce the habitat suitability for such birds. Meadow enhancements will serve to enhance habitats for birds, and we recommend that a house sparrow nest terrace be included on the new stable block for this priority species. This can be included/ specified in the biodiversity enhancement plan.

Kate Dewey BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

Senior Planning Officer



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

Planning consultations- please send to



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