
From: Planning For Nature
Sent: 02 May 2023 17:02
To: Johnston, Christopher; Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: SMD/2023/0110 Land Front Of Marsh Lea

Categories:

SMD/2023/0110

Land Front Of Marsh Lea, Brookhouse Lane, Armshead, Werrington, Staffordshire ST2 8ND

Proposed manege

0.14 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 –Holding objection -further information/ amendments required

Required prior to determination:

1. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
2. Biodiversity net gain metric
3. Drainage scheme to include wetland area/ pond feature
4. Landscaping plan to show habitat mitigation/ enhancement/ planting.

Secure via condition should approval be granted:

5. Reasonable avoidance measures precautions for amphibians and reptiles

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK

The site is in the Meadows Habitat Connectivity Opportunity Area, bordering the Heathland HCO. Local priority habitats and wildlife corridors include hedgerows, species rich meadows and woodland.

DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

Local Wildlife Sites

The proposals is 45m south of Brookhouse Wood BAS which is also an ancient woodland. While no direct impact is predicted, the proposal will need to balance habitat loss and ideally strengthen wildlife corridors linking to the woodland such as hedgerows.

HABITATS

Habitat Survey

No ecology survey has been submitted. The site appears to be semi-improved grassland, and may have some diversity. There will be an overall loss of grassland. It is not clear whether the access track will be surfaced or left as existing?

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is required to evaluate the habitats impacted and any species issues that could be relevant.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy NE1 paragraph 5 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 proposal appears likely to result in a net loss, therefore a Biodiversity Impact Assessment using the latest Defra metric is required.

Mitigation for the loss of grassland will be required, which would ideally involve enhancing a roughly equal area of grassland nearby by seeding with an appropriate wildlife mix for the soil. This could perhaps be a margin along the existing hedgerow to the east as this would link with the nearby woodland. Some hedgerow gap planting would be welcomed.

Drainage

Herringbone drainage to a stone soakaway is proposed. If possible, draining the manege to a surface feature such as a small pond or wetland area in the corner of the field would be preferable as this would create additional habitat value and contribute towards a net biodiversity gain.

SPECIES

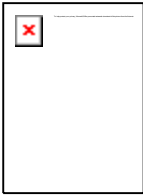
Great Crested Newts, Amphibians, Reptiles

There are two ponds within 250m of the site. Habitats are suitable for GCN and reptiles; in this situation given the distance from the ponds, some precautions should be employed to avoid impacting any species that may be on the site- Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) such as clearing materials by hand that could form habitat piles (wood/ brash/ stones), storing building materials off the ground and cutting the grass short before any excavations. A method statement may be secured via condition.

Regards,

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.



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