

From: [Planning For Nature](#)
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#); [John Copestake](#)
Cc: [Steve Massey](#); [SCC Flood Team](#); [Richard Millington](#); [connor](#)
Subject: SMD/2021/0113 Land At Bridge End
Date: 17 May 2023 17:13:35

SMD/2021/0113

Land At Bridge End, Macclesfield Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8LG
Erection of 12no. Bungalows
1.48 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/s should approval be granted:

1. Detailed landscaping, habitat enhancement, species mitigation measures including replacement features for reptiles, birds, bats and invertebrates. Updated biodiversity metric 4.0 with revised baseline and proposed habitat maps.
2. 30 year Landscape and Ecology Management and Monitoring plan
3. Pre commencement badger check, and bat checks of trees to be felled
4. Reptile/ amphibian and nesting bird precautions method statement
5. Detailed surface water drainage scheme.
6. Bat sensitive lighting scheme

Documents reviewed:

- Initial Biodiversity Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy February 2022 by Elite Ecology
- New Habitat Map 9 February 2022 by Elite Ecology
- Great Crested Newt Environmental DNA (eDNA) Survey report June 2022 by Elite Ecology
- Sketch Proposal Site Plan 5 May 2022 by Sammons Architectural
- Flood Risk Statement and Surface Water plan Jan 2023

HABITATS

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.'

The submitted Biodiversity Impact Assessment requires updating, but given the

areas involved shows that it will be possible to achieve a net gain with the additional land to the east being enhanced.

The baseline habitat map is not up to date as it does not show the whole of the proposed off-site enhancement area. Aerial photographs, views from Streetview and local knowledge suggest that the steep slope at the eastern edge of the mitigation area is likely to be unimproved or semi-improved grassland of existing biodiversity value and so tree planting here would be inappropriate. However, the main part of the field does have potential to be enhanced and the general design is suitable, and could be finessed to maximise gains. The proposed development site layout and landscaping has changed slightly from that shown in the BNG assessment, and SuDs features may also need to be included.

We support the comments of Steve Massey, Arboricultural Officer 16th May 2023 and these need to be incorporated into a final detailed landscaping / habitat scheme.

Overall we feel that a net gain is achievable with the combined on and off-site areas. An updated assessment and enhancement plan, using the now adopted metric 4.0. and providing an accurate baseline habitat map and revised post-intervention habitat map, should be secured via condition. A site visit to agree the final design would be beneficial.

A 30 year habitat management and monitoring plan will also be required.

Drainage and SuDS

The proposed surface drainage scheme plans do not show the whole site and does not appear to include the existing access road –it is not clear whether this is proposed to be altered. The access road would need to include drains and avoid flooding of properties. An underground storage tank may be necessary under the road as space is limited.

For the main development infiltration, permeable surfaces, water butts and a balancing pond are mentioned as suitable features and discharge is proposed to the River Churnet. As long as flood volumes are balanced and the local flood authority is supportive, a detailed drainage scheme should be secured via condition.

SPECIES

Great crested newts

The eDNA survey reported no evidence of GCN in the one pond that was able to be surveyed. No further action is required, but a general method statement for site clearance with precautions for amphibians and reptiles should be sought via condition.

Bats

The PEA concluded that mature trees on the site had no potential for bat roosts, but advised further surveys. Generally speaking tree roosts are difficult to identify, and it is best to examine the trees shortly before felling, and if necessary gain a licence and soft-fell the trees. This is usual practice and given the low suitability of most trees, with correct mitigation, bat boxes and if necessary retaining roost features from any felled trees and re-using these, requirements for bats can be satisfied. Therefore I would recommend that a pre-commencement condition is put in place that requires any mature trees to be felled are checked for bat roosts prior to felling.

A sympathetic lighting scheme should also be secured via condition.

Badgers

A pre-commencement check for any badger activity should be made a condition.

Recommendations in the PEA for species enhancement should be included within a detailed landscaping plan.

Regards,

Kate Dewey BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

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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