
From: Planning For Nature
Sent: 26 June 2023 16:21
To: Johnston, Christopher; Planning Comments (SMDC)
Cc: Steve Massey;
Subject: Re: SMD/2022/0438 Stonehouse Farm - proposed Co-op supermarket

Categories:

SMD/2022/0438

Stonehouse Farm, Ash Bank Road, Werrington, Staffordshire, ST10 0JR

Demolition of existing buildings on site and erection of a Class E retail unit, alongside access, car parking and associated works.

0.23 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. Amended landscaping design (hedges and trees), also showing bird, bat and mammal habitat features.
2. Construction Environmental Management Plan including precautions for bats, birds, mammals, amphibians and removal of montbretia plants, plus long-term management and monitoring
3. Habitat management and monitoring plan (30 years)

Documents reviewed:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal July 2022, RDF Ecology
- Fig L1 - Landscape Design 25 Apr 2023
- Werrington Biodiversity metric 28/03/2023, RDF Ecology

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. 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 submitted metric shows that a net gain will be achieved for both habitat area and hedgerows. The species mixes proposed are suitable.

The Landscape Design plan however shows new hedgerow planting in the same location as Hedge 2 and 3 are located, according to the Phase 1 habitat plan. I can see only about 30m of the south-eastern boundary that could be planted, that is currently a line of trees, which may not be suitable? This should be amended/ clarified to avoid confusion. In the hedge mix replace field maple with holly if planting into shaded areas.

As an alternative/ addition we suggest enhancing the retained hedges with additional species such as dog rose, dogwood and honeysuckle, and adding standard trees at 20m spacing- suggest oak, field maple, crab apple and damson. This will increase diversity as well as screening and roadside shade.

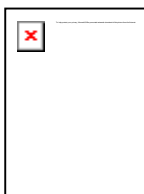
For meadow creation on the retained area of grassland, seed into the existing sward and add hay rattle. Management is ideal. To make cutting easier, move the proposed two new trees here into the roadside hedge.

New hedge management isn't specified. Some monitoring will also be needed to ensure the habitats meet the target value in the metric.

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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On Wed, 9 Nov 2022 at 18:36, Planning For Nature wrote:

SMD/2022/0438

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Demolition of existing buildings on site and erection of a Class E retail unit, alongside access, car parking and associated works.

0.23 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. Biodiversity net gain metric
2. Amendments to landscaping/ layout where possible to retain existing hedgerow and trees

Secure via condition should approval be granted:

3. Detailed landscaping and SuDs design, including bird, bat and mammal habitat features.
4. Biodiversity net gain mitigation plan
5. Construction Environmental Management Plan including precautions for bats, birds, mammals, amphibians and removal of montbretia plants.

Documents reviewed:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal July 2022 RDF Ecology
- Proposed Drainage Layout 3E ZZ XX DR C 2000 P2 FEB 2022
- Proposed site plan

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. 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'

Most of the poor semi-improved grassland on the site, part of the roadside hedgerow and some trees are proposed to be lost. Native hedgerows are a priority habitat.

The proposal appears likely to result in a net loss of both habitat area and linear habitat (hedgerows). Therefore a Biodiversity Impact Assessment using the appropriate latest Defra metric is required.

Where possible more habitat should be retained, e.g. the roadside hedge adjacent the proposed new store- there seems no good reason why this should be lost. Layout and landscaping should minimise hardstanding, and use permeable surfaces such as gravel and reinforced grass where possible. The surface water drainage proposals include an underground cellular soakaway or storage feature; rainwater could instead be stored or infiltrated within the landscaped areas e.g. the green space at the north of the site, which may be more cost-effective and provide more varied habitat. A green roof and green walls could also be an option to provide rainwater balancing, habitat and visual amenity.

If a net gain cannot be provided within the site, mitigation could be provided off-site on land nearby via a mitigation plan or via a S106 contribution.

SPECIES

Bats and Birds

Surveys of buildings and trees were conducted in June and no bat roosts were identified. Hedgerows and trees had bird nesting potential. Precautions to avoid nesting birds are recommended- to be included in a site Construction Environmental Management Plan. Bat and bird features should be installed or built in to the new building as part of biodiversity net gain.

Great Crested Newts, Amphibians

Risks have been assessed and deemed to be low. Precautionary measures required for site clearance and construction- within CEMP.

Mammals

Hedgehog has been recorded nearby- precautionary measures required for site clearance and construction - within CEMP.

Invasive Non-native plants

Two small stands of Montbretia (*Crocsmia spp.*) were recorded at the base of hedgerow H1. This needs to be removed and details included in the CEMP.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN and CLIMATE CHANGE

The orientation of the building roof is suitable for solar panels and these should be included to contribute to renewable energy generation. Rainwater harvesting is also another option which would reduce potable water use and save running costs over time.

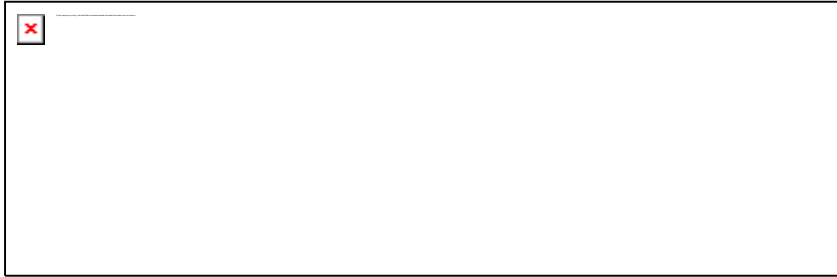
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