

Land off Shawe Park Road SWT Comments

Application Reference: SMD/2024/0237

Location: Land Off Shawe Park Road, Kingsley Holt, Nr Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 2DJ

Proposal: Erection of 4no. Bungalows for the over 55s, and detached garage

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.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust are unable to fully assess this application and require further surveys and information to allow us to do this. We recommend a **holding objection** until the following surveys have been carried out and we can fully assess the application:

- UKhab survey to inform the metric and cover the habitats that could not be assessed properly at the start of March e.g. grassland habitats. This should be carried out at a suitable time of year, between April and mid-October, ideally between May and September (and prior to any cut).
- Please provide condition assessments for the habitats that could be assessed at the start of March.
- River condition assessment carried out by an Ecologist trained and accredited to conduct a river condition assessment. The results should inform the metric.
- Invertebrate survey carried out at a suitable time of year by a suitably qualified Ecologist.
- Updated statutory BNG metric following botanical and river condition surveys and habitat condition assessment sheets.
- A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) should be carried out on T1 and T2 followed by dusk activity survey and/or tree climb surveys in May-Aug if they are found to support potential roost features for multiple bats. T1 and T2 need to be assessed for hibernation roost potential.

Planning Conditions

All protected and notable species recommendations should be put into planning conditions, these are for herpatiles, nesting birds, bats, hedgehogs, otters, invertebrates, crustaceans, fish, water voles, entrapment of mammals and non-native species. In addition, if protected species are discovered during works, work should cease and a suitably qualified Ecologist consulted.

If bats are present and T1 and T2 are to be felled, a licence would be required.

Habitat Management in Net Gain Report

We have further concerns regarding habitat management and have the following comments, these will need to be considered when producing the HMMP:

6.1 Soil preparation. Wildflower areas – suggest low nutrient soil or subsoil rather than topsoil to keep the soil as nutrient poor as possible. No compost should be added to wildflower areas.

6.3.1 Cuttings should be removed off site or placed in a suitable receptor area after cutting.

‘Management of the habitats will avoid mowing of the entire space, to allow patches of taller/rough grassland patches and flowering to take place’. This needs some further detail in the HMMP as it could result in areas of the grassland becoming rank and not reaching target condition. Cutting should be done after flowering in meadows.

7.2 Operational Phase

Wildflowers. Management should be altered – ensure grass is cut short or soil prepared appropriately and wildflower seeds sown ideally between August to October or, if that is not possible, March to April. Cut between mid-July (15th) and late September, varying the cut time each year to maximise diversity. Remove cuttings off site or put in a designated area of low botanical interest within the site. If the grass is lush and grasses are out competing wildflowers, a second cut early in the year may be beneficial – no later than April and also care should be taken to not do this if the site is waterlogged or very wet. Monitoring should inform whether further sowing of seeds is required.

Control of aggressive weeds – the management should include removal of aggressive weeds as well as plant ID survey. Perhaps worded ‘any aggressive or invasive weeds will be identified and removed by hand’. Unsure why March is one of the times suggested to do this – further clarification required, we would recommend just once a year in May.

We would not recommend annual surveys for all habitats. Suggest timing of monitoring surveys should be agreed with the Council or Responsible body and be habitat specific. Suggestions are every year for the first five years and then every 5 years until 30 or years 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30.

The site plan shows sewerage works in the on-site mitigation area – will these impact the habitat?

We look forward to receiving the additional information in due course.

We may wish to make further comments on this application upon review of the additional requested information.