

The Grange Whiston Eaves Lane SWT Comments

Application Reference: SMD/2024/0561

Location: The Grange, Whiston Eaves Lane, Whiston

Proposed Development: The erection of a barn for agricultural use and associated works.

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.

Having reviewed the information provided we have a **holding objection** further information required.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

To fully assess the ecological implications of the proposed development we require a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal or Ecology Statement completed by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist assess the potential for the site and adjacent habitats to support protected species, with recommendations for any further surveys or mitigation that may be required. There also needs to be evidence that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied.

BNG Metric

The site is within strategic areas for grassland, pasture and wetland. This is as per the map on the [net gain in Staffordshire](#) website. These habitats should be listed as strategic in the metric.

The planned orchard shown on the proposed site plan is not included in the BNG statutory metric tool calculations or in the BNG report. If an orchard is to be planted, this should be included in the biodiversity gain plan and metric submitted with the biodiversity gain plan. A deviation from the habitats detailed in this will result in potential enforcement action as the habitat on site will differ to what is detailed in the biodiversity gain plan and this is subject to 30 years of relevant management and monitoring.

Clarification is required about the temporary loss of habitat when excavated material is to be disposed of on the modified grassland. The statutory metric user guide states '*You do not need to record a habitat as lost when there are temporary impacts to a habitat and the area can be restored to both:*

- *baseline habitat type within two years of the initial impact; and*
- *baseline condition within two years of the initial impact'*

If this area complies with the guidance quoted above, then the metric can remain as it is. If it is envisaged that the spreading excavated material onto the modified grassland will take more than two years to return to baseline condition, then this needs to be accounted for in the metric. This area should be input as habitat lost and then new habitat created (assuming that the target habitat is not enhancing the baseline), any delay in creation should be

accounted for in the 'delay in starting habitat creation years' column. If needed, this should be accounted for in the metric submitted with the biodiversity gain plan.

BNG Report

Monitoring frequency will be set as per the S106 agreement or planning condition.

Recommend wildflower seed is sown in Autumn or Spring as per supplier's instructions. The ground will also need to be prepared appropriately, seed mix appropriate to the soil type, cuttings removed after a cut etc. and we would expect to see further detail of this in the Biodiversity Gain Plan or HMMP.

Application Form

Application form states there are 3.93 units, this is correct for the area habitats but does not include the hedge baseline so this should be corrected to 3.99 to include these.

Planning Conditions

Based on the information provided, we recommend that the following are secured through planning conditions:

Any trees planted should be native trees of local provenance.

Seed mix for grassland should be native, of local provenance and appropriate to the site conditions.