

The Grange, Clay Lake SWT Comments

Date: 07/07/25

Application Reference: SMD/2025/0104

Location: The Grange, Clay Lake, Endon, Staffordshire, ST9 9DD

Proposed Development: Residential Development of 6 dwellings

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.

Documents Viewed:

- Application form
- BNG Report The Grange 11.12.2024.
- The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_The Grange Final 11.12.2024
- Arboricultural Report The Grange Clay Lake Endon 2025
- Clay Lake Development - Planting Schedule - Dec 24
- 2022-2755-33 EXISTING CONDITIONS - BLOCK PLAN
- 2022-2755-34 PLANNING PROPOSAL - BLOCK PLAN
- 2022-2755-37 PLANNING PROPOSAL - LANDSCAPING PLAN

Summary: We recommend a **holding objection** until the following information is supplied and our comments are resolved:

- The pre-development biodiversity value is dated for 19/12/24, this is before the date that the application was submitted. This date should have been agreed between the person writing the biodiversity gain plan and the LPA with reasoning given for an earlier date on the application form. Alternatively, the date that the application was submitted should be given. This is as detailed in the Planning Practice Guidance for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- BNG assessment was undertaken in November 2024. While PEAs can be undertaken at any time of year, the BNG condition assessment using UK HABS for grasslands should but undertaken at the appropriate time of year this can be between April and October, but ideally between May and September before any cutting / grazing.
- We have insufficient information to determine whether the Biodiversity Gain Condition is capable of being discharged. This will need to be determined by the planning case officer when making their decision. Details of the S106 securing the 30 years of management and monitoring will be required to do this. This will need to be agreed with the LPA.

- To set the S106 securing the significant on-site BNG, details of how the BNG habitat will be created / enhanced and then managed are required. Further information required to determine this includes soil testing to show the soil is suitable for the enhancement of moderate condition modified grassland to moderate condition other neutral grassland and details of how the enhancement will be achieved along with a draft HMMP.
- The brook to the south of the site appears to be within 10m of the site for at least part of its length, therefore a MoRPh survey of the watercourse will be required by an ecologist who qualified in undertaking River Condition Assessments to inform the BNG calculation for the watercourse.
- The areas mapped by the current and post development habitat maps within the BNG assessment report do not appear to be consistent, please confirm which boundary is correct. If the site is larger than the area surveyed for the BNG report then a survey will be required to ensure the whole site has been assessed for its ecological potential and is included within the BNG calculation.
- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is required. This should include a data search. Consideration should be given to the mitigation hierarchy as required by the NPPF and BS42020:2013A.
- All the enhanced grassland areas need to be accessible for the ongoing management that will be required to achieve and maintain the target condition of the habitat.
- The BNG report states that the habitats on site are not in the local strategy. However, the southern section of the site is a Semi-strategic area for grassland, woodland and wetland on the Nature Recovery Network Map for Staffordshire and should therefore be recorded as “Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy” within the metric calculation tool.
- The BNG report notes that there was physical damage evident within the other neutral grassland, please clarify the nature of this degradation and update the metric and BNG report accordingly to reflect this.
- Please provide clarification that the urban trees will not be planted in the gardens of the properties.

BNG

BNG is a material consideration and we have insufficient information to consider whether the Biodiversity Gain Condition is capable of being discharged. To enable us to do this for this application, we require the following information:

Significant On-site Habitats

- Soil test showing conditions are suitable for creation of grassland (this is required after conditions have been created)
- Detail in the LEMP of the creation of suitable ground conditions for the habitats you are creating
- Draft HMMP detailing management to create desired habitat, timings of when you would expect to see certain conditions and remedial measures for if things do not go to plan.
- Details of the S106 securing 30 years of monitoring and management of the significant on-site net gain. This should include a definition of what is considered the completion date i.e. when the 30 years will start and also ensure that the significant on-site gain does not become part of the private gardens – if this were to happen, for BNG purposes, it would be classed as ‘vegetated garden’. This needs to be agreed with the LPA prior to determination. This S106 agreement should either include the approval of the HMMP or this could be approved in a separate condition, ideally the HMMP should be approved in conjunction with the net gain plan. Ideally this should include measures of success and remedial measures if things are not going to plan. We would need to see details of this to determine whether enough measures are in place to ensure that at least 10% BNG is delivered 30 years after development has finished.
- You may wish to submit a draft Biodiversity Gain Plan to provide evidence that the trading rules / net gain hierarchy etc have been met
- Draft post development BNG metric and habitat plan

Off-site delivery of BNG

- If the BNG is being delivered off-site then some detail on how this may be achieved.

A S106 will be needed to secure the monitoring of 30 years of management and monitoring after the development has finished.

We would recommend that you should consider whether the Biodiversity Gain Condition is capable of being discharged when creating the HMMP, as, if the Biodiversity Gain Condition cannot be discharged and changes need to be made to any plans, the HMMP may need to be adjusted to accommodate this.

Conditions

It is likely there will be further conditions recommended following the result of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

As detailed above there should be a S106 securing the 30 years of management and monitoring of significant on-site BNG.

There should be a condition securing the HMMP (to be considered alongside the net gain condition)

There should be a condition securing the grassland enhancement prior to the HMMP starting – this may be in the form of a LEMP.