

Hopestone Farm SWT Comments

Date: 01.04.2025

Application Reference: SMD/2025/0166

Location: Hopestone Farm , Park Lane , Ipstones , Staffordshire , ST10 2NE

Proposed Development: Machinery Shed

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.

[Updated comments can be found in blue text.](#)

Documents Viewed:

- 2502 Hopestone Farm Biodiversity Gain Statement- DBD Architectural Consultancy, March 2025.
- 2502 Hopestone Farm DA Statement REV A- DBD Architectural Consultancy, June 2025.
- 2502 Hopestone Farm PL01F Site Plan A1 1-1250- DBD Architectural Consultancy, January 2025.
- 2502 Hopstone Farm PL02C Plans and Proposed A3 1-100- DBD Architectural Consultancy, January 2025.
- 2502 Hopestone Farm PL03 Biodiversity gain plan A3 1-200- DBD Architectural Consultancy, April 2025.
- 2502 Hopstone Farm Small Sites Metric Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool 03.25
- [Biodiversity Gain Statement Rev B- DBD Architectural, September 2025](#)
- [Small Sites Metric- DBD Architectural, Updated September 2025.](#)

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

- Clarity has been given to bats- [There has been no further assessment of the derelict buildings ability to support bats. Further information is required.](#)

Further detail

- The survey was done by a competent person; the name and job title of the person has not been given in the desktop assessment page of the metric.
- Photos should be given of all the habitats on site, including the hard standing and the building to be removed, in the supporting information tab of the metric.
- The created building and hard standing have not been added to the habitats to be created

- The areas of the created habitats do not match the area of habitat lost; this is likely due to the building and hardstanding track not being included in the created habitats.
- Using the [net gain staffs](#) website, it can be seen that the site is in a strategic and semi-strategic area for woodland and grassland. This needs reflecting on the metric.
- It would be helpful to have habitat maps that show the baseline and proposed habitats on site.

The BNG small sites metric has been amended, thank you.

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). This is particularly important as the modified grassland is to be enhanced to good condition other neutral grassland.
- Draft post development BNG metric and habitat plan
- [A HMMP will be required at the Net Gain stage](#)

A condition or S106 will be needed to secure the monitoring of 30 years of management and monitoring after the development has finished. This needs to be agreed with the LPA prior to determination. This condition or S106 agreement should either include the approval of the HMMP or this could be approved in a separate condition. 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.

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.

Brief information has been provided on the management of the site.

Bats

We have been informed that the applicant no longer plans to demolish the existing building but make “like for like” repairs. We are not aware of the repairs that will take place and we have not received any photographs of the building. Even repairs to the building have the potential to impact bats, particularly if the repairs are on the roof.

All bat species in the United Kingdom are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended. This legislation makes it an offence to deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat, or to deliberately or recklessly disturb bats in a manner likely to impair their ability to survive, breed, rear young or hibernate. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost, including cleaning and moving debris from a damaged bat roost. A bat roost is defined as any structure or place used by bats for shelter or protection and remains protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

Therefore, it is important that the building is assessed for its potential to support bats before any work takes place. Pictures of the building that prove that it is unsuitable to support bats or a statement from a licenced ecologist should be provided.

Conditions

Breeding Birds

Due to the possibility of there being suitable bird breeding habitat within the site, all building works should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive). If vegetation and/or structures are required to be removed during the bird breeding season, then a further inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist is required no more than twenty-four hours before these are to be removed. If an active nest is found, a suitable exclusion zone around the nest will be necessary, where no vegetation removal can take place, to preserve the nest until the chicks have fledged.

Bat and Bird Boxes

A pre-commencement condition detailing the number, type and citing of bird boxes and bat boxes along with installation instructions to be submitted to and agreed by the LPA Ecologist. All bat and bird boxes should be made of woodcrete or a similar material to ensure longevity.

Reason: to comply with wildlife legislation including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Biodiversity Duty (NERC Act Section 40), NPPF, local plan policy NE1, the National Design Guide and Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 18 SPD

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This should be prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan using the Natural England template or if the Natural England template is not used, the Natural England checklist 2.0 should be used to ensure all relevant information is included. HMMPs should include:

- a non-technical summary;
- the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the [HMMP];
- the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority.
- Targets for each monitoring report
- Details of what shall be included in monitoring reports along with remedial measures and when these will be put in place if targets are not being met
- A risk register

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP, and monitoring reports shall be submitted to Local Planning Authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved HMMP.

Reason: To ensure mandatory biodiversity net gain is delivered as part of the development, in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 7a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), local plan policy NE1, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the national design guide.