

Site Name	Land To The Rear Of The Cottage 34 Keats Lane Earl Shilton Leicestershire	Advice Request	Ecology
Planning Ref	23/00982/OUT	Response Deadline	9 th November 2023
Planning Officer	Alex Jelley	Completed By	Dean LeFeuvre
Date of Request	19 th October 2023	Date of Issue	6 th November 2023

Stance: Object.

Dear Alex,

I am writing in respect of ecological matters for the above application advice request regarding the proposed outline planning permission for residential development of up to 10 bungalows (some matters reserved except for scale and access).

I have reviewed the following documents on the Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council's online planning portal.

- **Site Location Plan, Site Plan, and Ecological Appraisal.**

I have also consulted Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) for existing protected species data and designated sites within the locality, which may incur potential impacts depending on the proposals. This identified that the site falls within an impact buffer zone for badger due to the presence of records and habitats suitable for sett construction within close proximity. It also identified that the site is within a conservation zone for swifts, requiring biodiversity enhancement for this species on all planning application were deemed appropriate. A single reptile record for grass snake was returned from immediately adjacent the northern boundary, most likely associated with a pond that is present.

The 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' report dated September 2023 completed by Wildlife Consultants Ltd is acceptable. The assessment identified that the site is of limited ecological value, with exception to the mature hedgerow boundaries which are to be retained within the proposed development scheme. The following recommendations have been made:

- A lighting plan should be produced showing the locations and specifications for any proposed external lights will need to be submitted to the LPA as planning application. The plan should reflect the latest Bat Conservation Trust's Bats and Lighting in the U.K. guidance. Further detailed information has been provided within Section G, Recommendation 1.
- Nesting birds are likely to be present on site during the appropriate season (March - August inclusive). Therefore all vegetation clearance should be conducted outside of this period to

avoid disturbing any active nests. Should this not be achievable, then pre-commencement nesting bird checks will be required immediately prior. A breeding bird technical advice note should be attached to any approved scheme to ensure this.

- No evidence of badgers were recorded within the proposed development site associated with this application, however the ecological consultant accurately identified the presence of a main badger sett along eastern boundary, as confirmed by LRERC data (detailed above) and survey data from the immediately adjacent development site. I was concerned about the proximity of the sett in relation to this site and that a full survey could not be completed, however given that the ecologist has confirmed that a Mitigation Strategy has been prepared for that Site I believe this will be adequately addressed by the adjacent developer and their consultants. That said, there are still precautionary measures to take on this site which are detailed in the RESTRICTED INFORMATION APPENDIX, Page 20 of the report.
- General biodiversity enhancements have been recommended in the form of integrated bat and bird boxes (Section G, Recommendations 2 & 3) which are acceptable and should form a standard planning condition. Hedgehog highways have also been recommended (if applicable to any hard landscape boundaries). I would request that 5no bird and 5no bat boxes are provided. The boxes should be shown on a drawing/plan stating the makes, models, and proposed locations. Note that bat boxes should ideally be fitted south facing whilst bird boxes north facing. The outer edges of the development are favoured over those isolated in the middle.
- The Site Plan shows the provision of low-level landscape planting and tree planting as part of soft landscaping proposals. These should be of native species and local provenance. These should be shown on a soft landscape plan and submitted to the LPA ecology team for approval.

The proposed development exceeds the number of dwellings (1-9) for BNG Small Sites exemption and therefore a BNG assessment will need to be submitted as part of the application before any decision can be made. It cannot be left to reserved matters stage as plans may need to change to accommodate biodiversity enhancements. The optimal time of year for grassland surveys is May-Sept, as it is very difficult to carry out a condition assessment (part of the process for completing the metric) of grassland outside of this season. If net gain cannot be achieved within the site, the provision of off-site compensation can be Conditioned (although details of the proposed strategy should be provided). However, a baseline assessment and metric value of the existing habitats on site is still required at this stage. Therefore measurable BNG will need to be demonstrated, using the DEFRA 4 Metric.