

Site Name	Inglenook Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BD	Advice Request	Ecology
Planning Ref	23/00535/FUL	Response Deadline	3rd July 2023
Planning Officer	Christopher Brown	Completed By	Kirsten Hunter BSc ACIEEM
Date of Request	14th June 2023	Date of Issue	15 th November 2023

Stance: Object subject to supporting Information

Dear Christopher,

I am writing in respect of ecological matters for the above application advice request regarding the proposed erection of 20 accommodation pods, 10 holiday lodges, management building with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping and surface water balancing at Inglenook Farm.

I have accessed the planning application documents using Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's online planning portal and reviewed the following documents:

- eDNA survey of the existing ponds;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- Biodiversity Metric Calculation;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Proposed Site Plan, Drg. No. 1003 Rev E; and
- Site Location Plan, Drg No. 1004.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

A PEA has been produced by RammSanderson Ecology for the Site. In the first instance, the recommendations in Section 1 of the PEA which haven't yet been completed should be carried out. This includes a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for bats and production of Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)/precautionary methods of works (PMW) document with regards to badgers and reptiles, amphibians and priority mammals (brown hare and hedgehog). Further clarification is required on the following points:

- It is noted that the Site survey for the PEA was undertaken in March. While this limitation on the habitat assessment is indicated in Section 3.2 of the PEA, this is a suboptimal time of year for undertaking grassland condition assessments for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), unless done by an experienced botanist. Key diagnostic species may have been missed and the ecological value of the grassland subsequently underestimated.

Misidentification of grassland can have a significant impact on the final landscape plan's ability to achieve, or not achieve, net gain. Therefore, it is recommended that a Site walkover is undertaken at an optimal time of year (May-Sept) to ensure the grassland is adequately assessed for the BNG calculation; and

- The date for the great crested newt eDNA survey should be provided and clarification provided as to why a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (as referred to in the PEA Section 3.8.2) wasn't carried out as a subsequent survey.

In addition, the following is recommended:

- Given the highly mobile nature of badgers, a pre-works walkover is strongly advised prior to commencement of site works. Badgers should also be taken into account regarding reducing loss/fragmentation of suitable foraging and commuting habitats in the final landscape plan;
- A Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) document is recommended and should cover badgers, bats, reptiles, breeding birds, amphibians and any other priority mammals e.g. hedgehogs and brown hare, which have been listed as ecological concerns within the PEA. RAMMS should be in place and implemented prior to commencement of works and form a pre-commencement condition;
- Section 3.6.2 in the PEA records suitable habitat on Site for foraging and commuting bats. As the proposed landscape plans suggest suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat is to be removed, habitat should be assessed in terms of suitability and an appropriate survey effort as per good practise guidance should be recommended to adequately determine the effects of the development on foraging and commuting bats in the local area; and
- The ecological enhancements recommended in Section 5.2 of the PEA, such as bat and bird boxes and invertebrate features should be clearly indicated in the finalised landscape plans and details of installation should be included in the CEMP.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The accompanying BNG calculation is poorly reproduced and hard to decipher. This document should be re-submitted in a readable format, ideally with assessor's comments within the calculation, and accompanied by a BNG report. The present calculation appears to show the landscape plan used by the BNG calculation achieves +8.83% for area habitats. This falls short of the 10% BNG expected to become mandatory in January 2024. Additionally, trading rules are not satisfied. Further information is sought on the following:



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- BNG of at least 10% should be sought and trading rules should be satisfied. If this is not achievable on Site, off-Site solutions should be sought and clearly indicated on landscape plans;
- Clarification is required on what Site boundary was used for the BNG calculation and which landscape plan was used for the calculation; and
- Clarification is required regarding assumptions made on the proposed condition for created habitats.

Yours sincerely,


Dr Kirsten Hunter BSc, ACIEEM
Senior Ecologist
On behalf of Leicestershire County Council (Ecology Team)