

1st October 2024

Job no: EE1063

FAO Matt Jedruch
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub,
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Dear Matt

RE: Letter received on the 18th September 2024 for further ecology information required

Many thanks for the letter from Dr Kirsten Harvey at Red Kite Network Limited regarding the application for the change of use of agricultural building to aircraft maintenance and associated intensification of use of adjacent private airstrip (Sui Generis). This letter provides the further ecology information that has been requested in regards to Biodiversity Net Gain, badgers, great crested newts and reptiles. During the site visit on the 25th July 2024 the area to be impacted by the works was checked for evidence of other notable and protected species which has informed the below.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

We take note of the further requirements for BNG prior to the commencement of works including a CEMP, HMMP and Biodiversity Plan. As per the BNGA report the client does have other land within his ownership and within the authority to compensate for the small loss of Habitat and Hedgerow Units to the proposed development. It is understood that details of the offsite mitigation in regards to habitat creation for BNG along with the accompanying HMMP and Biodiversity Plan can be provided following planning permission and secured via planning conditions. Once the area for habitat creation offsite has been confirmed it will be surveyed and guidance followed to ensure mandatory BNG requirements are met. A CEMP will be secured by way of a planning condition, this will be produced and agreed with the LPA prior to works commencing.

Badgers

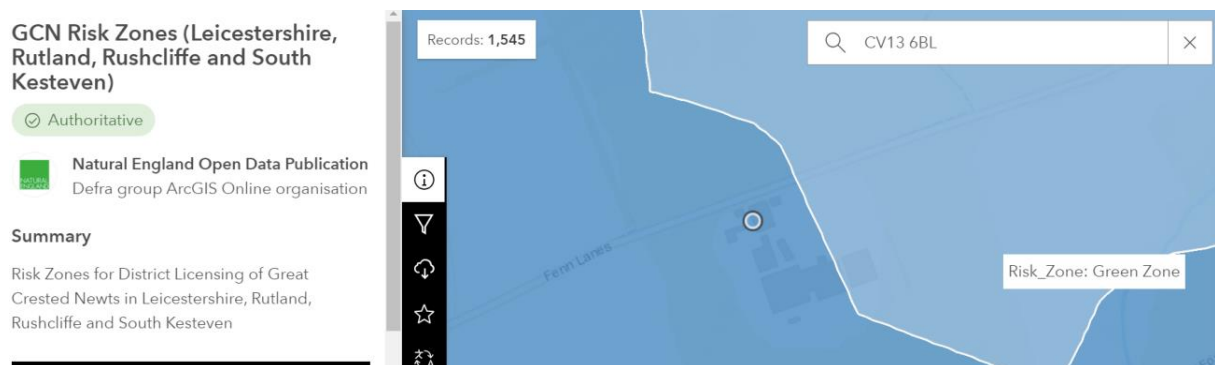
There were no badger setts within the Site or 30m from the red line boundary during the site visit. The bund was sub-optimal habitat to support sett creation as poorly vegetated with ephemeral/tall ruderals thereby lacking cover. The bund is adjacent to an existing built up area which is used by businesses and therefore there is high disturbance. There is a lack of optimal habitat for badger setts i.e. woodland in the wider area. It is considered highly unlikely for the reasons above that badger would be in the wider area and move into the Site. As a precaution a pre-works check for any new badger setts will be completed within 48 hours of works commencing.

Great crested newts

There are no ponds or waterbodies within 250m of the vegetation clearance works with the closest being 270m north east which is surrounded by arable crop and relatively isolated from

good quality terrestrial habitat. There is limited connectivity between the waterbody and the area to undergo clearance works with the dominant habitat being arable field or improved grassland. There are no GCN Licence returns, licence applications or GCN pond survey results within 500m of the site with the closest record of GCN being 1.1km south east. The site falls on the border of the green and amber Natural England GCN Risk Zones. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – GCN Risk Zones around the Site



Taking a worst case scenario and assuming there is a great crested newt population in the nearest pond, the small area of vegetation clearance is not anticipated to cause an offence when undertaking a rapid risk assessment as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Natural England GCN Rapid Risk Assessment

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
		Maximum:
		0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

Taking the above into consideration its highly likely GCN are absent. As a precaution, the vegetation will be cleared under reasonable avoidance measures. This will involve a 2 stage cut, first cut to 150mm using hand tools, the area hand searched by a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to confirm no GCN present or any other amphibians prior to the second cut to ground level. These works will be undertaken during the active season (temperature dependent but likely April to October), outside of the hibernation period. In the highly unlikely event that a GCN is identified during the works then these will cease and Natural England contacted.

Reptiles

The habitats onsite are considered to be suboptimal to support common reptiles, particularly with the nearby disturbance from the existing business and current use of the airstrip. The above reasonable avoidance measures for GCN will also safeguard any opportunistic reptiles



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which may be present within the vegetation clearance area. Reptiles will be displaced into adjacent retained habitat under their own volition in the highly unlikely event that they are present. The small loss of habitat is not anticipated to negatively impact upon the conservation status of common reptile.

Yours sincerely
for Evergreen Ecology Ltd

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Laws".

Richard Laws
Principle Ecologist/Director
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