

Suzanne Taylor

From: Megan Belanger
Sent: 28 March 2024 13:55
To: Suzanne Taylor
Subject: 23/01493/REM - Ecology Response
Attachments: Ecology Response.pdf

Hi Suzanne,

This application (23/01493/REM) is for phase 1B of this development. My understanding is that this includes the areas along the primary and secondary streets. The outline application has several ecology conditions including conditions for a biodiversity statement (10), update ecology surveys (25), hedge mitigation/compensation plan (26), GCN mitigation strategy (28), LHMP (29), and nesting bird precautions (51).

Condition 10, which was for the provision of a Biodiversity Strategy, was discharged recently (CDC Ecology's response attached). The Biodiversity Strategy Report includes updated survey results (2023) and measures for protecting biodiversity generally throughout the development. There is also a LHMP, which includes management practices for the habitats on site – including the habitats created for BNG purposes.

CEMP

The Biodiversity Strategy Report mentions that a detailed CEMP for biodiversity will be provided, which will include precautionary measures for all species during construction. I cannot find this CEMP for biodiversity – I see that a CEMP has been submitted for discharging condition 30 of the OUT, but this does not include information required for protected species and habitats. Has a CEMP for biodiversity been submitted for this site? If not, this should be conditioned.

GCN

Section 4.12 of the Biodiversity Strategy Report indicates that a GCN licence will be required. I can't see that there has been a condition for this on the outline application. A GCN mitigation strategy will be provided, and is conditioned on the outline app, which is positive. However, because the works will take place in and around the areas confirmed to be used by GCN, a licence will be needed prior to vegetation clearance or ground works taking place. This should be conditioned.

Badger

Section 4.18 of the Biodiversity Strategy indicates that a NE disturbance licence will be required for badgers – this is because the construction works will come within 30m of a set. The plans show that some of the badger set locations are near the roads being constructed in phase 1B – though the locations are indicative only. We should condition a badger licence for any works which could result in an offence under the Badger Act (1992).

Farmland Birds

The Biodiversity Strategy Report mentions on-site compensation for farmland birds. We should have more details about this on-site compensation, including location and management/monitoring details, prior to a decision being made on this REM application. The compensation should be put in place prior to commencement of any phase impacting the fields where these birds nest – which includes phase 1B.

Lighting

The Biodiversity Strategy Report includes a section on a sensitive lighting design for bats with specifications for avoiding lighting impacts on commuting and foraging bats. I've reviewed the lighting plans which show that the majority of hedges along the roads will be lit to some degree. The ES indicates that dark corridors for bats will be incorporated into the plans – where are these dark corridors? Some areas important to bats will be subject to lower levels of light (<1.0lux on the edges of the hedgerows) which is positive. However, the boundary hedgerows, particularly along the south boundary, will be subject to quite a bit of light, which could impact commuting bats.

Most lights will be dimmed to 50% between 10pm – 6am, however, it would be beneficial to wildlife to have these times adjusted to dusk-dawn. Section 4.23-4.40 'Dimming and part-night lighting' of the BCT guidance note 08/23 on 'Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night' explains that dimmed lighting in the middle of the night still impacts bats – lights should be reduced between dusk and dawn in order to avoid impacts.

Some more information about how bats are being considered in the lighting design would be helpful here.

Kind regards,

Megan Belanger

Ecology Officer

Tel: 01295 227953

Email: Megan.Belanger@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Cherwell District Council

www.cherwell.gov.uk