

From: Charlotte Watkins
Sent: 17 November 2019 22:04
To: Bernadette Owens
Subject: 19/01740/HYBRID and 19/01746/OUT

Bernadette,

I have addressed the applications together as they cover the same area and submit the same ecological report. The ecological report is fine in scope and depth. A proposed District Wildlife Site forms part of the site and will be lost to the proposals. Although the report suggests that the grassland within it has lesser value than recorded (compared to information from other sources) the proposals nevertheless constitute a significant loss of grassland and two ponds. The site is adjacent to the Bicester Wetland Reserve and the grassland on site currently also offers resources to a range of birds which also use the reserve and has the potential to affect the reserves ecology if not appropriately buffered.

Protected species are generally addressed in the report. GCN have been ruled out on site although it should be noted that there are records of GCN in the adjacent wetland reserve and therefore their incidental presence on site remains a possibility. Reasonable avoidance measures should be put in place as part of any CEMP therefore.

There is a bat roost on site for which an artificial roost is proposed as mitigation – I couldn't find any information on what form this would take? A EPS licence will be required and full details of proposed mitigation for bats included in any CEMP and LEMP. There is no mention of Priority species such as amphibians (other than GCN) and hedgehogs and measures for these species should also be included in any Habitat Management Plan as should enhancements for additional species within and on proposed buildings (such as swift bricks).

The proposal is for a reasonable mitigation area of wet grassland habitat in the southern part of the site which will be inaccessible to the public. This gives an acceptable level of net gain for biodiversity on site and therefore I am supportive of this aspect. Management of the area will be key and should be done holistically with the adjacent Wetland Reserve and with participation of the BOS who manage it – whether that's in a land management, monitoring or reviewing capacity. Currently the area is grazed and this should be considered going forward.

There are likely to be construction impacts on wintering and breeding birds which use the current areas as a support to Bicester Wetland Reserve. The mitigation habitat should be put in place and enhanced prior to works beginning on the rest of the site therefore, to ensure a buffer is in place and the shabitat can continue to be used.

For either application the following would be needed for ecology – a full CEMP for biodiversity, a bat licence, a full lighting strategy, an full LEMP for the site including enhancements on the buildings and a Habitat Management plan for the mitigation area which should include funding, review timescale and full management details.

Please do get back to me with any follow up or queries
Kind regards
Charlotte

Dr Charlotte Watkins
Ecology Officer