

Rachel Tibbetts

From: Andrew Thompson
Sent: 24 May 2023 14:59
To: DC Support
Subject: FW: 22/01611/OUT

Please upload

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From: Charlotte Watkins <Charlotte.Watkins@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 2:25 PM
To: Andrew Thompson <Andrew.Thompson@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>
Subject: 22/01611/OUT

22/01611/OUT
Stratfield Farm OX5 1DL

With regard to the above outline application, I have the following comments:

There has been no specific survey for birds and there are a number of records of red list species on site which must be assumed to be present at some point (linnet, lapwing). Mitigation for these species needs to be considered at the detailed landscaping stage as well as that of bullfinch which is mentioned.

There is a confirmed reptile population on site. Translocation of some of the reptiles on site may be required. A full reptile mitigation strategy should be considered. Receptor sites/areas for reptiles which need to be translocated during construction may require enhancement prior to works commencing.

There is currently no information on potential impacts on Otters or water voles despite the sites proximity to the canal where both species are recorded. There is little comment on how the area to the West of the site bordering the canal will be managed or whether any measures will specifically target these species. There is also no information on how public access (and dogs off the lead etc..) will be prevented for the western area which is to be managed for biodiversity value. This part of the site should be seeking to extend the DWS in terms of ecological value within the Conservation Target Area. Further information on how this area in particular will be managed to this aim should be provided.

Measures should be outlined to ensure that Stratfield Brake DWS (Woodland Trust reserve) has the resources and protection to deal with the additional recreational pressure as a result of this development, to ensure the ecological value of the site does not deteriorate.

The historic orchard is included within the BNG calculations and its enhanced management is a part of the net gain on site however the D&A statement notes that this area is to be within the private garden of the farmhouse and not within the application boundary. This makes its future management uncertain as it is not clear how this will be

controlled to achieve the habitat conditions included in the metric. This may reduce the net gain that can be achieved.

As regards to net gain, the submitted metric does demonstrate a 10% net gain in hedgerows and habitat units however I would concur with BBOWT that this will depend on substantial buffers to hedgerows to ensure they retain their ecological function and on achievement of the habitat conditions within the metric - some of which are ambitious. In particular the 'other neutral grassland' creation within the informal open space aims to achieve 'good' condition whilst also performing as the main amenity area for dog walking etc.. The orchard also need to be used both for amenity and to benefit biodiversity. Comment on how this will work in practice (will it all be accessible?) would be useful for assessment of the achievability of the proposed habitat conditions.

The site is within the red zone for GCN as identified by spatial modelling by our District licence delivery body. There are also records of GCN just over 500m to both the West and East. In 2017 a pond on site (P1) was found (by eDNA) to have GCN present. The last surveys found them to be absent but these were three years ago. The pond on site is of average suitability and there is one adjacent to the boundary which has been assessed as of 'excellent' suitability. I do not agree with discounting GCN presence entirely at this stage therefore and feel that update surveys will be required or consideration of joining the District licence scheme.

In short a little more information is required here. I am happy to advise on conditions as needed, please get back to me to discuss this.

Kind regards

Charlotte

Dr Charlotte Watkins

Ecology Officer

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