

Lynne Baldwin

From: Chris Wentworth
Sent: 30 January 2024 11:10
To: Planning
Subject: FW: Ecology Response - 23/01633/F

From: Megan Belanger <Megan.Belanger@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 10:57 AM
To: Chris Wentworth <Chris.Wentworth@cherwell-dc.gov.uk>
Subject: Ecology Response - 23/01633/F

Hi Chris,

I've reviewed the ecology information provided with this application (23/01633/F).

EnSafe undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in October 2021 and bat surveys in summer of 2022. Because the PEA was undertaken over 2 years ago, the site should ideally be subject to a walkover survey to ensure the habitats on site haven't changed. Similarly, bat surveys are only valid for 12-18 months and an updated walkover survey should be undertaken to ensure the conclusions of the reports are still valid. This is in line with CIEEM's 2019 advice note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports & Surveys.

As long as the site has not changed significantly, the only real ecological constraint to the development is nesting birds. Therefore, all vegetation removal or demolition works should be undertaken outside of breeding bird season (March to August inclusive) unless the site is checked by an ecologist immediately prior to vegetation clearance or demolition works. This should be conditioned.

We should also be conditioning a 10% biodiversity net gain for all developments. Biome Consulting provided a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Report in May 2023. The BNG report proposed the following features to achieve net gain:

- A total of 126 native, broad-leaved tree species planted across the site. This will include 12 medium 'feature' trees and 114 small trees.
- Two areas of woodland (0.0195ha in total) will be largely retained and enhanced.
- Biodiverse green roofs totalling 0.0516ha will be created on new buildings across the site. Refugia and other features to encourage a range of
- invertebrates, such as sand piles and bug hotels, will also be included.
- A 0.0036ha rain garden will be created in the east of the site, comprising a diverse range of flowering species beneficial to wildlife.
- Sustainable urban drainage features (0.0017ha in total) will be created to support urban trees within built habitats on site. These will include a diverse range of flowering plants beneficial to invertebrates.
- 0.1784ha of mixed scrub will be planted as landscaping across the site, comprising a mix of native and non-native.
- Areas of grassland (totalling 0.0447ha) will be created using an appropriate grass and wildflower mix.
- 0.0578ha of grassland will be created using an appropriate grass and wildflower mix and managed for biodiversity benefit.
- 0.268km of hedgerows will be planted, comprising a mix of native and non-native species to balance nature benefit with urban amenity suitability and ease of care.
- Species Specific enhancements:
 - 6 bat boxes and 26 'Swi• bricks' will be integrated into the building structure in the south-east of the site.

- Hibernacula to benefit invertebrates and small mammals will be included in the south-east of the site, where a mixed scrub and other neutral grassland mosaic will provide a relatively extensive area of semi-natural habitat to encourage such fauna.
- Lighting along paths in the south-east of the site will be low-level, using downlit bollards directed at the path, to minimise negative anthropogenic impacts on the semi-natural habitats, bird, and bat boxes in this area.

We should condition adherence to this report (specifically sections 4-6). If the layout of the site changes, it may not be possible to incorporate the above features into the development. If this is the case, the BNG assessment report will need to be updated, approved, and then adhered to. Any updated BNG reports should be accompanied by the BNG metric (excel format) for review.

To ensure the habitats/enhancement listed in the BNG report are implemented, and the habitats are managed to achieve the conditions used in the metric (e.g. 'good', 'moderate') a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (or similar) should be produced. The HMMP should show how the habitats will be created, managed, and monitored long-term. This should be conditioned.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Megan Belanger

Ecology Officer

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