

From: Louise Sherwell [<mailto:louisesherwell@warwickshire.gov.uk>]
Sent: 18 January 2018 15:47
To: James Kirkham
Subject: Re: 17/02414/F - Land To The South And Adj To South Side Steeple Aston

Hi James,

Many thanks for sending through the photographs, they are very helpful.

As the site has been cleared it is unfortunately very difficult to provide an assessment of the existing biodiversity value of the site at this stage. The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey undertaken in October 2017 by SES describes the dominant habitat present on site as emergent vegetation, from the photographs presumably this refers to the point that that the site was recently cleared and there are species emerging although this is not made clear in the report. The site also contains areas of semi-improved grassland, bramble scrub and species-poor hedgerows along the north, east and southern boundaries, with a line of trees along the western part of the southern boundary.

The site was identified by the CDC District Habitat and Land Use map project in 2014 (using aerial photography) as potential UK BAP/NERC Act Section 41 Priority Grassland Habitat. The project noted that the grassland appeared quite rough, there was presence of scrub or potentially fruit trees in a remnant orchard may have been present. From the photographs there are also areas of ephemeral/short perennial habitat and grassland which has been cut back. The site has no known non-statutory designation (Local Wildlife Site or District Wildlife Site). Piles of woody vegetation on site appear to be quite large and indicate that quite significant scrub/tree clearance has been undertaken. At this stage it is now not possible to provide an assessment of the value of the scrub and trees which have been removed, however the grassland has not been completely stripped and therefore during spring and early summer this year I would expect the grassland flora to become re-established. This would enable a botanical survey to re-assess the ecological value of the grassland at the appropriate time of year to determine the species diversity of the grassland and whether it may be semi-improved grassland or priority grassland habitat. The survey should be undertaken during May to August by an appropriately qualified ecologist. This will provide sufficient information to enable the level of the impact of the proposed development on biodiversity to be assessed and considered, in line with the NPPF and local plan policy ESD10.

I would recommend that a Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) calculation also be undertaken, which is a useful tool to aid assessing the level of biodiversity impact. The BIA should be informed by the updated survey of the grassland at the appropriate time of year and should be undertaken prior to determination of the application so that appropriate steps can be taken. The outcome is likely to result in a suitable approach being secured by S106 agreement or conditions - whether this is securing through an appropriate management plan showing compensation on site for any loss or securing offsetting of the loss through a biodiversity offsetting scheme. I've attached a copy of the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull BIA which is based on the Defra metrics and some guidance notes for the applicant's ecologist and would be happy to provide guidance on completing the BIA if needed.

The mix of rough grassland and scrub provides optimal habitat for reptiles and it is possible that species such as grass snake or slow-worm have been killed/injured during site clearance should no precautionary measures have been put in place. Reptiles are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). As highlighted in the

report, the site still provides suitable reptile habitat, in particular rubble piles (which are potential refugia and hibernacula), bramble scrub and semi-improved grassland along the boundaries of the site. As such I would recommend that the reptile survey is undertaken at the appropriate time of year (optimal periods being April, May and September) in line with the standard guidelines to determine absence/presence of reptiles on site. Appropriate mitigation measures can then be designed within the scheme should reptiles be present on site. I would recommend the reptile survey is undertaken prior to determination of the application as a protected species in line with the ODPM circular 2005/06.

Subject to the above, it would appear that other concerns could be dealt with by condition should approval be granted. As highlighted in the report, the site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds and scrub and brash pile clearance should not be undertaken during the nesting bird season. A pre-commencement walkover survey for badger is also recommended and pre-check for hedgehog. The hedgerows are likely to be used for bat foraging/commuting routes and so the proposed external lighting scheme should be at a low level along the site boundaries in particular. Biodiversity enhancements on site should also be maximised through for example native species planting, SuDs, habitat for amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and a bird/bat nest box scheme.

I hope this is helpful and please let me know if you have any queries or need any further information.

Kind regards,

Louise

Louise Sherwell MSc ACIEEM
Assistant Ecologist
Ecological Services
Community Services
PO Box 43, Shire Hall
Warwick
CV34 4SX
Tel: 01926 418028
email: louisesherwell@warwickshire.gov.uk

On 18 January 2018 at 09:36, James Kirkham
<James.Kirkham@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk> wrote:

Hi Louise

I have attached some photos. The site appears to have been recently cleared with some piles of old vegetation on the site.

I hope that helps.

Thanks

James Kirkham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Principal Planning Officer – **General Developments Planning Team**

Development Management

Cherwell District Council

Direct Line: 01295 221896

Email: james.kirkham@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Details of applications are available to view through the Council's Online Planning Service at <http://www.publicaccess.cherwell.gov.uk/online-applications>

Instructions on how to use the Public Access service to **view, comment on and keep track of applications** can be found at <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/viewplanningapp>

From: Louise Sherwell [mailto:louisesherwell@warwickshire.gov.uk]

Sent: 17 January 2018 16:54

To: James Kirkham

Subject: 17/02414/F - Land To The South And Adj To South Side Steeple Aston

Hi James,

I'm just having a close look at the ecology report for the above application at Steeple Aston and I just wondered if you have any site photos please of the site? I'm slightly confused by the survey results which identifies the majority of the site as comprising 'emergent vegetation' - this habitat type is normally associated with emergent plants around ponds/watercourses, not grassland habitat! So its not clear what the existing habitat on site is from the report. Also from the Land Use Habitat Map the site is identified as potential grassland Priority Habitat so this is a concern. I wondered with the spoil heaps present in the south of the site, if the site has been cleared in the recent past? I'm sorry for the late reply, I just wanted to double check if you had any photos before making comments.

Many thanks,

Louise

Louise Sherwell MSc ACIEEM

Assistant Ecologist

Ecological Services

Community Services

PO Box 43, Shire Hall

Warwick

CV34 4SX

Tel: 01926 418028

email: louisesherwell@warwickshire.gov.uk

This transmission is intended for the named addressee(s) only and may contain confidential, sensitive or personal information and should be handled accordingly. Unless you are the named addressee (or authorised to receive it for the addressee) you may not copy or use it, or disclose it to anyone else. If you have received this transmission in error please notify the sender immediately. All email traffic sent to or from us, including without limitation all GCSX traffic, may be subject to recording and/or monitoring in accordance with relevant legislation.

This e-mail (including any attachments) may be confidential and may contain legally privileged information. You should not disclose its contents to any other person. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately.

Whilst the Council has taken every reasonable precaution to minimise the risk of computer software viruses, it cannot accept liability for any damage which you may sustain as a result of such viruses. You should carry out your own virus checks before opening the e-mail(and/or any attachments).

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the contents of this e-mail represent only the views of the sender and does not impose any legal obligation upon the Council or commit the Council to any course of action.

This transmission is intended for the named addressee(s) only and may contain confidential, sensitive or personal information and should be handled accordingly. Unless you are the named addressee (or authorised to receive it for the addressee) you may not copy or use it, or disclose it to anyone else. If you have received this transmission in error please notify the sender immediately. All email traffic sent to or from us, including without limitation all GCSX traffic, may be subject to recording and/or monitoring in accordance with relevant legislation.

This e-mail (including any attachments) may be confidential and may contain legally privileged information. You should not disclose its contents to any other person. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately.

Whilst the Council has taken every reasonable precaution to minimise the risk of computer software viruses, it cannot accept liability for any damage which you may sustain as a result of such viruses. You should carry out your own virus checks before opening the e-mail(and/or any attachments).

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the contents of this e-mail represent only the views of the sender and does not impose any legal obligation upon the Council or commit the Council to any course of action.