

Summary

The only ecological issue is biodiversity net gain.

Wildlife Issues

Whilst no ecological appraisal has been provided, I am satisfied the site is very low risk for protected species and nesting birds with no suitable habitat and no records of any protected species near to the development. No further information or measures are required.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 187 of the NPPF 2024 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development will result in the loss of low value grassland to development. There are no significant effects on wildlife.

A BNG assessment has been provided that indicates 10% can be achieved on the site. I agree that this is the case. My only issue is that the baseline area and proposed development areas appear to be inaccurate, with the total area of modified grassland within the red edge shown as 0.12ha in the metric. Whilst not possible to accurately measure the area, given it does not confirm to existing boundaries, I estimate the site to cover around 0.25ha. The menage area post development is also recorded as 0.065ha in the metric whilst the proposed plan, provided as an amendment, therefore after the metric is 20 x 40m ie 0.08 ha. When the metric is amended this give a net gain of between 8 and 9%.

I do not regard this however as a significant issue at this stage, with two or three more rural trees enough to enable 10% to be achieved. Amendments can therefore be left to discharge of the statutory biodiversity gain condition, when the final version of the metric will be required as long as the developer accepts that these amendments are required.

As the habitat creation includes planting of rural trees a 30 year HMMP will be required. Given the units involved I am satisfied that a standard condition for the HMMP is all that will be required.

In order to discharge the statutory biodiversity gain condition they will need to provide:

- The biodiversity gain plan using the defra template,
- Final version of the metric with developers sections of start page completed and baseline area of modified grassland, area of menage and other habitat creation amended and
- The HMMP.

No mitigation for wildlife is required, the proposed trees and new stables providing potential habitat for nesting birds in the future.

Ecologist

Planning and Transportation