

68541 – Land to west of Bury Road, Warth Road, Hardys Gate, York Street, Radcliffe

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

Ecological issues have previously been discussed and include proximity to SBI, the River Irwell, nesting birds, invasive species and ecological mitigation. Previously agreed measures for other sections of the flood alleviation scheme should be conditioned as part of this application. The land in question has now been largely cleared of vegetation.

Otter

It has previously been accepted that otters are present in the River Irwell adjacent to this site but that reasonable avoidance measures will suffice. Given earthwork has now occurred, the level of risk will have been reduced. I recommend however that previously accepted reasonable avoidance measures are applied to any permission.

Other Protected Species

It is now very unlikely that any other protected species will be present. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

Bird nesting habitat that was previously present appears to have been cleared. As a precaution I recommend an informative along the following lines.

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. It is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a bird's nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).

Invasive Species

Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed were present within the working area. It is unclear whether the site has now been treated. ***I recommend that previously agreed biosecurity and control measures are applied to any permission.***

Protection of River Irwell

There are risks during construction of negative impacts to the River Irwell, from debris, sediment and pollutants. ***I recommend that previously agreed protection measures to protect the River Irwell are applied to any permission.***

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This site is presumably already covered by other applications and currently appears to lack any vegetation, though previously trees and scrub were present along with associated bird nesting opportunities. Mitigation and enhancement should be provided for what was present prior to clearance. ***The details can be conditioned.***

Ecologist

GM Ecology Unit