

Thank you for consulting the GMEU.

Summary

Ecological issues are materially unchanged from the previous application 69899. BNG however applies to this application.

Protected Species

It is very unlikely that there will be any protected species issues with this site, the new building sufficiently separated from adjacent properties to be unlikely to effect any bat roosts nearby and the amenity grassland providing no cover for species such as great crested newts or badger. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

The trees that were present were removed prior to the previous application. No nesting habitat remains or has developed since the previous application. No further information or measures are required.

Other Wildlife

The site provides no cover for priority species such as hedgehog or common toad and is of a scale and sufficiently isolated from high value habitats to be very low risk during construction. No further information or measures are required.

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

Section N2.1 part d) of the NPPF 2026 states that development proposal: should: Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value. 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 amenity grassland to development. There are currently no wildlife issues. A couple of trees were however present up until 2023, with current guidance allowing habitat loss since January 2020 to be taken into account with regards to mitigation.

The development is not exempt from mandatory 10% BNG as submitted and validated prior to changes in the guidance that came in to force in August this year. No metric has been provided though an assessment dated 2024 has been provided that indicated a 0.33 unit shortfall to achieve 10% net gain. It is unclear whether this was based on the current layout proposal but is likely to provide a reasonable indication of the current situation. The baseline has included the two trees lost in 2023.

Whilst you could request an updated assessment and metric, prior to determination, given the small number of units involved and the habitats lost, this could be left to discharge of the statutory condition. As the post development site only includes non-significant habitats no habitat management and monitoring plan is required.

In order to discharge the statutory biodiversity gain condition, if permission is granted, they will need to provide:

- The biodiversity gain plan utilising the defra template,
- The statutory metric with start page and off-site sections completed and
- Evidence that the required number of off-site units have been purchased and registered with defra.

Mitigation for loss of bird nesting habitat should also be provided in the form of a swift brick within the new build.