

Summary

Ecological issues remain effectively unchanged from the previous application

Protected Species

No evidence of any protected species was identified, though it was noted that species such as bat, badger, reptiles and otter may utilise the site on occasion. Knowing the site and area well, I am satisfied that the risk of an offence is very low and that only an informative with regards otter is required which has now been recorded on the River Roch.

Whilst there is only a low risk of otter being present, the applicant is reminded that under the 2019 Regulation it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill otters. If an otter is found during the development all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the otter(s). Natural England should also be informed.

Nesting Birds

The development will result in the loss of trees and shrubs, potential bird nesting habitat. All British birds nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. I recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA.

Other Mammals and Amphibians

The scrub woodland provides potential habitat for species such as hedgehog and common toad, both UK Biodiversity Priority Species and therefore material considerations. I recommend that measures are taken to ensure such species are humanely moved/displaced from the site. The details can be conditioned along the following lines.

Prior to any vegetation clearance or earthworks a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for mammals and amphibians will be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Invasive Species

As part of the previous planning application an invasive species mitigation and management plan was agreed. This has been submitted as part of this application. *I recommend that prior to determination it is reviewed in light of the new application and amended as necessary.*

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. Mitigation should be provided for loss of trees and shrubs as well as associated bird nesting habitat. Enhancement measures for bats are also recommended. The proposed layout does not appear to provide any mitigation for loss of trees and shrubs. *I recommend that prior to determination further information is provided on the area and number of trees to be removed is provided and how mitigation will be provided. I am satisfied that provision of bird and bat boxes on site is feasible as mitigation for loss of breeding opportunities.*