

Thank you for consulting GMEU on the above application.

The application is described as being exempt from mandatory BNG under the de minimis exemption, though a metric and report have been submitted, which show that, taking into account degradation that has already occurred on site, a loss of 0.16 units will be incurred and therefore units will be purchased off-site to achieve an overall 10% gain. The de minimis exemption will therefore not apply, and unless any other exemptions are relevant, the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition should be applied if permission is granted. I have no concerns about the assessment of the baseline or post-development value of the site or the proposed purchase of a small number of units from a habitat bank. At condition stage, sufficient information will be required to demonstrate that a 10% net gain has been achieved, including a Biodiversity Gain Plan, final metric showing a 10% gain, and evidence that off-site units have been purchased.

Notwithstanding the above, I would make the following general recommendations:

- Protected species can turn up in unexpected places and the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the laws which are in place to safeguard biodiversity. An informative should be used so that the applicant is aware that they must seek ecological advice should they find or suspect that the proposal will impact on protected species.
- Planning policy encourages enhancements and net gains for biodiversity to be delivered through the planning system. Wherever possible measures to enhance the site for biodiversity should be secured as part of this planning application; these could include integration of bat or bird boxes into the proposed building on site

I would note that it appears that the existing dwelling requires demolition to facilitate the development, though this appears to have already been approved and undertaken in accordance with a previous application. I have therefore not considered this within my comments.