

67535 – Burrs Country Park, Bury

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Declaration

I previously was based at Burrs Country Park whilst working for Bury Council and have prior knowledge of the sites history including involvement in tree and wildflower planting in the 1990's.

Summary

No ecological information has been provided. The site however consists of low ecological value grassland, historically grazed and no habitats suitable for protected species are present.

Protected Species

The likelihood of impacts on protected species is unlikely. There is no habitat suitable for bats and I am aware that the lodges nearby are stocked with fish and that there are no known populations of great crested newts nearby with all ponds in this area having been subject to surveys in the past. Badgers and otter are likely to be present in the area, but the field is very low risk owing to the level of disturbance and open nature of the grassland. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

Short sections of hedgerow will be lost, 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.

Invasive Species

I am aware that species such as himalayan balsam and japanese knotweed are present on the Country Park. I recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Prior to any earthworks or site clearance a survey for invasive plant species including japanese knotweed and himalayan balsam will occur and the finding supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. If any invasive species are present a method statement detailing avoidance, control and eradication measures should also be supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA, prior to any earthworks.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 170 of the NPPF 2019 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development will result in the loss of low ecological value grassland, to be replaced with a combination of gravel trackways and grass parking bays.

Habitat creation is proposed around the boundary of the site in the form of wildflower and tree planting. The layout indicates that probably enough land has been set aside to enable full mitigation on site, subject to the detail of the planting proposals and long term management. There is also significant scope across the wider Country Park to provide off-site compensation if additional compensation was required.

I therefore recommend the details are conditioned.

Ecologist

GM Ecology Unit