

GMEU recommendation

Summary

The site was agricultural land up until around 2017 and I note we raised no ecological concerns other than nesting birds for a previous application 61190.

Protected Species

There are unlikely to be any protected species issues with this site. There are no buildings or mature trees that could provide habitats for bats, there are no ponds within 250m that could provide habitat for great crested newts and no watercourses nearby for species such as otter and water vole. Whilst badger could theoretically be present in the wider landscape the risks given the scale and nature of the development are very low. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

There appears to be a minor loss of trees and shrubs between the existing car park and the site. 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.

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. The development will result in the loss of around 0.1ha of low ecological value grassland, which has been gradually undergoing succession since around 2017 from improved grassland to coarse neutral grassland and a small number of trees and shrubs. The site will be replaced with a formal garden including significant boundary tree and shrub planting and hardstanding. I am satisfied that an overall net gain can be achieved if a percentage of the trees are native and the boundary with the farmland planted as a native hawthorn hedge, in line with their own D & A statement which states the landscaping will be in keeping with the local area. I also recommend provision of one bird box on a retained tree. ***The details can be conditioned.***

Ecologist

Planning

Planning and Transportation

Place