

Planning application 70565 Former Bury Police HQ

Thank you for consulting the GMEU

Summary

Potential ecological issues include nesting birds, invasive species and biodiversity net gain.

Protected Species

No evidence of any protected species was found. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report, the site clearly sub-optimal. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

Trees and shrubs are present along the southern boundary, potential bird nesting habitat, with some removal proposed as part of the outline part of the development. 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 nesting bird survey method statement by a suitably experienced ecologist has been supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Invasive Species

Two species of Cotoneaster were recorded on the site. Certain species of Cotoneaster are listed under schedule 9 part 2 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to introduce various species of Cotoneaster to the wild, which this location is not, with one of the species identified as *C. frigidus*, which is not one of the Cotoneaster listed under schedule 9. Given the low level of infestation and uncertainty regarding whether the species present are regarded as invasive, I recommend an informative along the following lines.

It is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended to introduce, plant or cause to grow wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 part 2 of the Act. Certain species of Cotoneaster are included within this schedule. If any such species will be disturbed as a result of this development a suitably experienced consultant should be employed to advise on how to avoid an offence.

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

Section 180 of the NPPF 2023 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development site is primarily brownfield, characterised by short ephemeral species a low value habitat. A small area of broadleaved plantation/urban tree planting is also present along the southern boundary, some of which is shown as lost as part of the outline part of the application. Wildlife issues appear restricted to nesting birds.

The development I assume is a major and therefore subject to mandatory 10% BNG as submitted after the 12h February 2024. A biodiversity net gain assessment has been provided but this only appears to cover the full part of the application. It has also utilised defra metric 4.0, which has now been superseded by the statutory metric, its use required for developments subject to mandatory BNG. This would impact on the post development calculations for this development as it has amended the value of urban trees.

I therefore recommend that prior to determination the biodiversity net gain assessment is amended to include the entire site baseline and estimated post development value utilising the statutory metric. I would note that I have no issues with the value of the baseline habitat for the full application.

With regards wildlife, the only issue is nesting bird and primarily with regards the outline part of the development *I therefore recommend provision of bird boxes primarily within the outline part of the development, on the retained trees. As wildlife enhancement I recommend integrated bat boxes within both the full and outline applications.*