

Thank you for consulting GMEU on this application for 4no. Padel Courts at Stand Cricket and Tennis Club. The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecology Report (PEA) (arbtech, 17th October 2024) and BNG Assessment (arbtech, 31st October 2024 and accompanying metric).

Although the habitats on the site have very limited ecological value (being mown lawn) the wooded edges of the site could potentially support protected species such as bats, which could roost in the trees or forage/commute along the edge or within the woodland. The PEA has advised that a sensitive lighting strategy will be adopted post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. This can be secured via condition, although I would like to have seen a lighting plan indicating the predicated lux levels on the sensitive ecological features and how these will be reduced (if needed) to provide confidence that such a strategy can be implemented effectively.

The BNG assessment indicated that all the habitat on the site will be lost (0.29 habitat units) comprised of low value habitat (modified grassland in poor condition). With this in mind, it is likely that units will need to be purchased from a habitat bank to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition (BGC). As the number of units required will be small, it is entirely feasible that the applicant will be able to achieve this.

We would therefore advise that a biodiversity gain condition applies to any planning permission detailing that a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted and agreed in writing by the LPA, prior to the commencement of any development. This should include, where relevant updated Statutory Metric with accurate condition assessment scores, an off-site baseline and post-development plan if required, and the process by which a finalised number of off-site units will be secured, or a commitment to purchase statutory credits only as a last resort.