

Thank you for consulting the GMEU.

Summary

We are not aware of any ecological issues associated with this site.

Protected Species

Whilst theoretically badger could be utilising the adjacent railway embankment, this species recorded elsewhere along the metrolink line, I am satisfied that the risk is very low, with any sett, should one be present, extending away from the development in to the metrolink embankment and already subject to significant vibration. I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

The applicant is reminded that under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. If a badger sett is found on or near the developments site work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to advise on how best to proceed.

There is negligible risk of any other protected species being effected by this development proposal.

Nesting Birds

Since the previous application and permission, the site appears to have been cleared but is now undergoing succession. Therefore, whilst the bird nesting opportunities will have been reduced, they could potentially reform (eg bramble scrub develop) prior to development. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines is applied to any permission.

No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a precautionary working method statement for nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist has been supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

Other Wildlife

Given the scale of the site and currently limited cover, I am satisfied that all that is required is an informative to be applied along the following lines to any permission.

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to inflict unnecessary suffering to wild mammals. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act.

Invasive Species

Railway embankments are moderate to high risk for species such as japanese knotweed. I therefore recommend an informative along the following lines be applied to any permission.

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. Species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam 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.

Proximity to a Wildlife Corridor

The metrolink is designated as a wildlife corridor under UDP policy EN6/3, whilst in the process of being superseded, I am in any event satisfied that the proposed development will not weaken the functionality of the metrolink line for wildlife. No further information or measures are required.

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

Section N2.1 part d) of the NPPF 2026 states that development proposal: should: Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

Since the original permission the site has been cleared of the scrub present at that time, but is now undergoing succession, best described as urban derelict land a low value habitat. Wildlife issues are likely restricted to loss of bird nesting opportunities.

The developer has claimed exemption from BNG under the self-build rule. Whilst self-build applications ceased to be exempt on the 6th August, this application was made prior to that date, therefore if the LPA agrees this qualifies as self-build the exemption will apply. Note post the 6th August the development would be exempt under the new small development exemption as well under 0.2ha with no priority or irreplaceable habitats present.

I recommend as mitigation for loss of scrub and bird nesting opportunities, landscaping includes at least one native tree such as silver birch or rowan and one integrated bird brick targeting species such as swift and or house sparrow.

The details of biodiversity enhancement measures can be provided via condition.

Planning and Transportation