



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: *Katy Claw*

FROM: *Helen Forster*

DATE: *16th January 2016*

SUBJECT: *Land Adj Holme View Farm, Lydd Y16/1094/SH*

Thank you for requesting additional advice on this application from KCC's Ecological Advice Service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Ashford Borough Council planning decisions with regard to the potential ecological impacts. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.

The planning application is for the temporary use of the site for porta-cabins and associated car parking.

An ecological scoping survey, a reptile survey and badger survey have been submitted to inform the planning application and we advise that we are satisfied with the conclusions of the ecological survey. However we require clarification on the area to be directly impacted by the footprint of the proposed development.

The site layout plan suggests that the area to be impacted is only the access road and the footprint of the car park and porta-cabins. However the submitted red line boundary covers a much wider area – please confirm that the footprint of the development will be restricted to the area shown on the submitted site layout.

On the understanding that the proposed development will only be impacting the area depicted in the site layout plan we are satisfied that sufficient information has been submitted and we have the following comments to make:

The submitted surveys have detailed the following:

- Suitable breeding bird habitat within the site
- 10 bird species recorded within the site (including Linnet)
- Badger Sett – known to be used for breeding and likely to be a main sett

- Breeding population of Lizards

The footprint of the proposed development site has been recently cleared of dense bramble to enable the badger survey to be carried out. As such we are satisfied that the majority of the proposed development site provides limited suitable habitat for protected species and the main impacts that SDC need to consider is the impact the construction/operational phase of the development will have on the badger sett and the loss of the verge to create the access in to the site as it provides some suitable reptile habitat.

Badger Sett

The main sett will not be lost as a result of the proposed development but the ecological survey has highlighted that there are currently 3 entrances near the proposed road which, although are likely to be retained, may be impacted by the construction of the road. As detailed within the submitted report, if planning permission is granted, we advise that the works on the road are carried out under supervision of their ecologist. Badgers are highly mobile and as such how the sett/entrances are used may have changed by the time construction commences - therefore at the ecologist will be able to advise how the works should commence and if the works need to be carried out under a NE licence.

The report has detailed that the applicant has agreed to plant gorse around the badger sett to provide better habitat and act as a barrier between the proposed development and sett. We advise that the gorse is planted within the first planting season following on from when the planning application is determined.

Reptiles

The roadside verge provides some suitable reptile habitat and due to the known populations of reptiles within the site it is likely that reptiles utilise the verge for foraging during the active reptile season. Due to the annual mowing of the verge we understand from the report that there is reduced potential for reptiles to be hibernating within this area.

Although the risk is minimal we recommend that an ecologist is present when the grassland verge is cleared to reduce the potential for reptiles to be impacted the proposed works. In the (although unlikely) event that reptiles are found they must be moved to a suitable location elsewhere within the site.

We advise that active management of the verge for reptiles must be implemented once the construction works for this development (if granted) have been completed.

Breeding Birds

The scrub clearance has resulted in the loss of suitable breeding bird habitat within the site. However the planting of gorse is likely to provide suitable breeding bird habitat – particularly for linnets.

We would also encourage the applicant to increase breeding bird opportunities within the boundary of the site through additional planting – in particular native trees.

Additional Information

To address all the above points we recommend that if planning permission is granted a precautionary mitigation strategy and site wide management plan is produced as a condition

of planning permission if granted. It must be submitted for approval prior to any works commencing on site.

Future Development

We understand that the applicant has proposals to submit a subsequent planning application for this site. We advise that any mitigation/ ongoing management proposed for this development must be designed to take in to account future proposals for this site.

If you have any queries regarding our comments, please contact me.

Helen Forster MCIEEM
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following document(s):

Reptile survey; Martin Newcombe; October 2016

Ecological Scoping Survey; Martin Newcombe; August 2016

Ecological Survey; Martin Newcombe; December 2016