

Planning Applications Manager
High Peak Borough Council
Planning Department
Municipal Buildings
Glossop
Derbyshire
SK13 8AF

For the attention of James Stannard

Your Ref: HPK/2023/0447

Our ref: DWTHPK710

16th January 2024

Dear James,

Proposal: The proposed scheme is of x2 New Build Semi-detached homes on the former vacant land on Heath View road, with two car park spaces provided for each dwelling

Location: Land Off Brierlow Road Harpur Hill Buxton

Application Ref No: HPK/2023/0447

With reference to the above application, I am responding as the Biodiversity Planning Officer responsible for work relating to the Service Level Agreement, which the High Peak Borough Council and the Trust have signed. The following comments are aimed at providing accurate and up to date information on the nature conservation issues associated with the proposed development.

Response

We have reviewed the proposed plans alongside the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) (Elite Ecology, 2023). There are no designated sites or priority habitats found on site and the proposed works will remain within the site boundary. The



site was found to have some low potential to support protected and/or rare species.

No waterbodies are present on site; however, three ponds are found within 500m of the site. The ponds were not assessed for their potential to support great crested newts (GCN) as part of the PEA. No records of GCN are present in the immediate locality, with the closest positive GCN record being 3km from the site. Taking this into account and the small size of the site, we consider that the risk of encountering GCN during site clearance is low. The PEA recommends that eDNA samples are taken for each of the three nearby ponds to determine if GCN are present and inform any necessary mitigation strategy (including any licensing). This can be carried out between 15th April and 30th June and should be completed prior to determination. This is considered an acceptable approach. Alternatively, a precautionary Site Clearance Method Statement could be secured via condition, requiring initial vegetation strimming and a destructive hand search of rubble and brash piles. This second approach would avoid the eDNA works and initial delay but there is a risk that if GCN are found during site clearance, works would need to stop whilst the approach was reviewed and it was determined whether a licence was required. The applicant should consider these options carefully and an appropriate condition could be attached.

Although no evidence of hedgehogs were found during the survey, there are records of both species within the local landscape, hence the site may be used for commuting and foraging. The onsite vegetation could also be used by nesting birds and habitats are suitable for reptiles, however reptile records are sparse in the local area. A precautionary site clearance approach would safeguard such species.

The HRA identified that the development, in combination with other projects, could have a minor significant impact to three European designated sites within 20km: Peak District Dales SAC, Peak District Moors SPA and South Pennine Moors SAC. It was concluded that increased pressure from new residents through general recreation and dog-walking could contribute to a minor deterioration of habitat conditions. The development will also result in the lack of provision of open green space within the Local Development Plan. Overall, we would consider this impact to be very low.

The following conditions are advised:

Nesting Birds

No tree, scrub or hedgerow clearance shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless preceded by a nesting bird survey undertaken by a competent ecologist no

more than 48 hours prior to clearance. If nesting birds are present, an appropriate exclusion zone will be implemented and monitored until the chicks have fledged. No works shall be undertaken within exclusion zones whilst nesting birds are present.

Site Clearance Method Statement

Wording to be confirmed.

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

Prior to building works commencing, a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall indicate the locations and specifications of two or more of the following measures, which shall be implemented in full and maintained thereafter:

- 2x integral universal nest brick
- Bee nest boxes
- Hedgehog gaps in fencing (130 mm x 130 mm)
- Native and wildlife-attracting planting i.e., trees, hedgerow, shrubs and / or herbaceous perennials to provide resources for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

It is hoped that the information provided is helpful to the Council. If you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the comments made, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Avreen Roque BSc (Hons)

Biodiversity Planning Trainee

planning@derbyshirewt.co.uk

Reviewed by Libby Duggan-Jones MBiolSci MCIEEM – Biodiversity Planning Officer

Endnote:

Please see our planning pages <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/planning> for ecological advice on submitting a planning application, finding an ecological consultant and information on mitigation and enhancement.