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

For the attention of Rachael Simpkin

Your Ref: HPK/2023/0459

Our ref: DWTHPK712a

4th December 2024

Dear Rachael,

Proposal: Development of 5no. new dwellings

Location: Land to the South of Dinting Road and West of Dinting Lane, Dinting Road, Higher Dinting, Glossop, Derbyshire

Application Ref No: HPK/2023/0459

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

Further to our response dated 9th January 2024, the layout has been revised further to accommodate 3No. dwellings rather than the previous 5No. A proportion of the important hedgerow appears to be retained outside of domestic curtilage, adjacent to the access road,



however the western half of the hedgerow may still be within it. As per our previous comments, we advise some sort of agreement / covenant to secure the future of the hedgerow and sycamore tree. Careful consideration should also be given to the boundary treatment on this side of the site and we would not advise close board fencing immediately adjacent to the hedge.

The Arboricultural Implications Plan (Appendix 6 of Tree Report) is not cohesive with the Landscape Plan and indicates removal of around 3No. trees, which are retained on the Landscape Plan. It should be confirmed that the Landscape Plan is correct. The number of trees to be removed should be confirmed with the ecologists, as currently the Biodiversity Accounting report states that only one tree will be lost, which seems incorrect.

We have reviewed the Biodiversity Accounting Assessment Report (JCA Ltd., October 2024). The site visit was undertaken in January 2024, outside the optimal period for botanical survey. This is contrary to the guidance provided regarding BNG Condition Assessments, which states, *"They should be undertaken at the optimum time of year for the assessed habitat(s)"*. Guidelines state that where surveys are carried out at a suboptimal time of year, the precautionary principle should be applied with regards to condition assessment.

Furthermore, we have still not received any clarification of whether the grassland was re-seeded as part of previous restoration, as per our previous comments.

If no clarification can be provided and survey has been undertaken at the incorrect time of year, we advise that the grassland should be assigned good condition, in line with the precautionary principle and the metric should be updated. This will affect the proposals to enhance onsite grassland (from poor to good condition), however it appears that some of the grassland may be located within gardens anyway, so this element should be reviewed. It should be made clear which areas of the site are POS and which are private.

The post-development trees have been entered into the metric as medium sized trees. The Metric User Guide clearly states the following, *"record newly planted individual trees as 'small', unless 'medium' size or above at the time of site-planting"*. Medium trees would have to be planted with a diameter of at least 30 cm. Furthermore, trees can only be counted in the metric post-development tab if they are located outside of gardens. This also applies to hedgerows. These amendments should be made.

Based on the comments above, the predicted BNG figures will change. The requirement for offsite units has already been highlighted to satisfy the trading rules and it is likely that a higher

number of units will now be required once the amendments are made. Unless the applicant owns additional land that could be utilised for BNG, it is likely that units will need to be purchased from a Habitat Bank.

We advise that the figures should be finalised and that enquiries should be made to identify a Habitat Bank. Whilst the full details of the offsite approach can be provided in a post-determination Gain Plan, this would reduce delays at later stage, given the limited options for Habitat Banks at the current time.

We welcome the inclusion of bat and bird boxes and hedgehog gaps on the Landscaping Plan.

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,

Libby Duggan-Jones

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.