



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

For the attention of James Stannard

Your Ref: HPK/2025/0007

Our ref: DWTHPK775

10th March 2025

Dear James,

Proposal: Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved for 5 dwellings

Location: Buxton Road Chinley

Application Ref No: HPK/2025/0007

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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Weddles, December 2024), the BNG Summary Report (Weddles, December 2024) and the metric (16th December, 2024). Our comments are set out below:



Habitats and Species

The site visits(s) were undertaken at an appropriate time of year and a full data consultation was carried out with Derbyshire Biological Records Centre. The report states that the application area is dominated by bramble scrub, with a lesser area of modified grassland in the west and a belt of broadleaved woodland along the northern boundary. However, aerial imagery indicates that the eastern part of the site may also comprise broadleaved woodland, rather than bramble scrub as mapped, and we advise that this is checked with the ecologists.

Otter Brook flows outside the red line boundary to the east (typo noted in Section 2.2 of PEA which states west). It appears that there is a buffer of approximately 20 m between the site and the Brook and therefore it is not included within the BNG assessment. Broadleaved woodland is present in between the site and Otter Brook.

The report recommends additional surveys for breeding birds, foraging and commuting bats, and roosting bats in the onsite tree (T15 ash). Surveys for these receptors are required prior to determination.

Additional ecological constraints comprising trees, nesting birds, common amphibians, otter and terrestrial mammals are outlined in Section 5.1. The report recommends that these can be adequately mitigated for by including Reasonable Avoidance measures in a Construction Environmental management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity).

Whilst we are pleased to see a reasonable buffer between the development and Otter brook, we would suggest that omitting the eastern-most dwelling from the scheme would prevent the red line boundary from protruding into the wooded corridor along Otter Brook, retaining its integrity and further reducing disturbance to species such as otter which are confirmed to the watercourse. It would also restrict development largely to the modified grassland and bramble scrub, reducing impacts to broadleaved woodland, as per the mitigation and BNG hierarchies. This would also reduce the predicted net losses. Given that the wider land within the blue line is owned by the applicant, we query whether there is scope to enhance the woodland to achieve the required gains for the development, in line with the BNG hierarchy? We suggest that a reduction in area and impacts, may also reduce / remove the additional survey recommendations.

BNG

The metric appears to have been completed well, although we advise that a strategic significance of moderate should be used to reflect the location of the site along a green / blue corridor within the local landscape.

Notwithstanding the recommended amendment to strategic significance, the current outline layout would result in a net loss of -1.16 habitat units (87.76%) and a net gain of +0.10 hedgerow units (379.99%). To deliver 10% net gain, a minimum of 1.29 habitat units are required (subject to change due to amendment). These can be delivered on land owned by the applicant or a third party, or they could be purchased from a local Habitat Bank. Whilst full details of the approach will be set out in the post-determination Gain Plan, the preferred option should be discussed with the LPA to identify any requirement for a legal agreement at this stage. If offsite land is to be used (i.e. not a Habitat Bank), the land and its future management will need to be secured via Section 106 or conservation covenant.

As above, a more ecologically sensitive design would omit the eastern-most dwelling, hereby complying with mitigation and BNG hierarchies. We also suggest that it may be possible to deliver gains within the blue line and this should be explored, in line with the BNG hierarchy <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain> (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 74-008-20240214).

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 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.