



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Lucy Hankin
FROM: Helen Forster
DATE: 24 February 2025
SUBJECT: Land at Stoney Wood, Meopham 20240910

The following is provided by Kent County Council's Ecological Advice Service (KCC EAS) for Local Planning Authorities. It is independent, professional advice and is not a comment/position on the application from the county council. It is intended to advise the relevant planning officer(s) on the potential ecological impacts of the planning application and if sufficient/appropriate ecological information has been provided.

Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have must be directed in every instance to the planning officer, who will seek input from the EAS where appropriate and necessary.

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have available to us, and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that further information is sought from the applicant with regards to the potential for ecological impacts to arise.

It is noted that proposals are relatively small in scale with the conversion of a barn to a dwelling a small area of field being converted in to a garden. However from the limited information provided, it has not been possible to fully assess the likelihood of any constraints relating to ecology. In particular the likelihood of barn owls roosting in the building and the potential for protected/notable species within the garden area or access road.

To establish the potential for protected species presence, that must be taken account of in the planning decision, in the first instance, high quality, labelled, internal and external photos of the building and photos of the land within the wider redline boundary. These can then be reviewed by Kent County Council Ecological Advice Service (KCC EAS). These photographs may satisfy KCC EAS that no ecological surveys are necessary at the site. However, where photographs are inconclusive, or indicate possible features suitable for protected species, a simple Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) may need to be

undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist¹, in accordance with good practice guidelines. Any EclA would need to include the following:

- Details of the impacts of development proposals on the ecological baseline established via a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)
- Details of any additional surveys undertaken following the PEA;
- Details of any appropriate and achievable ecological mitigation measures;
- Identification of any residual ecological effects after avoidance and mitigation measures have been considered, and any compensation measures required to offset residual effects;
- Details of ecological enhancement measures; and
- Provision of sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation.

The above is in line with paragraph 99 of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005² which states *“it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”*.

The above is also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act 2006. Under section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF 2024, biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. Enhancement refers to providing net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation and compensation.

If you have any queries regarding our comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Helen Forster MCIEEM
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Proposed Block Plan; JRD Kent; July 2024
- Existing Site Plan; JRD Kent; July 2024

¹ Suitably qualified ecologists can be found using either the: [CIEEM Registered Practice Directory](#) or the [Environmental Data Services Directory](#).

² [odpm-circ-0605.qxd \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)