



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Lisa Fisher

FROM: Jonathan Lynch

DATE: 23 September 2024

SUBJECT: 20240661 / Land On East Side Of Church Street, Higham

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.

Proposals: Change of use from grazing use to dog exercise and training area and alterations to fencing.

SUMMARY – NO FURTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED

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 the proposed development has limited potential to result in significant ecological impacts. As such, we are satisfied that there is no requirement for an ecological survey to be carried out at this time.

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATIONS

The proposed change of use is not expected to result in any different ecological impacts than those associated with the current use of the site (sheep grazing) and in fact may

benefit biodiversity¹. No new structures are proposed, no loss or degradation of any habitat is proposed and no artificial lighting is proposed.

Natural England must be consulted on this application under Section 28I of the WCA 1981 as the application site is located within the impact risk zone (IRZ) of South Thames Estuary and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Consultations are required for **all**² applications at this proximity (except householder; site is ~200m from the SSSI). An objection from Natural England is not anticipated as we do not anticipate any effects on the SSSI.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The application is retrospective and therefore not subject to statutory BNG. Even if it were, the *de minimis* exemption would apply anyway as no degradation/loss of habitat is anticipated.

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

Jonathan Lynch
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Supplementary Information (undated)
- Proposed Fencing (Synergy, July 2024)

¹ The submitted Supplementary Information document states: *"The pasture in the field will be left to grow throughout May each to benefit the wildlife. Areas of the field are left unmown to provide areas of natural habitat, again benefiting the wildlife."*

² Applications for which Section 18I consultation is required at this proximity to a SSSI: *"All planning applications (except householder applications) where the proposed development is outside or extends outside existing settlements/urban areas and will increase lighting levels or affect greenspace, farmland, semi natural habitats, trees/woodland, waterbodies, rural buildings/structures (manmade or natural) or linear landscape features such as hedgerows, streams and rivers through direct loss, fragmentation or change of use."*