



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Lisa Fisher

FROM: Philippa Bromley

DATE: 05 June 2026

SUBJECT: 20260131: Site Of Former Police Station, 133 Windmill Street, Gravesend

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.

SUMMARY: SUFFICIENT INFORMATION

We have reviewed the information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient ecological and biodiversity net gain information has been provided for determination. Recommended condition/informative wording is provided below.

A summary of our review of the submitted biodiversity net gain information is provided below. Detailed comments on the submitted ecological and biodiversity net gain information follow the subheadings below.

Table 1: To show a summary of our review of submitted biodiversity net gain information

Percentage Net Gain Required	Percentage Net Gain/Loss Reported for Area Habitats	Percentage Net Gain/Loss Reported for Linear Habitats	Net Gain Proposed: 1 – all on-site; 2 – no significant on-site and off-site; 3 - significant on-site and off-site	On-site 'significant' Net Gains Proposed (Yes/No)
Yes	2716.23%	418.83	1	No

Using the national and local guidance regarding significance, we consider that the on-site biodiversity net gain (excluding private gardens) should not be treated as significant and

so does not require securing for 30-years. Even though there is no on-site significant habitat identified on-site for legislative biodiversity net gain, we recommend that a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan secures habitat retention and creation at the site under planning policy.

FULL COMMENTS

This application is for the erection of 67 apartments including access, car parking and landscaping. Due to on demolition works we are satisfied that no protected species are likely to be present within the site.

PROTECTED SITES

The application site falls within the 6km zone of influence of the Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area and its/their associated Wetland(s) of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Site).

This type of development may cause additional recreational disturbance, and likely significant effects on birds using the SPA and Ramsar sites. As such, the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS), applies and the applicant will be required to make a tariff payment which is based on the net number of additional dwellings proposed. The payment is to mitigate for additional recreational effects on the designated sites. The local planning authority must ensure that adequate means are in place to secure this mitigation before first occupation.

Gravesham Borough Council must consider the impact the proposal will have on these designated sites in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (CHSR) 2017 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Bats

A Preliminary Roost Assessment identified that no Preliminary Roosting Features (PRFs) are on or adjacent to the site, indicating that bats are unlikely to roost within the site. However, numerous bat records exist in the wider area. Trees located to the east of the site, along with habitats in the wider area, are likely to support foraging and commuting bats.

Lighting in the vicinity of a bat roost or along commuting/foraging routes could result in disturbance, resulting in roost abandonment, which is an offence under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Artificial lighting has been shown to be particularly harmful to bats along river corridors, near woodland edges and near hedgerows. Local authorities have a duty to ensure impacts upon legally protected species are avoided and impacts upon bats are a material consideration in any planning permission under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.

Therefore, to mitigate against potential adverse effects on biodiversity, the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professionals '*Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*' should be consulted in the lighting design of the development.

We advise that the incorporation of sensitive lighting design for biodiversity is submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

Suggested Condition Wording:

No external lighting, whether temporary or permanent, shall be installed on the site unless details are submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Details of any proposed external lighting shall accord with the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professionals 'Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' and demonstrate that no impacts to bat foraging/commuting activity shall result. Such details shall include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of light equipment proposed (luminaire type; mounting height; aiming angles and luminaire profiles) as well as an ISO lux contour plan showing light spill. The details shall be implemented as approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: To limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light in accordance with the NPPF 2024, paragraph 198(c). With consideration for bats and other nocturnal wildlife in accordance with the NPPF 2024, paragraph 187(d).

Other Protected Species

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken on 16th February 2022 and concluded that the site is unlikely to support protected species due to the absence of suitable habitat, and that it is of negligible ecological value with limited opportunities for protected species. The PEA refers to vegetation on site, which the Biodiversity Net Gain metric confirms 55²m of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation was present. In our opinion, this would have offered a low potential to support breeding birds. However, upon review of satellite imagery indicates that this vegetation has now been removed as part of works carried out under a previous planning application (please see figure 1 & 2 below).

As the site is enclosed by fencing, roads, and other infrastructure, this further limits its accessibility and connectivity for commuting species such as reptiles and badgers. This, combined with recent site clearance, leads us to agree with the PEA's conclusion that the site currently provides minimal opportunities for protected species. Therefore, it is our view that there is limited potential for impacts to other protected and priority species.

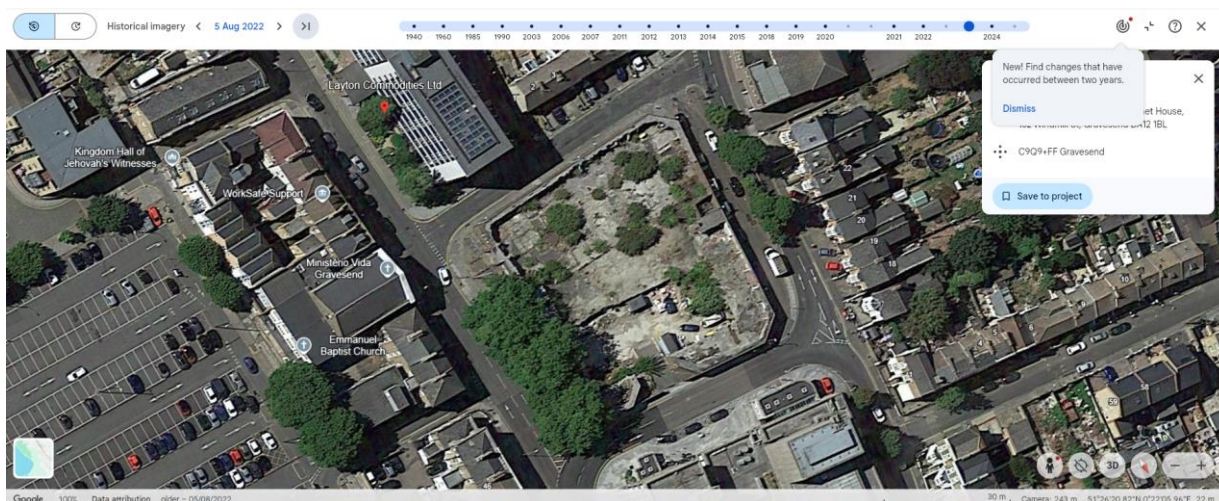


Figure 1: Google Earth Imagery of the site August 2022

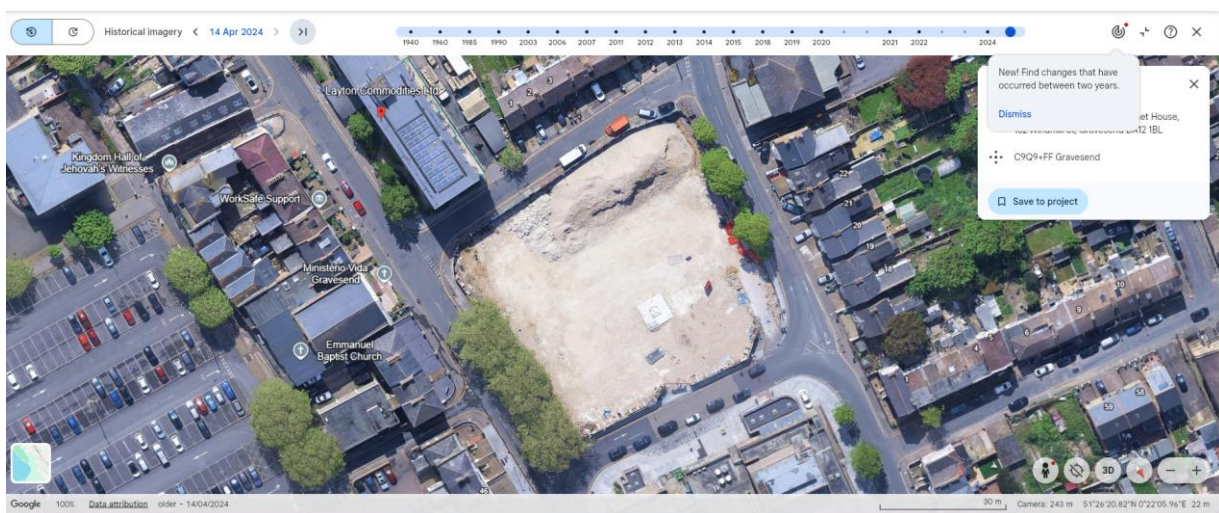


Figure 2: Google Earth Imagery of the site April 2024

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications¹ for development (unless exempt^{2,3}), must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), shown via use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric prior to commencement of any development.

Having reviewed submitted information⁴, we consider a 10% biodiversity net gain is a statutory requirement of this proposed development. We consider there is no local policy biodiversity net gain requirement above 10% for this development.

¹ All planning applications for major development (unless exempt) submitted on or after 12th February 2024 in England, and all minor applications (unless exempt), submitted on or after the 2nd April 2024.

² Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

³ The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

⁴ References to the biodiversity value of any habitat or habitat enhancement within this section of the advice note refer to the value as calculated in accordance with the biodiversity metric.

We have produced the following table to aid the local planning authority in ascertaining whether sufficient BNG information has been submitted:

Table 2: *To show whether the applicant has met the minimum validation requirements, expected information standards in line with planning practice guidance and any applicable national or local policies.*

Information Needed	Provided	Comments
Confirmation that the applicant believes that planning permission, if granted, the development would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition.	Yes	
The pre-development biodiversity value(s), <u>either on the date of application or earlier proposed date (as appropriate).</u>	Yes	A site visit was carried out on the 16th February 2022.
Where the applicant proposes to use an earlier date, this proposed earlier date and the reasons for proposing that date.	Yes	Google Earth Imagery indicates that construction activities occurred between 05/08/2022 and 08/03/2024 (Google Earth, accessed 05/06/2026). These works appear to have removed the previously recorded ephemeral vegetation and levelled out the site. It is considered that these activities are associated with the prior planning permission (ref. 20220432) for demolition of the existing structure. The metric was based on a habitat survey carried out prior to site clearance in February 2022.
<u>The completed metric calculation tool</u> showing the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of application (or proposed earlier date) including the publication date of the biodiversity metric used to calculate that value.	Yes	The site is 3660 square metres (0.36ha) in size, according to the information in the application form. The habitat area reported in the biodiversity metric calculation tool is (0.36ha) does match the reported red line boundary site area as per the application form. <u>Baseline Habitats</u> We are content with the baseline habitat classifications. We highlight to Gravesham Borough Council that the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was published 28th November 2025. The LNRS changes how strategic significance is considered and any BNG assessments

		produced after the LNRS was published can no longer use <i>Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy</i>. All baseline information must be set to <i>Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy</i>. The baseline information has correctly reflected the published LNRS requirements.
A statement whether activities have been carried out prior to the date of application (or earlier proposed date), that result in loss of onsite biodiversity value ('<u>degradation</u>'), and where they have: • a statement to the effect that these activities have been carried out; • the date immediately before these activities were carried out; • the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on this date; • the completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations, and • any available supporting evidence of this.	Yes	Works have occurred as detailed above.
A description of any <u>irreplaceable habitat</u> (as set out in <u>column 1 of the Schedule to the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024</u>) on the land to which the application relates, that exists on the date of application, (or an earlier date).		None reported.
Plan(s), drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North, showing onsite habitat existing on the date of application (or earlier proposed date), including any irreplaceable habitat (if applicable).	Yes	

Post-development Habitats

Habitat Creation

We consider that the proposed habitat creation and proposed uplift of 2716.23% BNG is achievable and realistic.

Information has been submitted with this application to give confidence that the biodiversity gain hierarchy can be effectively applied to this application, and how conditions should be applied should planning consent be granted.

The proposed scattered trees are located adjacent to hard-standing areas, including pavements and roads, where there is potential for root-related damage to the surfacing over time and present safety risks to future residents. It is therefore recommended that appropriate tree pit design and root management measures are incorporated into the

scheme to ensure compatibility with adjacent hard surfaces and safeguard the safety of future site users.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been published and could influence the strategic significance scores applied in the biodiversity metric calculation tool for post-development habitats. However, upon review, despite the site lying within an ACIB, no potential measures correspond with the proposed habitat creation. Changes to the strategic significance scores for the habitats currently proposed on-site are unlikely to make a significant difference to the achievable BNG outcomes for the site.

Biodiversity Gain Plan

The applicant should submit a biodiversity gain plan form⁵ along with supporting information (e.g., legal agreement and habitat management and monitoring plan) once planning permission has been granted to demonstrate in more detail how the proposed biodiversity net gain will be delivered. The biodiversity gain plan must include the following information:

- Information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effects of the development on biodiversity;
- The pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat;
- The post-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat;
- Any registered off-site biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- Any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- Any other matters that the Secretary of State may be regulations specify.

We advise the local planning authority that there may be conditions attached to the decision notice should planning permission be granted that are linked to the biodiversity gain plan. Wording should be included in such conditions to ensure that it is clear that any documents/plans are produced in accordance with the 'approved biodiversity gain plan'. Relevant conditions where this is likely to be appropriate include soft and hard landscaping conditions, and any other ecology/biodiversity conditions. Other relevant conditions may include drainage conditions.

If planning permission is granted, the statutory biodiversity gain condition (and its reason for imposition) should not be included on decision notices as a condition. The condition cannot be varied or removed. An application must be made to discharge it as any other condition.

⁵ [Biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/biodiversity-gain-plan)

We recommend an informative in line with the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 74-026-20240214)¹² should be included on the decision notice to set out the legislative requirements in relation to biodiversity net gain.

The following condition is not a statutory requirement but unless imposed there would be no requirement that the Biodiversity Gain Plan submitted for approval to be in accordance with any biodiversity or ecological information submitted with the planning application. approved.

Suggested Condition Wording:

The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the baseline information within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, by Tyler Grange in April 2022, and the Small Site Statutory Biodiversity Metric by Joseph Small in January 2026 for Site Of Former Police Station, 133 Windmill Street, Gravesend, DA12 1DB.

Reason: To ensure the proposals are in accordance with details submitted and considered as part of the planning application, in accordance with [insert relevant policy].

Significant on-site gains

It is considered that the site does not meet the on-site significance requirements. While the relevant habitat units marginally exceed 0.5, this is primarily due to the introduced shrub planting. In this instance, we consider the requirement for formal monitoring to be disproportionate. The proposed habitat plan enhances the site and improves the quality of the habitats previously present. With appropriate management, the proposed habitats will benefit biodiversity. Therefore, we recommend that a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) be secured to secure habitat retention and creation at the site under planning policy. Please see below for suggested condition wording.

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

The proposed development provides opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are beneficial to wildlife, such as native the installation of integrated bat/bird nest boxes. This is in accordance with Paragraph 193 of the NPPF that “*opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*”. We advise that measures to enhance biodiversity is secured via a LEMP of planning permission, if granted.

Integral Nest Boxes

The recommended ratio of integral nest boxes to residential units is 1:1, with 4-10 recommended for a small block of flats and 10-40+ for larger developments (e.g. warehouses, schools, hospitals and large blocks of flats). This is as per BS 42021:2022.

Integral swift and bat features are supported by the NPPF 2024 187(d). The adopted Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045⁶ also contains the target: “*stop the decline of swifts by ensuring that every new house built in Kent contains one swift-box or nest-brick.*”

⁶ [Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045 \(kentnature.org.uk\)](https://kentnature.org.uk/kent-nature-partnership-biodiversity-strategy-2020-2045/)

As such, each proposed dwelling should contain at least one in-built swift nesting brick, with their make, model and locations shown on the Elevations drawings. Nest boxes should be provided in accordance with BS 42021:2022 'British Standard for integral nest boxes'. Swift bricks are a 'universal' bird brick, used by a range of species. Integral nest boxes should be installed close together, e.g. two boxes located in every other house, or three in every third dwelling. Integral nest boxes need to be a minimum of 4m above ground level.

Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)

Habitat creation and retention on-site can be secured by condition. Although no ongoing monitoring and oversight by the Local Planning Authority is considered likely to be necessary, to secure on-site compensation for lost habitats, a landscape and ecology management plan condition should be effectively secured by condition, should planning permission be granted.

This is because the proposed habitats still contribute to the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain that needs to be secured as part of the development and the proposed habitats will still require some form of management to achieve the desired outcomes for biodiversity. Providing on-site enhancements will also meet national and local policy requirements.

Suggested Condition Wording:

No development shall take place (including any ground works, site, or vegetation clearance), until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority addressing:

- 1. Creation of habitats in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan;*
- 2. Management of on-site habitats to achieve biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan;*
- 3. Biodiversity enhancement measures, including a minimum of 9 integrated swift bricks and 6 integrated bat bricks.*

The content of the LEMP shall be based on the recommendations in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Tyler Grange, April 2022) and include the following:

- a. Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed ecological design works;*
- b. Detailed design(s) to achieve stated objectives;*
- c. Extent and location/area of proposed works on appropriate scale maps and plans;*
- d. Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance;*
- e. Timetable for implementation;*
- f. Persons responsible for implementing the works;*
- g. Details of initial aftercare;*
- h. Aims and objectives of management;*
- i. Prescriptions for management actions;*
- j. Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period);*

- k. *Habitat monitoring provisions; and*
- l. *Details of the individual, body or organisation(s) responsible for implementation of the plan.*

The LEMP shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and in order for the Council to comply with Part 3 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Evidence of Implementation - LEMP

Suggested Condition Wording:

Within twelve months of first use of the development hereby approved, photographic evidence of the implementation of such habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement measures as are required by condition X (the LEMP condition) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The approved measures shall be thereafter retained.

Reason: To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), and in order for the Council to comply with Part 3 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Philippa Bromley **Biodiversity Officer**

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Tyler Grange, April 2022)
- Construction Environmental Management Plan Rev C
- Site Plan (Planning Issues, January 2026)
- Location Plan (Planning Issues, January 2026).
- BNG Metric (Joseph Small, January 2026)