



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Lisa Fisher
FROM: Nancy Inman
DATE: 29 May 2025
SUBJECT: Little Mockbeggar Farm, Higham 20250213

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 RECEIVED

No ecological information, other than the BNG metric, has been supplied with this application. However, we are satisfied that subject to the implementation of sensitive working methods, any adverse impacts to protected species can be reasonably avoided. This is due to the small scale of the proposals which seek to widen an existing access track, and due to the limited value of onsite habitats for biodiversity. The submitted BNG assessment has demonstrated a net gain of 0.005 habitat units through offsite scrub creation.

Biodiversity Net Gain

A small sites metric calculation has been submitted which demonstrates that a net gain of 0.005 area habitat units (+20.83%) is achievable onsite, in addition to a net gain of 0.0141 hedgerow units (+19.56%). This is largely through the creation of new scrub and hedgerow habitat.

The submitted metric currently presents with an error in the area calculations as the baseline habitat area (324m²), does not match the post-development habitat area (379m²). This is from the creation of the offsite scrub habitat. Post-determination, the baseline

habitat type for the offsite scrub planting area will need to be included to ensure that the final net gain outcomes are accurate and that there are no area errors. We consider that a net gain will still be achievable within this area.

As the onsite baseline habitat areas are correct, we do not require this information prior to determination, however a finalised version of the metric with correct habitat areas will be required in order to inform the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP), as referenced below.

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP)

To ensure successful establishment and retention of the proposed biodiversity enhancements through appropriate long-term management and monitoring, we advise that a condition for a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) is attached to any approved planning permission. This shall align with the habitat creation measures as proposed within the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment. Due to the small size of the site there are limited opportunities for providing additional enhancements (e.g. bird boxes or bat boxes).

Suggested Condition

Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include full details of biodiversity enhancements which shall include locations of new hedgerow and mixed scrub planting, specifications of species included within new habitat creation, management measures and the details of the individual, body or organisation(s) responsible for implementation of the plan.

The approved plan shall be implemented as described and retained thereafter.

Reason: In accordance with paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024.

NESTING BIRD INFORMATIVE:

The site contains one hedgerow that is due to be removed and replanted. All wild birds and their nests are protected from harm under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, any works which may result in impacts to nesting birds should be conducted outside of the core nesting season which is March through August (inclusive) or under ecological supervision. A suitable exclusion zone should be established around any active bird nest in the event one is discovered during works.

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

Nancy Inman
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:

- Site Location Plan – GSP, March 25
- Proposed Block Plan - GSP, March 25
- Small Sites Metric – March 25