



ECOLOGICAL ADVICE SERVICE

TO: Amanda Grout
FROM: Luke Wallace
DATE: 03 November 2022
SUBJECT: 20220839 / Cobham Lodge

The following is provided by Kent County Council's Ecological Advice Service (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 whether sufficient and appropriate ecological information has been provided to assist in its determination. 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.

We query the inputs into the biodiversity metric, e.g., the creation of woodland habitat on-site. It is not obvious to us where woodland is being created on-site according to the site plan and, therefore, we assume that the positive result in habitat units is inaccurate and likely negative. We note that there is a clear increase in linear habitat units (hedgerow).

In accordance with rule 4 of the metric, the habitat units and linear habitat units cannot be summed for a positive result. However, in the absence of secondary legislation regarding the Environment Act (2021), we take the view that it would be difficult for the local planning authority to refuse the application based on these metric results alone.

If planning permission is granted, we advise that the most important ecological aspect is to safeguard the adjacent ancient woodland by limiting light pollution (that would disrupt the woodland's invertebrate population) and ensuring that the development has a native species-only landscape scheme. This would not only help safeguard the ancient woodland from potential colonisation of non-native species but maximise biodiversity value on-site. Suggested condition wording (and a breeding bird informative):

Biodiversity and Lighting

Prior to commencement of works, a lighting design plan for biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan will show the type and locations of

external lighting, as well as expected light spill in lux levels, to demonstrate that areas to be lit will not adversely impact biodiversity. All external lighting will be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and will be maintained thereafter.

Biodiversity and Ecological Enhancement

Within six months of works commencing, details of how the development will offset biodiversity loss/enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include a native species-only landscape scheme. The approved details will be implemented and thereafter retained.

Breeding Bird Informative

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act. Breeding bird habitat is present on the application site and assumed to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist and has shown that nesting birds are not present.

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

Luke Wallace
Biodiversity Officer

This response was submitted following consideration of the following documents:
Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Report. Sevenoaks Environmental. July 2022.