

Date: 18 December 2013  
Our ref: 106816  
Your ref: S6/2013/2530/FP



Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council  
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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam

**Planning consultation:** change of use of land to car washing, valeting (Sui Generis), works to include erection of canopy

**Location:** Ramada Hatfield

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 10 December 2013.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

**The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)**

**The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)**

Natural England's comments in relation to this application are provided in the following sections.

**Statutory nature conservation sites – no objection**

Based upon the information provided, Natural England advises the Council that the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes.

**Protected species**

We have not assessed this application and associated documents for impacts on protected species.

Natural England has published Standing Advice on protected species. The Standing Advice includes a habitat decision tree which provides advice to planners on deciding if there is a 'reasonable likelihood' of protected species being present. It also provides detailed advice on the protected species most often affected by development, including flow charts for individual species to enable an assessment to be made of a protected species survey and mitigation strategy.

You should apply our Standing Advice to this application as it is a material consideration in the determination of applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation.

The Standing Advice should not be treated as giving any indication or providing any assurance in respect of European Protected Species (EPS) that the proposed development is unlikely to affect the EPS present on the site; nor should it be interpreted as meaning that Natural England has

reached any views as to whether a licence may be granted.

If you have any specific questions on aspects that are not covered by our Standing Advice for European Protected Species or have difficulty in applying it to this application please contact us at with details at [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

#### **Local sites**

If the proposal site is on or adjacent to a local site, e.g. Local Wildlife Site, Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site (RIGS) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) the authority should ensure it has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the proposal on the local site before it determines the application.

#### **Biodiversity enhancements**

This application may provide opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes. The authority should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant, if it is minded to grant permission for this application. This is in accordance with Paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Additionally, we would draw your attention to Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) which states that *'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'*. Section 40(3) of the same Act also states that *'conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'*.

#### **Landscape enhancements**

This application may provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green space provision and access to and contact with nature. Landscape characterisation and townscape assessments, and associated sensitivity and capacity assessments provide tools for planners and developers to consider new development and ensure that it makes a positive contribution in terms of design, form and location, to the character and functions of the landscape and avoids any unacceptable impacts.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours faithfully  
Dawn Presutti  
Customer service Consultation Team