

Mr Mark Peacock
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
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Hertfordshire LEADS
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Contact: Sophie Batchelor
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Date: 25 January 2024

Dear Mr Peacock,

Application: Erection of two industrial units for light industrial processes (E(g)(iii)) / general industrial (B2) / storage & distribution purposes (B8) and ancillary office space, with associated parking, access and supporting infrastructure.

Address: Plot 5610 Gypsy Moth Avenue Hatfield AL10 9BS

Application No: [6/2022/2759/FULL](#)

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting this office on the above application.

Overall Recommendation

- Application can be determined with no ecological objections (with any Informatives/Conditions listed below).

Summary of Advice

- Landscaping plans should be amended or an off-site location secured in order to achieve a minimum of 10% net gain to biodiversity through these proposals.

Supporting documents

I have made use of the following documents in providing this advice:

- Ecological Appraisal by Ecology Solutions (Report date: November 2022).
- Landscape Masterplan by Macgregor Smith Landscape Architecture (Report date: 26 October 2022).
- Design and Access Statement by SRA Architects (Report date: 1 December 2022).
- 22.034 Cambria. Plot 5610 Hatfield_External Lighting 221128 by D&D Building Services Consulting Engineers Ltd. (Report date: 28 November 2022).

- 7954. Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool Version 1.xslm (1 December 2023).

Comments

We have no in principle objections to this proposal.

We previously wrote to you on the 30th October 2023 regarding the planning application referenced above. Since this letter, we have received new information in the form of a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric dated 1st December 2023, submitted on the 18th December 2023. The following takes account of this information. Please note that our comments relating to a LEMP, and Informatives for birds and hedgehogs within our previous letter still stand.

Biodiversity Net Gain

This development will result in the loss of an area of semi-improved grassland, as well as rough grassland and dense shrub. A Landscape Planting Strategy has been submitted detailing proposed shrub species alongside a one-year Maintenance Schedule. The Landscape Proposal involves planting a thick buffer of berry-bearing native shrubs; the installation of bird boxes; and the planting of 23 native and non-native trees.

Achieving a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to this development would be consistent with the requirements set out under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the recently adopted (October 2023) Local Plan Policy SADM 16. In order for this proposal to demonstrate a minimum of 10% BNG, this needs to be informed by an appropriate Biodiversity Metric calculation which assesses losses and gains in Biodiversity Units.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Metric has now been submitted. I am satisfied that the baseline assessment of habitat present is likely to be accurate based upon the survey information provided. Subsequent metric calculations demonstrate a net loss of habitat units by 36.30%, and a net loss of hedgerow units by 30.09%.

A fully completed metric will be required to demonstrate how these net losses can be addressed in order to demonstrate that a minimum of 10% BNG can be achieved. Currently, there is insufficient onsite habitat creation within the proposed landscaping to achieve this, and so any measures proposed will need to be delivered offsite.

Consequently, I advise that if this application is approved, a Biodiversity Gain Plan condition is applied, informed by an appropriate metric and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan as necessary, to demonstrate how BNG can be achieved.

I trust these comments are of assistance,

Regards,

Sophie Batchelor

Assistant Ecology Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.