

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Site: Nyn Park, Well Road, Northaw, Potters Bar

Description: Engineering works comprising ground works and shaping of land to create a golf course (used only in conjunction with the Nyn Park Estate dwelling house) and erection of an associated single storey maintenance building

Application: 6/2020/0311/MAJ

Date: 11/03/2020

Objection: No ecological survey supplied, net gain to biodiversity not demonstrated. Application not consistent with NPPF or BS 42020.

NPPF states:

170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity

175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

BS 42020 states:

'8.1 Making decisions based on adequate information

The decision-maker should undertake a thorough analysis of the applicant's ecological report as part of its wider determination of the application. In reaching a decision, the decision-maker should take the following into account:

h) Whether there is a clear indication of likely significant losses and gains for biodiversity.'

The proposal must demonstrate consistency with these policies. At present it does not because it has not supplied an ecological assessment and quantification of net impact. Before it can be determined it must supply an ecological report, consistent with BS 42020 that clearly and measurably demonstrates a net gain to biodiversity by utilising the Defra biodiversity metric.



**Herts and
Middlesex**

**Grebe House
St Michael's Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL3 4SN**

Tel: (01727) 858901
Email: info@hmwt.org
www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk

Chief Executive: Lesley Davies



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President
Sir Simon A Bowes Lyon, KCVO

The object of an ecological report submitted in support of a planning application should be to demonstrate how the proposals are capable of being consistent with NPPF and local planning policy. The ecological report should state, the objectively assessed value of what is there, how it will be affected by the proposal and how any negative impacts can be avoided, mitigated or compensated in order to achieve measurable net gain to biodiversity.

Notwithstanding the lack of ecological information, a noted area of concern in this application are the seed mixes selected. Golf courses have a substantial capacity for ecological enhancement if they utilise species rich grassland mixes wherever possible. This proposal does not, instead proposing a sterile grass based mix throughout. Changing the rough grassland to a species rich mix e.g. Emorsgate EM4, is likely to result in a net gain to biodiversity, if measured by the Defra biodiversity metric.

If you wish to discuss any of these points please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes

Matt Dodds

Matt Dodds
Planning & Biodiversity Manager
Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
Grebe House
St Michael's Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL3 4SN

Tel: (01727) 858901 ext. 236

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