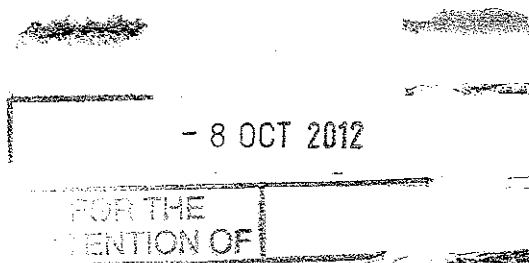


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Colin Sharpe
Planning
Ribbles Valley Borough Council

Email: ecology@lancashire.gov.uk
Your ref: CONECO/3/2012/0739
Our ref: 03/12/0739/ASM/ASP/RS
Date: 8th October 2012

Dear Colin Sharpe,

Ecological comments

Planning Application No: 3/2012/0739

Proposals: **Outline planning application with all matters reserved for up to 13,000 sq m of mixed use employment floorspace with access and assorted landscaping**

Location: **Land North of Barrow Brook Business Village**

District: **Ribbles Valley**

Thank you for your consultation in respect of the above planning application.

It seems reasonably unlikely that the proposed development would have any significant ecological impacts provided the **following matters are dealt with at the reserved matters stage or by planning condition:**

- External lighting associated with the development shall be designed to avoid excessive light spill and shall not illuminate hedgerows or trees, which may adversely affect wildlife such as bats roosting / foraging / commuting in nearby habitat. The principles of relevant guidance should be followed (e.g. the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Engineers guidance *Bats and Lighting in the UK, 2008*).
- No site clearance, site preparation or development works shall commence until a fully detailed habitat creation/compensation and management plan has been submitted to Ribbles Valley Borough Council for approval in consultation with their ecological advisors. The plan should include planting mixes, habitat establishment proposals, aftercare and long term management. The habitat creation scheme should demonstrate habitat connectivity and shall include creation of species rich hedgerow around the perimeter of the site. The agreed plan shall be implemented in full.

- All trees and hedgerows being retained in or adjacent to the application area will be adequately protected during construction, in accordance with existing guidelines (e.g. *BS5837: 2005 Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations*).
- Vegetation clearance works, vehicle movement associated with the development demolition work or other works that may affect nesting birds will be avoided between March and August inclusive, unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections.
- Japanese knotweed, and any other plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), shall be eradicated from the site and working methods shall be adopted to prevent the spread of this species.

JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

In determining this application, the requirements of the following legislation, planning policies and guidance should be addressed:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 (NPPF)
- Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (DEFRA 01/2005, ODPM 06/2005).
- North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021, Policies EM1 and DP7.
- Environmental Protection / Nature Conservation policies of the Local Plan.

2. HABITAT COMPENSATION/CREATION

Based on the quality of the habitat to be lost it appears that it would be feasible to incorporate compensation into the design of the scheme. The details of habitat compensation / creation can be dealt with at reserved matters stage or by planning condition.

The hedgerows and scattered scrub on the site would provide nesting habitat for birds (Ecology Report, para 3.29). Some of this scattered scrub habitat will be lost as a result of the proposed development. In order to compensate for these losses the ecology report recommends the creation of a species rich hedgerow around the perimeter of the site (section 4.3). This is appropriate compensation and would also address the requirement of NPPF that planning decisions address the integration of new development into the natural environment (NPPF Para 61).

In addition, consideration should be given to creation of species rich grassland and installation of a pond within the site (as recommended in section 4.3 of the ecology report).

Habitat creation schemes should comprise native species and habitats appropriate to the locality. Appropriate guidance is given in Lancashire County Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape and Heritage

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/view.asp?siteid=3654&pageid=11650&e=e>

Any compensatory planting / habitat creation should maintain habitat connectivity with existing areas of semi-natural habitat.

Areas of retained habitat and created habitat should be managed for wildlife for the lifetime of the development. Appropriate hedgerow management includes the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Guide to Hedgerow Management and the Environmental Stewardship hedgerow management prescriptions.

3. BREEDING BIRDS (protected)

Habitats on the site have the potential to support nesting birds, including ground nesting species. It needs to be ensured that detrimental impacts on breeding birds are avoided during the works. A planning condition is therefore recommended above to address this matter.

4. INVASIVE & INJURIOUS WEEDS

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), a species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) is present on the site. This species should be eradicated from the site and working methods adopted to prevent its spread. This can be dealt with by planning condition.

5. LIGHTING

Planning decisions should limit the impact of pollution from artificial light on nature conservation (NPPF Para 125). Bats may forage/commute in the area and they may be disturbed and/or discouraged from using their established flyways or foraging areas if these are subject to the introduction of artificial light. A planning condition is therefore recommended above to minimise the potential impacts of lighting on bats.

The above comments are based on a review of documents submitted with the planning application as well as a review of ecological records, maps and aerial photographs accessible to Lancashire County Council.

The above comments represent the professional opinion of an ecologist and do not constitute professional legal advice. You may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited above.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Stevens
Ecologist
Lancashire County Council