

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
Dukinfield Town Hall
King Street
Dukinfield
Tameside
SK16 4LA



Email: [REDACTED]

Principal Ecologist:
 Derek Richardson

FAO Principal Planning Officer
 Planning Services
 Ribble Valley Council

Your ref : 3/2025/0180
Contact : Derek Richardson
Date : 14th April 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

Application 3/2025/0180 Proposed creation of an alternative temporary park and ride and heavy goods vehicle marshalling area facility associated with the Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme (HARP), Land to the west of the A671 Pimlico Link Road

Thank you for consulting the Ecology Unit on the above planning application.

Ecological Survey Effort

Ecological surveys undertaken to inform the application have been carried out by suitably qualified ecologists and to appropriate standards. The surveys are sufficiently up-to-date. No further surveys need to be undertaken before the application is decided.

Impact on designated sites

The application site is in part adjacent to, or closer than 100m to, –

- The Salthill and Bellmanpark Quarries SSSI
- The Salthill Quarry Local Nature Reserve
- The Salthill Quarry Biological Heritage Site
- Bellman Park Quarry Biological Heritage Site

Although the proposals will not lead to any direct losses to the designated sites, I would advise that the following measures should be required to avoid harm to the special nature conservation interests of the above sites –

- The robust close-board fencing proposed along the northern boundary of the application site and separating the application site from the sensitive designated sites should be required to be installed prior to the commencement of the main construction works,
- A Biodiversity Construction Environmental Method Statement should be required to be prepared giving full details of how any potential impacts arising from the construction of

the facility through noise, visual disturbance, water pollution, air pollution, vibration, dust and artificial lighting are to be mitigated.

Impacts on notable habitats

The application site is dominated by grassland of rather limited ecological value. However, there are some locally important habitats on or close to the site including hedgerows, trees, watercourses and broadleaved woodland. While I understand that the majority of these more notable habitats will be able to be retained during the course of the scheme, measures for avoiding harm to retained on-site habitats should be included in the Biodiversity CEMP described above, and a comprehensive Tree and Hedgerow Protection Scheme should also be required to be prepared and implemented by Condition.

The scheme is described as 'temporary', with habitats reinstated after the operation of the facility has ceased, but 9-10 years cannot in my view be described as particularly temporary with regards to any species which may be displaced by the construction and operation of the facility. I would therefore advise that wherever possible new landscaping features (trees, shrubs and hedgerows) should be introduced onto or close to the site as soon as possible in the development process. An 'advance' landscaping plan should be required to be prepared.

Impacts on notable species

Birds

I would advise that no vegetation or ground clearance works required to facilitate the development should commence during the optimum time of year for bird nesting (March to August inclusive) unless nesting birds have been shown to be absent by a suitably qualified person. All nesting birds their eggs and young are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

New bird nesting boxes should be installed on nearby retained trees to compensate for any lost bird nesting potential.

Bats

Bats will use the site for foraging and a number of trees have been identified as having some potential to support bat roosts. While the loss of the foraging habitat is unlikely to have a significant impact on local bat populations given the extent of alternative bat habitat nearby, loss of trees with bat roost potential should be avoided. If such trees do need to be removed to facilitate the scheme they must first be further inspected for the possible presence of bat roosts before commencing any tree works. New bat roosting potential (bat roosting boxes) should be installed on nearby trees as compensation for any tree losses.

Any lighting plans for the site should be sensitively designed so as to avoid direct lighting of sensitive habitats of use to bats (trees, woodlands, hedgerows and watercourses).

All UK bats and their resting places carry a high level of legal protection.

Badgers

Badgers have been shown to use the site, although the development will not directly affect any known Badger setts. However, badgers can be mobile in their habits. I would advise –

- That an updated survey for Badgers is undertaken prior to any work commencing on site, to ensure that new badger setts have not been created.
- Precautions should be taken throughout works to ensure that Badgers are not harmed during the construction of the facility.

Badgers are specially protected under the terms of the Badger Protection Act 1992.

Other mammals

Deer and Foxes may use the site. Although these species are not protected, measures should be taken during any works to protect animal welfare (for example, leaving gaps in or under boundary fencing so that mammals can escape from any works areas).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Currently, although it is proposed to restore habitats on the site post-completion, because the scheme is not particularly 'temporary' it will result in an overall net loss in biodiversity, contrary to statute which requires at least a 10% gain to be delivered. The applicant has stated that a gain will be achieved by purchasing off-site biodiversity credits, although no details appear to have been provided as to where / how these credits will be obtained.

I would advise that further details are required to be provided prior to deciding the application concerning the provision of off-site biodiversity gain, to provide the Council with reassurances that BNG will be able to be achieved.

In any case, the statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition will apply to any permission which may be granted to the scheme, to require a final Biodiversity Gain Plan to be provided.

I hope that these comments are useful.

Yours sincerely

Derek Richardson
Principal Ecologist