

APP/15/01435 | Outline application for residential development (175 dwellings) with associated infrastructure. | Land South of Bartons Road, Havant 16.0425

Following a review of the further ecological information supplied and a conversation with Paul Whitby at the Ecology Co-op I am now satisfied that sufficient information has been provided.

The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Phase 1 Habitat Assessment (The Ecology Co-op, July 2015), Bat Emergence, Activity and Tree Climbing Survey (The Ecology Co-op, September 2015) and Reptile Survey Report (The Ecology Co-op, October 2014) are useful in providing a sound base of evidence on the ecological constraints at the site.

The site overall is not of particular ecological value but is situated within very close proximity to a nationally-important population of Bechstein's bat. This species is generally associated with mature ancient woodland but is known to occur within a range of other associated habitats such as hedgerows, parkland and open grassland. Any development within this immediate landscape may therefore impact on this rare bat species. In this case, bat surveys have identified bats on site which could, potentially, be Bechstein's bat. I felt that some further justification was required in order to reassure the LPA that impacts had been considered robustly.

No habitat likely to be used significantly by bat species will be lost. The outline proposals are to provide increased native hedging along the site's boundaries, thereby bolstering the provision of habitat available for bats in what is essentially a large arable field. This new habitat will be linked to existing habitat within the surrounding area and, combined with a sensible lighting strategy, should provide suitable enhancements for bat species post-development. The provision of a 'new' semi-improved grassland area to the east (which will act as a reptile receptor area also) will be of benefit for a wide variety of species.

If you are minded to grant permission can I suggest that a pre-commencement site-wide ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement strategy is secured by condition.

Prior to the commencement of any development activities, a fully-detailed ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement strategy shall be submitted for approval to the Local Planning Authority. This strategy shall be informed by the recommendations detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Phase 1 Habitat Assessment (The Ecology Co-op, July 2015), Bat Emergence, Activity and Tree Climbing Survey (The Ecology Co-op, September 2015) and Reptile Survey Report (The Ecology Co-op, October 2014) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall then proceed in strict accordance with any agreed strategy, with all mitigation features permanently retained and maintained. Reason: to provide ecological protection and enhancement in accordance with the Conservation Regulations 2010, Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, NPPF, NERC Act 2006 and Policy CS 11 of the Havant Borough Core Strategy March 2011.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
Ecology Team**