

Michelle Houghton

From: Norton, Tristan [Tristan.Norton@hants.gov.uk]
Sent: 12 December 2013 14:15
To: Rachael McMurray
Cc: Planning and Development Shared Mailbox; Havant Auto-Reply
Subject: APP/13/01074 | Proposed Pet Cemetery | Johnston's Coppice, Stakes Hill Road, Waterloooville | 13.1474

Dear Rachael,

APP/13/01074 | Proposed Pet Cemetery | Johnston's Coppice, Stakes Hill Road, Waterloooville | 13.1474

Thank you for consulting me on this application. In summary, I consider that the ecological information provided is not sufficient to enable a satisfactory assessment of the site's current ecological value, and thus the potential ecological impacts are not clear at this stage.

Firstly, I am not at all clear as to the actual proposals. There is no succinct description of exactly what physical development works are proposed and thus it is not possible for me to gauge exactly what impacts will occur and where. There is no woodland management plan on the planning application web pages – this plan may indeed address some of the issues detailed below.

Secondly, there are a number of ecology-related documents – these are predominantly maps showing breeding bird territories, presumably from recent bird survey works. It is usual practice for planning applications to be accompanied by a single report (or collection of related reports) detailing the ecological survey works undertaken at a site. The report should clearly detail the proposals, the scope of the survey, the survey methodologies and how they accord with best practice guidance, the results should be analysed (not simply presented as raw maps/data) and an evaluation should be made of the potential impacts to any identified ecological features. The report should contain a strategy for mitigating any identified impacts. Unfortunately, none of this information is presented with this application. I should add that I provided some 'informal' advice on this site back in October of this year, within which I strongly recommended that the applicant use an experienced professional ecologist to produce any necessary reporting fit for planning purposes as this would undoubtedly save time and expense during the planning process.

From a review of aerial photography and the extensive data held by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) it is clear that this area supports a population of hazel dormice, a European Protected Species. There are numerous records of this species dating to 2007 from woodland/scrub habitat immediately adjacent to the south-eastern corner of Johnston's Coppice – a maximum of 21 animals were trapped at this location, indicating a healthy and large population. I am concerned therefore that the application makes no specific reference to the potential for impacts to this species – its presence is a potentially decisive constraint in terms of detailed design and, development issues aside, dormice should be considered within any plans for woodland management as there are licensing issues (disturbance of dormouse habitat, either for development or woodland management reasons, is licensable and expert advice should be sought before undertaking any woodland management works).

In summary, I do not consider that this application addresses ecology in sufficient detail. I would recommend that the applicant commissions a Phase 1 ecological survey of the site: this should include where necessary a desk-based assessment (via the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)) but primarily a site survey assessment of the potential for the site to support protected species (to be provided by a qualified ecologist (see Natural England guidance on finding a suitably-qualified ecologist

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/spatialplanning/standingadvice/faq.aspx#q13>). The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (www.cieem.net) holds a database of suitably-qualified ecologists.

A Phase 1 ecological survey will determine whether there is any evidence of protected species or whether the site offers habitat suitable for supporting protected species, and whether the proposed works are likely to result in impacts to those habitats or species. Unless the consultant is able to conclude that there is no reasonable likelihood of protected habitats or species being present (due to negligible potential) or, that if present they are not to be impacted by the works, it is likely that further ecological survey work (Phase 2 survey) will be required prior to determination of the application. The results of any further surveys should be used to provide an assessment of the likely ecological impacts of the proposed works and to inform any mitigation measures.

NPPF and Circular 06/2005 require that planning decisions are based on full, up to date information and, in line with Natural England's standing advice, full protected species information must be available before a decision can be made. Following this guidance, provision of this information should not be deferred as a condition of any planning permission. Without full information at the point of determination it is not possible for the LPA to ensure that any impacts are known and acceptable, to engage with the Habitats Regulations, and to be able to secure any necessary mitigation. In line with NPPF, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural England Standing Advice, I would recommend that this information is required prior to further consideration of this application.

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

Kind regards,

Tristan

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