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From: Norton, Tristan [Tristan.Norton@hants.gov.uk]
Sent: 19 March 2014 12:48
To: Stephen Cantwell
Cc: Planning and Development Shared Mailbox; Havant Auto-Reply
Subject: APP/14/00270 | Discharge of Conditions A1 (i)c and A1 (ii), A17 and A18 of Planning Permission APP/12/00338 | Dunsbury Hill Farm, Park Lane, Cowplain, Waterlooville | 12.0529

Dear Stephen,

APP/14/00270 | Discharge of Conditions A1 (i)c and A1 (ii), A17 and A18 of Planning Permission APP/12/00338 | Dunsbury Hill Farm, Park Lane, Cowplain, Waterlooville | 12.0529

Thank you for consulting me on this application in relation to the discharge of Planning Conditions A1 (ecological mitigation and habitat creation plan), A17 (hazel dormouse mitigation) and A18 (bat mitigation).

I have received a number of documents directly from the applicant: (all documents: Atkins, February 2014)

- Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (Link Road and Associated Infrastructure Phase)
- Dormouse Licence - Method Statement Document 1: Background and Supporting Information
- Dormouse Licence Method Statement - Document 2: Delivery Information
- Application for a Natural England Licence – Bats - Bat Master Plan
- Application for a Natural England Licence – Bats – Application Form
- Application for a Natural England Licence – Bats - Method Statement: Document 1 Background and Supporting Information
- Application for a Natural England Licence – Bats - Method Statement: Document 2 Delivery Information

Upon review of these documents I have the following comments to make in relation to the discharge of the Planning Conditions:

Condition A1

The submitted Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan covers that portion of the DHF site subject to the full planning permission – details for the remainder (bulk) of the site are not provided due to current uncertainty as to the exact layout and composition of landscaping for each proposed development plot/phase. Although some details are given for the proposed Habitat Creation Area. This is a working document and therefore a degree of uncertainty is to be expected – I would however like to state that it is unusual for European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences (in this case for bats and dormouse) to be granted in the absence of a site-wide landscaping plan – the successful granting of an EPSM licence is based upon a detailed understanding of the impacts and mitigation across the entire development site, even where there is proposed phasing of works.

In summary, based on the information submitted, I have no issues with the proposed Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan for the Link Road and associated infrastructure phase. This document provides a useful summary of the various threads of ecological mitigation

(encompassing vegetation, bats, dormice and reptiles) and demonstrates how and when such mitigation measures will be carried out.

I therefore consider that this document provides sufficient detail for the partial discharge of Planning Condition A1 (i.e. parts (i)c and (ii)) and I look forward to reviewing the plans for the remainder of the application site in due course.

Condition A17

The submitted documents provide a site-wide mitigation strategy (covering both full and outline permitted areas) for hazel dormice which seeks to retain key habitats and landscape connections. A relatively sizeable area (2.4Ha) of potential dormouse habitat is to be lost (actually 10% of the proposed development area), although through retention, new planting and the provision of a dormouse tunnel crossing it is hoped that landscape-scale habitat corridors can be maintained. A series of dormouse nest boxes will be installed across the wider site.

On the basis of the details provided within the EPSM Method Statements 1 and 2 I have no overriding concerns in respect to the dormouse mitigation measures proposed. I would however point out that the proposed March 2014 commencement date for vegetation removal is highly improbable – the application submission timetable will take it well into April if not May before any response is received from Natural England, meaning that vegetation removal will have to be undertaken in June. Whilst this is acceptable, any later and dependent young will be present and there is always the potential for nesting bird species to occur then as well. This will require very careful planning.

To summarise, in principle I have no overriding issues with the dormouse mitigation strategy as presented and, timing issues aside, the measures provided are sufficient to allow the discharge of Planning Condition A17. I would however like to note that all mitigation measures are likely to require amendment as the various development phases come forward – the wording of Condition A17 does not explicitly allow for the provision of updated ecological information prior to the commencement of each phase.

Condition A18

The submitted Method Statements 1 and 2 are solely in relation to the proposed felling of on-site trees within the Spine Road development area and thus have no bearing on any subsequent development phases. Two trees here have been confirmed as supporting roosting bats and a small number of additional trees have potential to support bats also. All trees will be subjected to soft-felling techniques, under licence. These measures are standard operational procedure for tree roosts and, in principle, should be perfectly acceptable to Natural England. I would however note that additional Phase 2 bat surveys are planned for several trees which may require works due to the realignment of the Hermitage Stream – it is therefore imperative that further details are provided for those works as they are collected and that it is understood that such works cannot take place until the LPA has reviewed and agreed them.

Site-wide bat mitigation measures are dealt with by the Bat Master Plan. This document sets out the detail contained within Method Statements 1 and 2, as well as some additional measures designed to compensate for impacts from the wider development phases. The document concludes that although direct impacts to bats are not anticipated for the two subsequent phases, this cannot be ruled out due to insufficient information at the current time. This again highlights the absolute necessity for updated ecological information for each development phase – the impacts are highly likely to change from those currently understood and, unfortunately, the wording of Condition 18 does not allow for the repeated provision of information as each phase comes forward.

In summary, I am content that the bat mitigation information is sufficient for the Spine Road application but there is not yet sufficient detail to allow discharge in relation to either of the subsequent development phases or the Hermitage Stream works.

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

Kind regards,

Tristan

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Senior Ecologist

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