

## ECOLOGY APPRAISAL EXTRACT

## 5.0 Recommendations

### Planning Context

- 5.1 The development should be undertaken with due consideration to policies CSP3, ENV1, ENV4, and ENV5 of the Black Country Core Strategy (adopted February 2011) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

### Habitats and Flora

- 5.2 Best practice pollution prevention measures should be implemented to ensure any indirect impacts on the surrounding habitat.
- 5.3 All retained trees on and adjacent to the site will be protected from incidental damage and disturbance during construction in accordance with current standards (BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations).
- 5.4 Planting within the scheme design should take place in order to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. Any trees lost should be replaced on a minimum one-for-one basis to ensure there is no net loss of trees and native species should ideally be used in replacement planting.

### Fauna

#### Badger

- 5.5 Proposals for the site are not yet fixed, however where works are required to setts or within a 30m buffer from a sett, a Natural England mitigation licence should be considered against the proposed works/level of disturbance.
- 5.6 It is recommended that an updated badger survey is undertaken prior to any works as badger are considered to be very dynamic animals and activity status of a sett can change rapidly.
- 5.7 Full recommendations can be found within the Badger Survey Report (TEP Ref: 7507.32.009).

#### Bats

- 5.8 Prior to any works commencing, a toolbox talk should be given by a Natural England Bat Licenced ecologist to demolition contractors to explain measures that need to be undertaken to minimise damage to the existing bat population and what is required should bat(s) be encountered during construction.
- 5.9 If the proposals are to impact any habitat such as hedgerows, scrub or woodland on the site, a sensitive lighting strategy will be required to ensure there are no adverse effects on commuting bats from light pollution.
- 5.10 Prior to any works commencing, three bat boxes should be installed on suitable mature and retained trees to mitigate for any lost roosting habitat.

- 5.11 A Natural England Bat Mitigation Class Licence will be required to allow the demolition of Barns A and C due to the presence of three day roosts of common pipistrelle. An endoscopic inspection of the roof and eaves of both buildings will be required immediately prior to demolition by a licenced bat ecologist. Where possible, soft demolition techniques should be used where the bat roost feature can be removed by hand under the supervision of a bat licenced ecologist prior to mechanical demolition commencing.
- 5.12 If trees assessed as having moderate or low potential are to be felled they should be subject to a pre-felling inspection and felled under the supervision of a bat licenced ecologist. If bats are found, works will cease and advice sought from Natural England.
- 5.13 Full recommendations can be found in the Bat Survey Report (TEP Ref. 7507.32.005).

#### Birds

- 5.14 Any site clearance undertaken during the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) must be subject to a nesting bird check prior to works commencing. The nesting feature will be checked by a suitability qualified ecologist no more than 24 hours prior to any clearance works. If nests are identified, works must cease in that area and an appropriate buffer zone established around the nest until the young have fledged. This will require monitoring by an ecologist who will advise when works within the buffer zone can proceed.
- 5.15 Any loss of nesting bird habitat, in particular trees and dense scrub habitats, should be mitigated through replacement of appropriate habitat in order to maintain or increase the amount of breeding and nesting habitat available to birds. This could include tree planting, native shrub and/or hedgerow planting and planting fruiting tree species to provide additional foraging resources. An extensive nest box scheme should also be included in the development proposals to mitigate for the loss of nesting habitat.
- 5.16 Full recommendations can be found in the Breeding Bird Survey Report (TEP Ref. 7507.32.006).

#### Invertebrates

- 5.17 Further surveys for invertebrates, to determine the invertebrate assemblage of the site, will be required prior to any future development.

#### Hedgehog

- 5.18 A hedgehog Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) will be required to ensure that killing or injury of hedgehog that may be present within the site are avoided during site clearance. The PWMS will need to include methods such as staged strimming, hand searching and removal to a safe location of any hedgehogs found.

### **Biodiversity Enhancement**

- 5.19 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), developments should aim to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gain in biodiversity.
- 5.20 Once development proposals are known an updated biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment will be required to provide future habitat creation or offsetting requirements.
- 5.21 The BNG will also provide for loss of the on site SLINC.
- 5.22 Landscape planting should aim to utilise native species appropriate to the local area and should maximise berry-bearing and nectar and pollen rich species. These can provide a valuable foraging resource for a range of pollinators and other invertebrates, which in turn benefits wildlife such as bats, small mammals and many bird species. Native wildflower seed mixes, suitable to the soil type at the application site, are available commercially and could be planted on site. This would also be beneficial to invertebrates such as bees and butterflies.