

Date: 07 September 2022
Our ref: 404423
Your ref: **22/0484/FUL**



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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Sir/Madam

Planning consultation: Construct 173 no. dwellings including public open space, landscaping, access, drainage, parking, servicing, utilities and all associated infrastructure and ancillary buildings

Location: Land At Brook Farm, Daws Heath Road, Hadleigh, Essex

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 17 August 2022 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

We consider that without appropriate mitigation the application would:

- damage or destroy the interest features for which Great Wood & Dodd's Grove Site of Special Scientific Interest has been notified.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures should be secured:

- measures to restrict unauthorised access from the application site into the SSSI, the application of a 15m buffer zone adjacent to the SSSI, the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan to safeguard the SSSI during construction and the submission of a sensitive lighting strategy.

In addition, in order to ensure no adverse integrity on internationally designated sites, the following is required:

- a contribution to the Essex Coast RAMS and the provision of sufficient accessible semi-natural open space within the development with circular walks of at least 2.7 km.

We recommend that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Further advice on mitigation

It has been identified that this development falls within the 'Zone of Influence' (Zol) for one or more of the European designated sites scoped into the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). Without mitigation, new residential development in this area and of this scale is likely to have a significant effect on the sensitive interest features of these coastal European designated sites, through increased recreational pressure when considered 'in combination' with other plans and projects. The Essex Coast RAMS is a package of strategic measures to address such effects which is funded through developer contributions.

We agree with the measures proposed to safeguard international sites in the report entitled '*Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment and Statutory Designated Sites Impact Assessment Land at Brook Farm, Daws Heath, Hadleigh, Essex*' (SES, June 2022). Mitigation measures on the application site include accessible semi-natural open space, circular dog walking routes of 2.7km within the site with links to surrounding public rights of way, dog waste bins and a commitment to long term management and maintenance of these provisions. A contribution to the Essex Coast RAMS is proposed by the applicant.

We agree with the measures given in the above report to minimise any adverse impacts on the adjacent Great Wood & Dodd's Grove SSSI. These measures include a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which should detail how construction activities will be limited in time, location and noise level to minimise the risk of impacts to the sensitive habitats of the adjacent SSSI. The CEMP should deal with the physical protection of SSSI habitats and on-site retained habitats, such as trees and hedgerows. In addition, it should set out how pollutants, water quality/quantity, lighting and noise will be controlled during construction to avoid indirect impacts on the SSSI. To protect the SSSI during the operational phase of the development, we note that there will be a fence and a 15m green buffer, including native thorny species, between the open space provision and the SSSI. A sensitive lighting scheme must be provided to demonstrate no artificial lighting of SSSI habitats or sensitive habitats on-site.

The nearby Garrold's Meadow SSSI will not be affected by this proposal.

Please note that if your authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter, you are required under Section 281 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

Other advice

Further general advice on consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A. Should the developer wish to discuss the detail of measures to mitigate the effects described above with Natural England, we recommend that they seek advice through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. We would not expect to provide further advice on the discharge of planning conditions or obligations attached to any planning permission. Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours faithfully

Alison Collins
West Anglia Team

ANNEX A

Protected Species

Natural England has produced [standing advice](#)¹ to help planning authorities understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. We advise you to refer to this advice. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on protected species where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

Environmental gains

Development should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the NPPF paragraphs 174(d), 179 and 180. Development also provides opportunities to secure wider environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 73, 104, 120, 174, 175 and 180). We advise you to follow the mitigation hierarchy as set out in paragraph 180 of the NPPF and firstly consider what existing environmental features on and around the site can be retained or enhanced or what new features could be incorporated into the development proposal. Where onsite measures are not possible, you should consider off site measures. Opportunities for enhancement might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Designing lighting to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

Natural England's [Biodiversity Metric 3.1](#) may be used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and intertidal habitats and can be used to inform any development project. For small development sites the [Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of [Biodiversity Metric 3.1](#) and is designed for use where certain criteria are met. It is available as a beta test version.

You could also consider how the proposed development can contribute to the wider environment and help implement elements of any Landscape, Green Infrastructure or Biodiversity Strategy in place in your area. For example:

- Links to existing greenspace and/or opportunities to enhance and improve access.
- Identifying opportunities for new greenspace and managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips)
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network or using the opportunity of new development to extend the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition or clearing away an eyesore).

Natural England's [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside [Biodiversity Metric 3.1](#) and is available as a beta test version.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>