Ecology Consultation

Proposal:		Location:	
Replacement dwelling		Abblitt Dairy Farm Mereside Drove Ramsey Mereside Huntingdon PE26 2UE	
Dc Case Officer: KS	**Ecology Officer:** ET	**Application Ref. No:** 25/00773/FUL	**Date:** 16/06/2025

Submitted Plans and Documents Reviewed

- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, received 28/04/2025
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, received 28/04/2025
- Calculation of Biodiversity Net Gain, received 28/04/2025

Conclusion

Objection. Based on the submitted information, the approach to protected species, biodiversity net gain, and the mitigation and enhancement measures, are unacceptable and objections to the proposal are raised as the application fails to:

- Ensure the development delivers a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

- Conserve protected species and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

If the Planning Officer is minder to progress the application, further survey and amendments are required. Where the submitted details are sufficient, suitable conditions have been suggested.

Assessment

Biodiversity Net Gain

The following issues will need to be addressed:

- The submitted metric contains area habitats and offsite watercourse baseline without areas
- Discrepancy between the area in the metric (0.17ha) and on the application form (0.19ha)

- Creation of habitats within curtilage of a privately owned or tenanted dwelling house cannot be included BNG uplift (excerpt from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide below). With this corrected, the proposal has a net gain of -13.64% area units. Amendments and off-site purchase of units are recommended.

> The post-development private garden has no public access, and biodiversity net gains cannot be legally secured. As these gains cannot be secured you should only record created private gardens as either:
>
> - 'urban – vegetated garden'; or
> - 'urban - unvegetated garden'
>
> You should not:
>
> - record the creation of any other new habitats within private gardens
> - record enhancement of any habitat within private gardens
>
> However, habitats which are recorded in the baseline and remain within a private garden may be recorded as retained. Guidance on retention should still be followed.
>
> Find out more about recording habitat retention.
>
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>
> **Recording planted individual trees at post-development**
>
> **Using the tree helper**
>
> Use the tree helper to calculate the area for planted trees. You should:
>
> - record the count of planted individual trees
> - enter the count into the tree helper to determine area
>
> You should not:
>
> - count newly planted trees sited within private gardens
> - count trees planted as part of hedgerow creation or enhancement
> - adjust the area generated by the tree helper

Ecology

A bat dusk emergence survey is recommended by the PEA to identify roosts within Building 1 which must be submitted prior to determination as an EPSL application to Natural England may be needed. The presence or absence of protected species, and the extent to which they could be affected by the proposed development, should be established before planning permission is granted to ensure all material considerations have been taken into account in the decision-making processes. Therefore, these surveys cannot be secured by condition and must be completed prior to determination for the application to progress.

However, the top-up bat roost potential survey for Tree 1 prior to removal can be secured by condition. In accordance with BSI Standards Publication, Biodiversity — Code of Practice for Planning and Development, BS 42020:2013, Clause 9.2.4. d), the additional survey can be secured by condition as it falls within the criteria for exceptional circumstances. The following condition is recommended:

- *No development shall commence until the further survey of Tree 1 prior to removal as recommended in the PEA (the Landscape Partnership received by the Local*

Planning Authority on 28/04/2025) has been carried out within 1 year prior to commencement of development by a licensed ecologist. A report of the findings including a suitable mitigation strategy or further European Protected Species Licencing if required, should the above specified species be found, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved report.

- *Reason: To conserve protected species and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036*

The PEA recommends Schedule 9 invasive species removal. This should be secured at the condition stage by the submission of an Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Management Plan. The following condition wording is recommended:

- Condition: *No development shall commence until a Non-Native Invasive Species Management Plan, including a scheme for the eradication of Cotoneaster and a timetable for implementation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Should there be a delay of more than one year between the approval of the scheme for the eradication of Cotoneaster and its implementation or the commencement of development then a new site survey and, if necessary, further remedial measures shall be submitted for the further approval of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be carried out as approved and retained thereafter."*
- *Reason: To prevent the introduction and spread of Invasive non-native species under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).*