Landscape Consultation

Proposal: Demolition of two outbuildings and erection of two self-build dwellings	**Location:** Land At 64A Bottels Road Warboys
Case Officer: HG **Landscape Officer:** PBAI	**Application No:** 24/02258/FUL

Comments:

There appears to a be a significant loss of trees and associated wildlife habitat and amenity value; all but one sycamore to be removed.

The proposal is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain, due to the proposal being a self-build. The site is less than 5,000m^2 and there are no more than 9 dwellings.

We do not support this application in its current form. It is considered that the proposed loss of trees on site cannot be reasonably mitigated for, as proposed.

With reference to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2038: LP 30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, and LP 31 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows:

> LP 30: *'A proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated.'*
>
> LP 31: *'b. sets out how the details of the proposal have been decided upon in terms of their impact on the value of trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible.'*

The proposal does not demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been fully investigated, nor does it demonstrate how adverse impacts will be avoided as far as possible, or if unavoidable how they will be minimised as far as possible.

This is further substantiated by the absence of a desk study; Identification of any designated nature conservation sites within the zone(s) of influence; Species records within the zone(s) of influence; Contextual information about the protected or priority habitats or species which are present. On this matter, Ecology colleagues are deferred to in the first instance.

> LP30: *'All possible efforts must be taken to avoid adverse impacts. If it is demonstrated that adverse impacts are unavoidable they must be minimised as far as possible and then mitigated. Only where this process of avoidance, minimisation and then mitigation is insufficient to fully address adverse impacts will consideration be given to compensation measures. Following this process a proposal will only be supported subject to a hierarchy where:*
>
> *c. a protected species, a priority habitat or species, a site of local or regional importance, the achievement of water body good ecological potential, or the biodiversity value of the proposed development site as part of the wider network would be affected, the need for and the benefits of the proposal must clearly outweigh the assessed impacts.'*
>
> LP31: *'Loss, threat or damage to any tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of visual, heritage or nature conservation value will only be acceptable where:*
>
> *c. it is addressed firstly by seeking to avoid the impact, then to minimise the impact and finally where appropriate to include mitigation measures; or*

d. there are sound arboricultural reasons to support the proposal.'

The mitigation hierarchy has not been followed to demonstrate avoidance nor adequate mitigation proposed for the loss of habitat.

> LP30: 'c *[…] the need for and the benefits of the proposal must clearly outweigh the assessed impacts.'*
>
> LP31: *'Where impacts remain the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location must clearly outweigh the loss, threat or damage.'*

The Planning Officer is deferred to in the first instance regarding the planning balance.

> LP30: '*A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.'*
>
> LP31: '*Where loss, threat or damage cannot be fully addressed through minimisation and/ or mitigation measures the proposal may be supported if alternative measures such as reinstatement of features, additional landscaping, habitat creation or tree planting will compensate for the harm and can be implemented and established before development starts.'*

Should the Planning Officer be minded approving this application, it is strongly recommended that a Statutory Biodiversity Metric is used to measure the baseline habitat value of the site. This is to ensure mitigation measures are proportional to the proposed loss, and to ensure compliance to LP30 and LP31, as discussed above. It is highly likely that the necessary mitigation measures cannot be fully addressed on site, and that offsite contribution is required to ensure no net loss in biodiversity.

Signed: [redacted]

Dated: 04/02/2025