

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

The Biggleswade Allotment Meadow CWS will be retained as part of the proposed development. To ensure habitat connectivity to and from this nature conservation site and to protect against indirect impacts during construction of the proposed development, the following recommendations are made:

- **Habitat Connectivity:** The hedgerow with trees and woodland strip which forms the northern boundary of the survey area should be retained and protected during construction. The stream and tree lined stream corridor which runs along the eastern boundary of the CWS and south through the proposed development should be retained and protected as another green corridor.
- **Construction Impacts:** During the construction phase a fenced 15 m buffer zone should be implemented around the CWS boundary to ensure no accidental damage is caused by machinery or other hazards.

### 6.2 HABITATS

The following recommendations are made regarding the habitats present on site:

- **Habitat Loss:** In accordance with the provision of Planning Policy Statement 9 (Biodiversity & Geological Conservation) and Local Planning Policy, a habitat/species enhancement scheme should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme of any proposed works to maximise the ecological value of the site. This will involve, for example, the planting of native seed/fruit bearing species which will be of value to wildlife. Only keep this in if it relevant to the works proposed on site.
- **Ponds:** The ponds within the site should be retained and protected where possible. Any ponds damaged or destroyed should be compensated for by the creation of new wildlife friendly waterbodies.
- **Running water:** The stream corridor running through the centre of the site should be retained and protected from physical, chemical or hydrological damage during the development work.
- **Trees:** Any trees and/or hedgerows on site, or overhanging the site, which are not to be removed as a part of any proposed works should be protected in accordance with British Standard "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations" BS5837:2005. Protection should be installed on site prior to the commencement of any works on site.

### 6.3 PROTECTED / NOTABLE SPECIES

The following recommendations are made regarding protected species that are potentially present on site:

- **Badgers:** To ensure compliance with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, given the suitable habitat present within the survey area and connectivity to adjacent habitat that is suitable for badgers, it is recommended that a badger survey is undertaken to determine whether any setts are located within 30 m of the proposed development area. Should badger setts be identified a badger activity survey may be required. Badger surveys can be completed at any time of the year. Should a badger sett be identified that will be required to be disturbed or closed, works to the badger sett will require a licence from Natural England. Badger setts can be closed between July and November inclusive.
- **Roosting Bats:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), an initial bat survey should be undertaken on any mature trees and buildings that will be removed, renovated or impacted in any other way by the proposed development works. Initial bat surveys can be completed at any time of year. Should these initial surveys recommend that further activity surveys are required, these further surveys can be undertaken during suitable weather conditions between April and September (inclusive). Ideal activity survey times are in suitable weather conditions between May and August, however surveys in April and September may be possible but consultation with Natural England / Local Planning Authority is recommended.
- **Foraging Bats:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), a foraging bat survey should be undertaken to determine bat use of the site. Foraging bat surveys can be completed in suitable weather conditions between April and September (inclusive), with ideal surveys times being May and June.
- **Water Voles:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), a water vole survey of the central stream corridor should be undertaken. This survey should include 100 m upstream and downstream of the proposed works area. Water vole surveys can be completed between March and October inclusive.
- **Otters:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), an otter survey of the central stream corridor should be undertaken. This survey should include 100 m upstream and downstream of the proposed works area. Otter surveys can be completed at any time of year.
- **Breeding Birds:** A Breeding Bird survey should be undertaken to determine bird use of the site. Particular attention will be paid to recording the presence of Schedule 1 species such as kingfisher and barn owl for which records have been provided for the local area. A large number of records were also provided for characteristic and notable farmland bird species and these will also be

considered a special interest group. Breeding bird surveys are conducted in March to July during peak breeding season.

- **Nesting Birds:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season. The nesting bird season is weather dependent but generally extends between March and September inclusive. If this is not possible then any vegetation that is to be removed or disturbed should be checked by an experienced ecologist for nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing. If birds are found to be nesting any works which may affect them would have to be delayed until the young have fledged and the nest has been abandoned naturally.
- **Great Crested Newts and other amphibians:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), a great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment should be undertaken for all ponds identified within 500 m of the edge of the proposed development. Great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index assessments can be carried out at any time of year, although if possible it is preferable to carry out the assessments between March and October. If suitable great crested newt breeding ponds are identified with connecting habitat to the proposed development site it is likely that a full great crested newt survey will be required.
- **Reptiles:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), a reptile survey should be undertaken of suitable habitats within the proposed development site. Reptile surveys can be completed in suitable weather conditions between April and September (inclusive).
- **Invertebrates:** Recommendations made in 6.1 and 6.2 above will ensure continuity of nectar supplies and habitats and connectivity for a large number of invertebrates which may be using the survey area as indicated by the desk study records. Additional wildlife friendly planting as part of the proposed development should aim to supply additional nectar sources and habitats for invertebrates.
- **Vascular Plants:** It is recommended that a Phase 2 detailed botanical survey is undertaken. The focus of such an investigation should be the stream corridor and other wetland habitats for the presence of the UKBAP species *Oenanthe fistulosa* and the arable farmland for the presence of notable arable weeds.
- **Himalayan Balsam:** To ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the works must not cause Himalayan balsam to spread. Therefore it is recommended that a Himalayan balsam survey be completed and a Method Statement developed to ensure that the proposed works do not result in the spread of this invasive non-native species.