

Stakehill: Ecology Summary Summer 2018

Ecological Receptor	Survey Findings	Further survey	Indicative mitigation/compensation
Habitats	The site supports a mosaic of habitats including grassland, scrub, hedges, scattered trees, tall ruderal and open water. The grassland resource is relatively homogenous and predominantly comprises poor semi-improved and improved grassland (mainly used for silage production although there is some grazing). Two very small areas of better quality semi-improved grassland exist on knolls within the centre of the site, but they do not meet SBI criteria. None of the hedgerows appear to qualify as important under the Hedgerow Regulations, mainly due to a lack of species diversity. Hedgerows are however a UK Priority Habitat type. Several mature trees are present throughout the site and these are of ecological value given their age. Himalayan balsam occurs frequently throughout the site, while other Schedule 9 listed plants include variegated yellow archangel. Japanese rose and Japanese knotweed occur close to the site.	None currently required	Owing to the limited value of terrestrial habitats within the site, there is no legal obligation to provide compensatory habitats. The landscape scheme should however incorporate new areas of species rich grassland and hedges while retained grassland could be restored and enhanced through an appropriate management regime. Species planted should include native species of local origin. Himalayan balsam and other Schedule 9 listed plant species should be eradicated, and special measures will need to be implemented to prevent their spread during construction. Even with the creation of new areas of habitat the LPA may request that biodiversity offsetting is required off site.
Badger	No evidence of badgers was recorded and there are no records from the surrounding area suggesting the species may be absent from the site.	None currently required	Implement reasonable avoidance measures during construction e.g. position mammal ramps within steep sided excavations
Riparian Mammals	No evidence of otter or water vole was recorded during the survey. Steep and densely vegetated margins around the fishing ponds provide good habitat for water voles while there is a small ditch also present within the site.	None currently required	None required
Bats	The buildings within the site are of negligible value to bats. There are several trees which support potential roosting features for bats while buildings adjacent the site may also support bat roosts. Three activity transect surveys were carried out between May and July 2018, along with static monitoring	None currently required	Implement RAMs during felling/demolition, incorporate bat roosting features in new buildings and erect bat boxes on retained trees. The planting of native vegetation as part of the landscaping scheme would help boost insect numbers and therefore bat numbers. Keep lighting (LED) to an

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	using two detectors. All three transects recorded low levels of bat activity across site by common and soprano pipistrelle bats only.		absolute minimum and implement measures to reduce light spill.
Great crested newt	As agreed with GMEU only ponds within 250 m of the site required consideration for GCN survey. While there are ten waterbodies within this zone, only two have been subject to eDNA survey: a pond in the nearby industrial estate and a small pond within the site. Both of these ponds have tested negative for GCN DNA. The five fishing ponds within the centre of the site have been ruled out of further survey as they support dense fish populations while all other ponds are separated from the site by physical barriers, namely the A627(M) motorways	None currently required	None required.
Breeding Birds	<p>Breeding bird surveys were undertaken over three visits between 6 May and 1 June 2018. Surveys recorded 35 bird species, principally common farmland, woodland and garden birds.</p> <p>Birds were generally encountered within scrub and woodland habitat immediately beyond the northern boundary of the site (i.e. within highways planting long the A627(M)); within hedgerows; within scrub habitats around the fishing ponds; and within adjoining domestic gardens. These habitats are considered to be those of greatest value to breeding birds at the site offering nesting and foraging opportunities.</p> <p>The grassland habitats at the site are considered to be of limited value for birds.</p> <p>Barns located just outside site boundary provide potential roosting/nesting habitat for barn owl.</p>	Gain access to select farm buildings	Removal of woody vegetation outside breeding bird season. Provision of bird boxes on buildings and retained trees. Provide additional foraging and nesting habitat through provision of woody habitats as part of landscaping scheme. Keep lighting (LED) to an absolute minimum and implement measures to reduce light spill.

