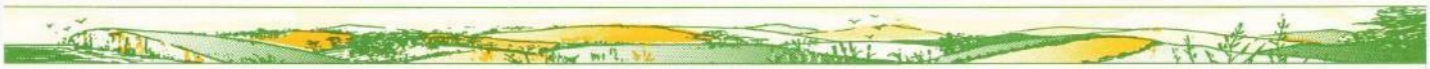
ECO TECH
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SPECIALISTS IN: HABITAT AND SPECIES SURVEY ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND ADVICE

Application number: LLA P/2022/0199 (variation of conditions 2 and 4 of planning permission P/2018/0517 to amend site layout)

Miners Road, Llay Industrial Estate, Llay, Wrexham, Ll12 0PJ

Report in relation to the discharge of Condition 6: Tree and shrub planting

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1 Background

The Section 73 application for the variation of conditions 2 and 4 of planning permission P/2018/0797 (to amend site layout) was permitted in April 2022.

Condition 6 of the decision notice states:
"Within six months of the first use of the development, trees and shrubs shall be planted on the site in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority."

The reason for this condition is stated as:
To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies GDP1 and PS2 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

Eco Tech was commissioned to produce this report in order to discharge this condition.

2 Rationale

2.1 Compliance with condition 8 of the same permission

Condition 8 of the decision notice states:
"The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the findings and recommendations contained within the Ecology Assessment A1801/Conditions v3 Final, dated 11.10.2018, GCN report and statement approved as part of this application. The mitigation and compensation measures hereby approved shall be fully implemented prior to first use of the development."

The reason for this condition is stated as:
"To protect named species / habitats / biodiversity which would otherwise be damaged / lost by the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies GDP1 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan."

Within the recommendations of the Ecology Assessment A1801/Conditions v3 Final, condition 11 of LLA P/2022/0200 (variation of conditions 2 and 9 of planning permission P/2018/0797) and also the required Natural Resources Wales mitigation licence was the need for a Long Term Conservation Management Plan. For ease of reference, this management plan is submitted with the application to discharge this condition.

In relation to trees and shrubs, the management plan includes the following statements.

"4.12 In general terms, the aim is to retain and manage the existing mosaic of scrub, grassland and ephemeral vegetation to maintain a mosaic of habitat structures beneficial to GCN. Natural colonisation of scrub is already occurring in the least disturbed parts of the site, and this will be encouraged and managed as necessary to maintain a diverse age structure. However, a small amount of additional scrub planting may be carried out in selected areas to diversify the species composition. The requirement for additional planting will be assessed prior to completion of construction, once the security fences have been installed and the licensed GCN capture and release has been carried out. At this point, if additional planting is deemed necessary it will be carried out in the next available planting season."

From Table 5:
"(2) Maintain, enhance and manage a mosaic of scrub vegetation to provide foraging habitat and shelter for GCN.

- *Existing areas of scrub should be retained undisturbed. Shrubs may be coppiced on a rotational basis every 5-10 years, as necessary, in order to maintain a mosaic of age structures across the Site. Areas to be cut should be identified through monitoring. Coppicing should be carried out in winter and the prunings retained as habitat piles.*
- *Once established, newly planted areas of native shrubs will be allowed to grow tall and dense with minimal intervention until fully mature.*
- *Once mature (years 5-10+), shrubs may be coppiced on a rotational basis in winter, such that no more than 30% are cut in any one year. This will ensure that dense canopy cover is maintained to provide cover and shelter for GCN.*
- *Any prunings arising are to be retained on Site and used to create log piles to be allowed to rot down naturally over time. These will provide additional foraging and sheltering habitats for GCN."*

To ensure compliance with condition 11 of LLA P/2022/0200 and the mitigation licence, these statements need to be adhered to. Hence, for consistency (and the avoidance of contradictory management schemes) it is suggested that these statements should be accepted as the scheme for condition 6.

2.2 Natural regeneration of trees and scrub since permission was granted
Whilst the wording of the condition uses the word "planted". This is taken to be equivalent to trees and shrubs growing and/or regenerating naturally. As can be seen in Photos 1 to 5, growth and regeneration has been prolific on the periphery of the permitted area. It is proposed that this growth and regeneration has achieved a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities without the need for planting.

2.3 Maximising biodiversity by limiting the dominance of trees and shrubs
Whilst trees and shrubs can have a high biodiversity value, the permitted area also supports species of high biodiversity value that thrive in more open habitats. For example, the permitted area currently supports bee and common spotted-orchid (see Photos 6 and 7). These would most likely be shaded out if tree and shrub cover expanded (or was planted) to a level not much greater than currently present. This would reduce the area's biodiversity value.

The wording of the Long Term Conservation Management Plan accounts for this, for example
From Table 4:
"Grassland & ephemeral
Maintain and manage a mosaic of open habitats to provide foraging and dispersal habitat for GCN."

And

"4.15 The habitats will also provide wider biodiversity benefits for birds, invertebrates and other wildlife…"

Thus, as per section 2.1 above, for consistency (and the avoidance of contradictory management schemes) it is suggested that these additional statements should be accepted as the scheme for condition 6

3 Conclusion

Section 2 outlines the rationale for accepting the Long Term Conservation Management Plan as the scheme required for condition 6. Photos 1 to 5 hopefully show that growth and regeneration since permission has achieved a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities without the need for planting. Hence, it is requested that condition 6 is discharged in line with this report.

Photos



Photo 1 – Eastern boundary



Photo 2 – South-eastern boundary



Photo 3 – South-western boundary

Photos (cont.)



Photo 4 – Western boundary



Photo 5 – Northern boundary



Photo 6 – Bee orchid



Photo 7 – Common spotted-orchid