

RE: 25/1066 comments



Harris, Matthew (Ecology Officer)

To Ostler, Marnie (Planning Officer)

Retention Policy 7 Year Delete (7 years)

Expires 02/02/2033



12:17

Hello Marnie, I accept that the removal of these hedgerows will result in the betterment of the features for which the SSSI has been notified, however traditional hedgerows such as these will have value for a range of other non-SSSI features, as well as for climate change mitigation and adaptation. I note in their response of 20th January that NRW have advised *'Removing only the southern hedgerow, while retaining and managing the northern one, ensures essential linear features remain in place to support species movement and foraging, including for dormice'*. However, no clearance methodology is provided which would assure us that harm to individual dormice will be avoided. For example, I would normally expect above-ground vegetation to be cleared in winter when the dormice are hibernating at ground level, then stumps and roots etc cleared in spring when they have emerged from hibernation and made their way to retained vegetation nearby. Alternatively, a directional clearance to encourage active dormice to move to retained habitats could be employed. Either way, we should be provided with a clearance methodology statement.

Similarly, I would be asking for assurance that clearance will avoid disturbance to nesting birds, which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: Part 1, 1(1)(b), whereby it is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. For example will clearance take place outside the March to August nesting season, or will the hedgerows be surveyed prior to clearance and avoidance measures put in place until the nest is no longer in use?

Finally, will there be compensation for the loss of hedgerow habitat? In accordance with section 6.4.42 of PPW 12, *'Permanent removal of trees, woodland **and hedgerows** will only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined public benefits. Where individual or groups of trees and hedgerows are removed as part of a proposed scheme, planning authorities must first follow the step-wise approach as set out in paragraph 6.4.15. **Where loss is unavoidable developers will be required to provide compensatory planting** (which is proportionate to the proposed loss as identified through an assessment of green infrastructure value including biodiversity, landscape value and carbon capture). Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must be preferably onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost.'*

We should seek the advice of the Applicant or their Agent (NRW in this instance) as to whether replacement planting will be in place, and if so, where.

Matt Harris
Ecology Officer