

TMC Ecology Technical Note Summary Sheet

Baseline

This Technical Note was produced following reference to, and consideration of:

- survey work undertaken by TEP
- the 3 other submissions to the Millennium Communities Competition
- minutes of the two EEG meetings.

There are several habitats and species that place constraints on the development however some have more major implications than others.

In terms of faunal species the following are of relevance:

- Great crested newts – medium sized population present in ponds 1, 2 and 3 and protected by European legislation;
- Reptiles – medium sized population present predominantly in the south central area and protected by national legislation;
- Badgers – probably small group of relatively inactive badgers present using one sett protected by national legislation;
- Wintering and breeding birds – nests protected by national legislation. Several species recorded on site declining nationally but not protected in themselves.
- Terrestrial invertebrates – site of some interest but limited survey prevented full assessment of nature conservation importance.

In terms of habitats and species of flora the following are of relevance:

- Lowland heathland – UKBAP habitat
- Acid grassland – UKBAP Broad habitat and in Telford and Wrekin BAP
- Broad-leaved woodland and existing green corridors along the railway and along Beveley Glen Stream identified as key habitats for retention *in situ*.
- Areas of woodland/heath/wetland/marsh identified as habitats for which compensatory habitat creation possible if retention *in situ* not possible.

Ecology and Environment Group Responses

The EEG are concerned about the following main issues:

- Ensuring that no species need to be taken off site.
- Complying with the objective of maintain or enhance the site in terms of nature conservation.
- Ensuring that the existing newt ponds are retained but protected from road etc. drainage and yet still collect enough water to be wet in the spring and early summer for newts to breed.
- Ensuring that enough habitat is retained for newts around the existing ponds.
- Ensuring that enough habitat is created for the reptiles if their existing habitats are lost.
- Ensuring that similar bird species to those currently present continue to be able to use the site.

- Ensuring that the wildlife is not subject to so much disturbance during and post development (i.e. with over 1000 people on site) that species just leave the site.

These are all reasonable points that need to be considered.

Key Issues

The baseline surveys and EEG concerns have led to the following key issues being identified:

- Four primary areas of nature conservation value to be retained *in situ*. Other habitats, such as acid grassland, hedges, woodland can be translocated/recreated elsewhere on site if lost. The constraints plan illustrates hard constraints (to be retained *in situ*), soft constraints (that should be green but could be provided by herbaceous or unmanaged areas of gardens for example as long as there is linkage between them), and an indication of areas of habitat for which efforts should be made to translocate/recreate elsewhere on the site. The possible locations have not been indicated as these will be defined by other constraints - indeed they could be retained *in situ*. The constraints are illustrated in Appendix B of the accompanying Technical Note.
- Creating/retaining large areas of habitat will be more beneficial to the wildlife than creating several small ones because the small ones will be more vulnerable, as will the fauna that inhabit them.
- Areas of habitat should be linked to facilitate the flow of wildlife across the site. The green corridors should be of a good size (4-5m wide) and of comprise rank grassland, hedges tree lines etc. Green corridors should flow over or under roads.
- Appropriate habitats needs to be retained for great crested newts. This has been assessed at a **minimum** of 3.5 ha of core habitat but did not take account of the likelihood of newt in the ponds in the gardens of Glen Cottages and in off-site Gardens. Habitat areas can be optimised for great crested newts through careful creation and management.
- Appropriate habitats need to be created, if not retained, for reptiles. Still researching this but expect 3-5ha to be roughly right. *Needs to be confirmed*. Note that some, but not all, of the habitat in the area to be retained for newts is appropriate for reptiles. Habitat areas can be optimised for reptiles through careful creation and management.
- Areas of open grassland need to be retained/provided to allow the badgers on site to forage. Appropriate habitat management and planting can help.
- Birds will continue to use the site however they can be encouraged.
- The terrestrial invertebrate species of interest on site will occur on the translocated/recreated acid grassland areas/areas etc.
- The timing/phasing of development activities will need to be carefully planned. Development will not be possible until appropriate licences have been obtained and probably some habitat and species receptor sites created. This will take time.
- It will be important to ensure that during, and post, development some areas of habitat are not subject to disturbance or only subject to 'managed' disturbance i.e. controlled access along walkways or similar. Substantial disturbance will result in the loss of the species that we are trying to retain.
- Foster a sense of community interest through education on site such as through provision of information boards, membership of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust for example.