

# Ecological Mitigation Enhancement Creation

Land East of Pettaugh Lane

Gosbeck

Ipswich

Suffolk

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Company Director

# Contents

1. Summary

2. Introduction

3. Site Assessment

7. Conclusions

Appendix 1 – Habitat Provision Drawing

# 1. Summary

- 1.1 Eco-Planning UK Ltd had received earlier this year instruction to complete an Ecological Assessment for an area of land to the east of Pettaugh Lane, Gosbeck, Ipswich, in Suffolk.
- 1.2 A planning Application has been submitted to the local planning authority for a change of use of this agricultural land area into equine use including ménage.
- 1.3 The local authority as part of that planning application process sought ecological advice from Place Services – Essex County Council. The Place Services response/comment identified a need for an ecological submission as part of the planning application that should include a Great Crested Newt consideration.
- 1.4 All ecological assessments/survey efforts and subsequent reports were in <sup>h</sup> July 2023.
- 1.5 The planning application DC/23/02326 was approved September 2023. The planning approval contained 2 x ecological conditions:

## Condition 9

### PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

A Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected and Priority species prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;
- c) locations, orientations and heights of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the NPPF 2021 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

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Ipswich  
Suffolk  
Ref 0642/23

## Condition 8

### ACTION REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS

All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Assessment Amphibian Assessment (Eco-Planning UK, July 2023) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

- 1.6 Eco-Planning Uk Ltd received instruction to provide all necessary information to address both these conditions.
- 1.5 The Ecological Assessment, reptile presence or absence survey when complete will with this report addresses all relevant ecological/conservation related issues as part of the planning application process for this site.

## 2. Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

- 2.1. The approved development site is an area of land to the east of Pettaugh Lane, Gosbeck, Ipswich in Suffolk - Drawing 1.



**Drawing 1**

- 2.2 The approved development area has been in intensive arable agriculture production for at least the last 15 years with all of the associated pesticides and inorganic fertilisers – see below. As such it has had and continues to have very low conservation and biodiversity value.
- 2.3 Any existing conservation value is limited to the occasional short section of hedgerow to the rear site boundary, the very occasional tree and a minimal field boundary margin (Photographs 1-3).
- 2.4 The Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy will protect and enhance the small amount of existing habitats with significant new habitat to supplement. The type of habitat being provided and its connectivity will provide for both biodiversity on site and connectivity into the wider landscape beyond.



**Photograph 1**



**Photograph 2**



**Photograph 3**

## Existing Hedge management

- 2.5 Hawthorn, blackthorn, and other fruiting hedgerow shrubs generally only flower with any abundance on wood that is at least two years old. Annual trimming or trimming in the second year of growth removes the hedgerow fruits reducing the food/conservation value of the hedge.
- 2.6 The existing hedge on site has been managed by regular cutting back or flailing. This has retained the boundary feature linear habitat but has

resulted in it not achieving its full potential in relation to wildlife biodiversity. Future management will reverse this failure:

- Cutting will take place every third year in the period January – February to allow wintering birds to harvest the fruit produced.
- The cutting will use either a hedgerow flail (this will cope with growth up to 38mm thick – usual for 3-year-old growth), or for thicker growth a reciprocating cutter or a heavier duty flail will be utilised.
- The machine used for cutting will usually chop the cut material fine enough that no further treatment or disposal will be necessary.
- The hedge will not all be cut in the same year – cutting a third every year as a maximum of those present will provide a continuous rich source of flowers and fruits on the site.
- An ‘A’ shaped hedge with a thick base will be created – suitable for most farmland birds.

## Hedge creation

2.7 Where the continuity of any hedge on site has been lost then in-filling of gaps will help to improve the structure and thus the long-term wildlife value of the hedges. Where there is no hedge, they will be created to achieve a continuous Priority Habitat native hedge to all boundaries of the site :

- Any gaps >1m will be in-filled at 6 plants/m planted in a double staggered row with 30cms between rows.
- In mixed species hedges, gapping up will use Hawthorn 80%, Field Maple 5%, Dog Rose 5% Hazel 5%, Spindle 5%. All plants will 60-90 cms bare root stock individually protected with appropriate guards.
- 1 x standard tree will be planted for every 30m of gapping up/new planting, protected with individual tree guards along the hedge line.



- Where new hedges or hedge sections are being planted then they will be planted in a double staggered row as above and protect by enclosing in rabbit netting rather than with individual guards.
- Weed control to aid establishment of new plants will be necessary. A contact herbicide will be used to control grass growth ensuring that it is not applied where there is a diversity of flora. For the first 3 years after planting 1/3rd of each year's growth will be cut back to aid establishment and thickening out of the base of the plants.

## Species Rich Field Margin Grassland Creation

2.8 The existing field boundaries have minimal field margin habitat. The creation of a species rich structured sward as a continuous habitat abutting the new and existing hedge rows will be a big biodiversity gain. Such grassland habitats can be difficult to create – but we have had repeated success with the following methodology:

- Site preparation will start in the autumn before sowing by spraying off any existing vegetation using a proprietary contact herbicide.
- Depending upon soil conditions/mass of vegetation the site - will then either be lightly cultivated to a depth of 8 – 10cms and a rough seed bed left over winter.
- The following spring and summer the emergent vegetation will be once again controlled using a propriety herbicide (this may need 2 or 3 applications in April/May; late June/July and again in mid-August).
- This will have created a 'stale seedbed' reducing the number of annual weeds that would otherwise compete with the sown mixture.
- In late August the wildflower sward will be sown. This will be a mix of native grasses (80%) and wildflowers (20%) at a rate of 35 – 40 kgs/ha.
- To provide colour during the first year after sowing the inclusion of a cornfield annual mix will be included at a rate of 15 – 20kgs/ha. This mix of colourful annual plants such as poppy, corn marigold, corn cockle and cornflower will not persist once the perennial sward is established but will give visual and biodiversity interest in the first summer after sowing.

- In late June/early July the sown areas will be cut, and the arisings collected once the cornfield annuals have finished flowering. Following this the sown areas will be cut monthly until the end of the growing season.
- From year 2 onwards the informal leisure paths will be regularly mown, and the remainder of the sown vegetation managed as a hay meadow by cutting and collecting at the optimum time for the species in each sward.
- In all grassland types and creation methods 10% will be left uncut in rotation each year to provide additional long grass habitat through the site for any invertebrate or small mammal that require these areas of cover for overwintering.

Suitable Wildflower typical seed mix (Neutral) for this site :

*Achillea millefolium* Yarrow

*Leontodon autumnalis* Autumn hawkbit

Cowslip *Primula veris*

Wild parsnip *Pastinaca sativa*

Small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*

*Euphrasia* spp. Eyebright

*Conopodium majus* Pignut

*Trifolium pratense* Red clover

*Trifolium repens* White clover

*Trifolium dubium* Lesser trefoil

*Cerastium glomeratum* Sticky Mouse-ear

*Centaurea nigra* Common knapweed

*Leucanthemum vulgare* Ox Eye Daisy

*Medicago lupulina* Black medic

*Plantago lanceolata* Ribwort plantain

*Plantago media* Hoary plantain

*Prunella vulgaris* Selfheal

*Ranunculus acris* Meadow buttercup

*Rhinanthus minor* Yellow rattle



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### Suitable Grass seed mix (Neutral)

*Agrostis capillaris* Common bent

*Aloperceris pratensis* Meadow foxtail

*Cynosurus cristatus* Crested Dog's Tail

*Dactylis glomerata* Cocksfoot

*Festuca* sp Fescue sp

*Phleum* sp. Timothy

*Holcus lanatus* Yorkshire fog

*Briza media* Quaking grass

*Bromus mollis* Soft brome