

AGENDA ITEM 8: DEFERRED APPLICATIONS

Item. 8a: pages 12-23

Location: BANHAM: Hilltop Cottage, Heath Road

Proposal: Change of use from smallholding to leisure, erection of four holiday let eco lodges and a natural swimming pond.

REFERENCE: 3PL/2019/1408/F

Applicant: Mr K Whitefield

Author: Naomi Minto

CONSULTATIONS

Natural Environment Team (NETI) – 24 August 2020

NETI have provided the following comments following a re-consultation in respect of the revised access;

“The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Greenlight Environmental Consultancy; October 2018) needs to be updated in accordance with the revised proposals. A site visit carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist will be necessary to ensure the habitats remain the same and the mitigation measures remain valid due to the time that has elapsed since the survey visit was conducted on the 19th October 2018.”

ASSESSMENT

The revised plans, which have resulted in a subsequent re-consultation, relate to amendments made to the proposed site access. The applicant originally proposed to use the existing site access. However, following an objection from the Local Highway Authority, the applicant now proposes to move the site access further east along Heath Road, utilising existing garden land, which belongs to the applicant.

Whilst it is accepted that the use of the garden, to accommodate the revised access, will unlikely lead to an adverse impact on ecology given it consists of maintained lawn, it is also acknowledged that the revised proposal will lead to the removal of a section of hedgerow on the southern boundary of the site in order to accommodate the new access. An addendum to the ecology report has therefore been sought to bring it inline with the revised proposal.

It should also be noted that following receipt of a hedgerow survey earlier this year, which included assessment of the length of hedgerow running the entire width of the applicant’s land, along the southern boundary, the hedgerow was found not to qualify as being important under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations. Therefore, the removal of a section of the hedgerow, as proposed, is considered acceptable having due regard to Policy ENV 06 and taking into account the existing site access, now proposed to be closed up with the provision of new hedgerow planting.

RECOMMENDATION

The application continues to be recommended for approval, subject to the Natural Environment Team's comments being satisfactorily addressed.