

Mr. N. Harding
Head of Development and Construction
Peterborough City Council Planning Services
Town Hall
Bridge Street
Peterborough PE1 1HF

15th December 2015

Cc. Miss A. McSherry
Peterborough City Council Planning Services
And Mr. James Fisher
Peterborough City Council Natural and Historic Environment Team

Planning application ref. 15/01840/OUT for outline permission for a housing development on land off Uffington Road, Barnack

In its comments on Planning Application 15/01840/OUT, sent to you on 7 December, Barnack Parish Council reserved the right to make additional submissions in relation to new information or other matters that come to their attention during the processing of the application. We have now received advice from the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust relating to common lizard, and as a result we wish to make an additional observation.

As stated in the Ecological Appraisal that forms part of Planning Application 15/01840/OUT, a population of common lizard was present on the adjacent brownfield site that is now the Paynes Field housing estate. Common lizard is listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as a species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This places a duty on the Local Planning Authority, in exercising its functions, to have regard to the conservation of this species. Consequently, the developer of the Paynes Field estate was required, as a condition of the development, to capture and translocate the lizards before building work started.

The proposed new development is largely on arable land, a habitat highly unlikely to support common lizard. Visits to the site, carried out in November 2015 for the Ecological Appraisal, did not include a detailed survey for lizards and the ecologist considered the site to be “of low to negligible value to reptiles”. However, in the light of previous records for common lizard in the adjacent site, the report recommends precautionary measures “to minimise the risk of harm to any reptiles prior to construction.” These measures include “a finger-tip search by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure that no reptiles are present” in areas of longer grassland, followed by two-stage strimming to encourage the reptiles “to move into suitable off-site habitat”.

Barnack Parish Council has consulted the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust and has been advised that there is a reasonable chance that remnants of the common lizard population from the Paynes Field site may be present in the hedgerows that surround the arable field and form part of the development site. It is not possible to verify this immediately, as the animals hibernate over the winter. Natural England and Defra recommend¹ that surveys for reptiles

¹ www.gov.uk. Standing advice for local planning authorities who need to assess the impacts of development on reptiles.

are carried out in April, May and September. Herpetologists² advise that a reptile survey should involve the laying of artificial refugia, together with four to seven visits to the site, during which searches for animals basking in the open and sheltering in the refugia are carried out.

If reptiles are present on a development site, potential impacts on the population should be assessed and mitigation and compensation measures are required. The advice from Natural England and Defra on mitigation includes the following:

- consider changing the layout and not developing the areas used by reptiles
- displace reptiles from sensitive areas by changing the vegetation
- change the timing of the work
- as a last resort, translocate the reptiles to another specially prepared area
- use temporary fencing to prevent reptiles moving into areas where there are damaging activities.

Barnack Parish Council requests that a full survey of the field margins and hedgerows is carried out to ascertain whether common lizard is present in the proposed development site. If a population is found, the Parish Council requests assurances from Peterborough City Council that the developer will be required to take adequate mitigation and compensation measures, as recommended by Natural England and Defra.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Morrison

Clerk to Barnack Parish Council

² David Sewell, Richard A. Griffiths, Trevor J. C. Beebee, Jim Foster and John W. Wilkinson. 2013. Survey protocols for the British herpetofauna. Version 1.0