

MEETING NOTES



Job Title	Kent International Gateway
Project Number	12070549-002
Date	6th Feb 2007
Time	10.30
Venue	Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone
Subject	Kent International Gateway Ecological Issues
Client	KIG Ltd. Edward Rowsell (KCC)
Present	Angela Bond (WSPE) Nick Holland (RPS)
Apologies	

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Meeting Notes

Introduction and meeting aims

NH explained the planning context for the scheme and identified the regional/national significance of the site attributes for a rail freight interchange. AB identified the existing ecological baseline information and key ecological issues. For each habitat/species the extent of likely further survey requirement, mitigation and timescales were discussed. The issues were dealt with on a habitat/species basis and the results of the discussions are recorded below.

Invertebrates

- 1 ER identified the need for some information relating to the value of the site for invertebrates. It was agreed between AB and ER that a preliminary assessment by a renowned invertebrate specialist, Colin Plant, would be likely to suffice. AB will contact Colin Plant to discuss scope of surveys.

Reptiles

- 2 ER recommended that AB discuss the potential reptile receptor site with Lee Brady (Kent Reptile Recorder/ recognised amphibian and reptile expert) to discuss suitability and concerns regarding connectivity to the wider countryside.

Great Crested Newts

- 3 ER agreed that 'gaps' in newt pond survey information should be addressed with surveys this season. (This will involve surveys of the ponds north and south of Glenrowan House, plus two ponds off-site for which access has not been possible).

ER agreed that in the absence of full survey information of the ponds (i.e. should access not be possible for survey) it was reasonable to assume GCN are present in inaccessible ponds due to their close location. However, a lack of survey information could prevent an accurate assessment of population sizes.

The land directly north-west of the site (adjacent to the M20) was discussed. AB thought this could have been a mitigation area for another development and ER agreed that it could have been developed as part of the Channel Tunnel Rail work. ER suggested AB consult Lee Brady regarding this land. AB and ER agreed that it was sensitive and may require special protective measures during scheme construction/operation.

- Birds**
- 4 ER recommended that breeding bird surveys were undertaken as it would be necessary to identify, for example, the numbers of pairs of skylark and song thrush that might be breeding on the site in order to inform an impact assessment.

ER agreed, *in principle*, that direct mitigation for impacts to skylark (in the form of habitat creation) would be unlikely to be practical or necessary because of the existing management of the arable habitat on site (which is not managed sensitively for skylark). Due to the specific ecology of skylark it is unlikely that the site currently provides conditions in which skylark breed successfully. However, this should be backed up by breeding bird surveys.

It is possible that mitigation for impacts to bird species could be delivered off-site through agreements relating to land elsewhere that is under the control of the Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT).

- Bats**
- 5 ER suggested that further discussion could be undertaken with KWT and the Kent Bat Group to understand more fully the importance of the site for bats. Because a Natural England protected species licence for bats will ultimately be required for the clearance of the woodland, ER recommended that the Natural England area team should be involved in agreeing any further survey requirements.

ER was unable to state at this time whether further survey (i.e. bat mist netting) would be require pre-application (see note 7 below).

- Woodland/ woodland mitigation**
- 6 ER accepted that the site is identified as a development/growth area and did not imply that loss of the woodland would be objected to *in principle*. (Based on the information provided to him by AB).

ER stated that the area adjacent to Leeds castle has been identified as a potential area for grassland re-creation by the Kent Wildlife Trust and therefore grassland re-creation may be preferable to woodland recreation. However, this will depend on our ability to also mitigate for impacts of woodland loss on bats. ER suggested that AB consult with Richard Moyes or Keith Nicholson at KWT about a soon-to-be published document entitled 'A Living Landscape for the South East' which describes ecological networks at a strategic level. It would be desirable for our mitigation to tie-in with aims and objectives of this document. **(The document will be available on the Kent Wildlife Trust web pages by end of w/c 19th Feb).**

- Timing of surveys**
- 7 ER was not able to state categorically the level of survey information that would be required pre-planning and was not prepared to confirm that certain elements of survey work could be provided as amendments etc. However, he did agree that this may be possible in some cases.
- In summary, KCC have recommended that the following survey work is undertaken this year:
- Invertebrate Survey
 - Great Crested Newt Surveys
 - Breeding Bird Surveys
- For bat surveys – discussions with Natural England, KWT and Kent Bat Group are required to determine further survey needs for the woodland area.

- Scheme**
- 8 ER accepted that much of the land is earmarked for development.

Distribution: Design Team