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Your Ref:

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David Harvey
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Sent by email only: david.harvey@dhaplanning.co.uk

Dear David

LAND AT PLOVER ROAD, MINSTER, ISLE OF SHEPPEY, KENT

Further to our recent correspondence, I write regarding the site at Plover Road.

I understand that planning permission was obtained in July 2016 for the erection of a food store and retail units, but that since then the putative retail occupier has withdrawn and the client is now looking to submit a new outline application for 25 residential units.

As set out in earlier correspondence, our existing report is based on survey information for reptiles obtained in 2014 and Great Crested Newts in 2015, as well as various habitat surveys during that time. Survey data usually has a useful life of two years for planning purposes, so the report is now somewhat out of date. We recorded a low population of Slow Worms (a 'partially protected' reptile species) within the site, but no Great Crested Newts were recorded in nearby ponds.

Given the relatively small area of the former retail site, the recommended approach has always been a programme of habitat manipulation to encourage any reptiles in that part to migrate to the wider area. The long term strategy is that when the wider site comes forward for development, a programme of capture and off-site translocation would be implemented, with reptiles removed to the agreed receptor site at Elmley National Nature Reserve a short distance away. It may be that matters will align for mutual benefit and the translocation could be undertaken for the site as a whole without the interim habitat manipulation, but for the time being the two-stage approach is that which is recommended.

This is a reasonable mitigation strategy based our existing knowledge, but it is necessary to update that information given the time that has elapsed since the earlier survey work. This we have recently been instructed to do, and the work is underway. Should the results indicate that the population size and distribution is broadly as it was in 2014, then we

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would proceed with the mitigation strategy as previously stated. In the event that circumstances have changed significantly, we may need to revisit certain aspects of it.

I see no reason why this update work should delay the forthcoming application, since we already know that a population of reptiles is present and have a strategy in place to accommodate them, and indeed there is an extant planning consent in place. Subject to favourable weather conditions, we would expect to have completed the reptile survey work by mid-May or so. At this stage I think it unlikely that Great Crested Newts will represent a potential constraint to development given the nature of the ponds concerned and their remove from the site.

I trust this is all clear, but please let me know if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Peter Hadfield
Director

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cc Charlie Munday – Dalemarch