

**MN2.48 land north of Formby Industrial Estate - Lancashire Wildlife Trust advice on mitigation proposed for the presence of water voles.**

It is clear from the ecological report that a sizeable population of Water voles is present on this site. The report recommends the following:

**Construction Phase**

- Design to avoid sensitive water vole habitat wherever possible, including where burrows and tunnels are present or likely to be present;
- Precautionary survey a few weeks in advance of works to ensure new burrows are unaffected and advise accordingly if they would be;
- Enhancement of any retained ditch habitats through management, and increasing the habitat available, through wetland creation (attenuation ponds) together with reed bed habitat; and
- During construction, precautions to avoid pollution, timing of works and if necessary, temporary exclusion to avoid unacceptable disturbance or mortality.

**Completed Development Phase**

- A management plan designed to maintain the watercourses in a favourable condition for Water Voles; and
- Control of any Mink population, if necessary.

I agree that adherence to these guidelines will minimise the impact of the development on Water Voles, and has the potential to provide suitable, well managed habitat in the long term. If the ditches are retained within the development, or new ditches/ponds created, Water Voles are likely to re-colonise as disturbance is reduced after the construction phase.

**Additional suggestions.**

The construction phase will cause disturbance to Water Voles, even if the ditches are maintained and pollution minimised. Therefore I suggest ensuring there is suitable, connected habitat for them to move into before construction takes place. This should ideally be at least the same amount of habitat as that being disturbed and may require management of the surrounding area or require some habitat creation.

As well as enhancement of retained ditches, I recommend the creation of new habitat to replace any that is lost, whether that be within the development or in the surrounding landscape.

Mink is known to be present in the area, therefore control should be an imperative rather than 'if necessary.'

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