

Marina Theatre Ecology Report

In Attendance:

East Suffolk Council (ESC) Officers - Emma Bellward (Project Manager) and Darren Newman.

Lowestoft Town Council (LTC): Cllrs Wendy Brooks and Andy Pearce and Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk).

Marina Theatre: Eddi Sharp and Robin Townley.

HS Procurement Consultant - Henry Swan

FWS - Mike Whitfield

Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) - Johanna Green

The Marina Theatre Ecology report had been received and section 5.3 (extracted below) addressed the situation regarding the kittiwake colony that nests at the theatre:

Birds

Demolition of the existing ground level link building and construction of the new link building should preferably be carried out between September and the following February, inclusive, to reduce the possibility of damage to birds' nests and disturbance to the breeding adults. Kittiwakes often arrive on shore from late February and begin roosting at potential nesting sites shortly after, then usually by March pairs have formed and nest building commences. Although it is possible for some species to nest earlier in the year. Guidance should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist if there is any reason for doubt.

*If clearance and demolition is planned to take place from **March to August, inclusive, it will first be necessary to carry out an inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist to determine whether or not there are active nests present.** If there are, then the work would have to wait until any young had fledged. If not, the demolition could begin immediately, before any nests could be established, but any further delay would necessitate another survey.*

Provision of additional kittiwake shelves could help mitigate the loss of nesting habitat from the development.

This meeting had been called to discuss the project risk regarding the plans to commence the demolition and construction works of the link building, consider the mitigation measures and any information required from the report for the tender document (which was due to go out early August 2024).

The first element of work, once contractors were onsite in October 2024, would be to demolish the existing link and commence the groundworks. The entire timeline of construction was October 2024 to June 2025, though it was the preference of SWT for the timeline of works to keep within September 2024 to February 2025. Mike Whitfield confirmed the demolition of the existing link building was expected to be completed before the kittiwakes arrive for the 2025 breeding season.

Mike Whitfield noted there would be a risk of kittiwakes nesting on the steel frame due to be installed when construction commences on the new three-storey building. Measures would need to be considered to close off the scaffolding from nesting kittiwakes, such as and any nearby ledges being hoarded off or replaced with temporary Perspex. Johanna Green identified two windowsills on the sea facing wall of the theatre where Perspex sloping could be used to stop the kittiwakes nesting there. Additional ledges could also be installed elsewhere on building to compensate for any that

were hoarded off, though this would need to consider the impact on people inside the building (e.g. noise).

If it was intended to complete the demolition works after the 2024 breeding season and before the 2025 breeding season, then any nesting deterrents required as part of the mitigations for the construction work needed to be installed before the next breeding season. Suggestions for these deterrents would need to go to LTC Full Council, and it was noted that LTC had a policy of no netting, spikes, or displacement of the colony being used as deterrent measures.

The mitigation proposals from the ecology report would be reviewed at the next Marina Theatre Project Committee meeting to consider what strategies can be implemented.

The tender document would be shared with the involved parties to reach an agreement on what should be included, such as the SWT mitigations provided in the ecology report and the strategy forward. Henry Swan suggested a quality question regarding the nesting and relevant mitigations be included in the tender documents.

Johanna Green reiterated the need to prevent the kittiwakes from nesting where the new link building would be constructed and suggested netting be considered as the appropriate deterrent since it would be taut enough to ensure the kittiwakes would be unable to ledge.

Mike Whitfield queried if netting and spikes would be acceptable deterrents for LTC if they would only be implemented for a short period of time (such as two months). LTC had made this policy decision in 2021, when this project was not in existence at the time, and only with the view of such deterrents being proposed as permanent installations. As any consideration on this would involve a variation of a Full Council policy, it was suggested to have an item on the August Full Council agenda to consider a variance or relaxation of the policy on kittiwake deterrents. The Project Manager noted that they would need to consider the dates the tender was due to go live and if waiting for the Full Council meeting would delay that.