



12th March 2025

Robert Hermitage
Horsham District Council
Parkside,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

By email only

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' ecological advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Horsham District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer who will seek further advice from us where appropriate and necessary.

Application: DC/25/0116
Location: Shelley Arms 16 Old Guildford Road Broadbridge Heath West Sussex RH12 3JU
Proposal: Erection of 4No. dwellings and associated car parking, amenity space and landscaping, along with re-configuration of pub car park.

Dear Robert,

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

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| a) No ecological harm/No objection | |
| b) Requires further information – protected species (out of date report) | Yes |
| c) Recommend grant permission subject to conditions | |
| d) Recommend refusal | |
| e) Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Appropriate Assessment | Yes |
| f) Discharge of condition | |

Please note that following receipt of Natural England's position statement on developments in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, decisions on planning applications should await the completion of a Sussex North water neutrality strategy.

Summary

We have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (SEED Agricultural Consultancy, July 2023), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. Please note that comments on mandatory biodiversity net gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house.



We are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information on protected species available for determination of the application. This is because the ecological assessment (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (SEED Agricultural Consultancy, July 2023)), is out of date to support this application, in line with CIEEM Guidance¹ and paragraph 6.2.1 of British Standard (BS) BS42020 'Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development 2013'. This is because the initial site walkover was undertaken in July 2023.

As a result, we recommend that the applicant's ecologist provides an ecological addendum or an updated ecological report to support this application, which should require an additional site visit and may require updated desk study information. The ecologist will be required to provide appropriate justification, on:

- The validity of the initial report;
- Which, if any, of the protected species surveys need to be updated; and
- The appropriate scope, timing and methods for the update survey(s).

If additional impacts to protected species are identified as a result of the additional ecological assessment, then any necessary further surveys for protected species should also be provided prior to determination. This is necessary as the Government Circular 06/2005 states "*It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.*"

Therefore, this further information is required to provide the LPA with certainty of impacts on protected and priority species and enable it to demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, as well as its biodiversity duty under s.40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Additional Comments

We note the site lies approximately 12.8km from The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is therefore outside the 12km Wider Conservation Area for the SAC (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol).

Please note we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

We look forward to working with the LPA and the applicant to receive the additional information required to overcome our holding objection.

Please contact us with any queries.

¹ CIEEM (2019) Advice note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys - <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>



Yours sincerely

Genevieve Broad MCIEM MSc BSc (Hons)

Ecological Consultant

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Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Horsham District Council

Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.