



15<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Amanda Wilkes  
Horsham District Council  
Parkside  
Horsham  
West Sussex  
RH12 1RL

By email: Amanda.Wilkes@horsham.gov.uk

**Re: Response to Place Services Ecology Comments – DC/25/0362**  
Menzies Wood Farm, Okehurst Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9HR

Dear Amanda Wilkes,

Following receipt of the ecology response by Place Services dated 20 June 2025, the applicant has amended the proposed development layout so that the new office and barn are both set back a minimum of 6 metres from the boundary hedgerow and associated earth bank, as shown on the amended Existing and Proposed Block Plans (Philips Surveyors. Drawing no: BP-01 REV: E).

Arun Ecology Ltd was instructed to undertake a follow-up ecological review to consider the amended layout. I visited the site on 16 October 2025 to: (i) assess potential impacts on the hedgerow and vegetated earth bank; (ii) consider potential impacts on reptiles and hazel dormouse; and (iii) advise on the need for any further surveys.

The hedgerow and associated vegetated earth bank provide suitable habitat for hazel dormouse and common reptiles. However, the footprint and working area for the amended scheme lie within existing hardstanding, with no suitability for either group. No vegetation removal is required to facilitate the development and the nearest construction activity will remain at least 5 m from the hedgerow/bank, therefore no direct or indirect adverse effects on these features are anticipated.

While the presence of hazel dormouse and reptiles in the wider habitat network cannot be ruled out, the retained buffer and the absence of any direct habitat loss or severance mean that the risk of harm to individuals is reasonably unlikely.

With proportionate construction-phase mitigation in place (outlined below), any residual risk can be avoided, and further species-specific surveys are considered disproportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed works.

We recommend that the following mitigation measures are followed:-

- **Protective fencing:** Install temporary barrier fencing 5 m inside the site from the base of the earth bank, forming a continuous exclusion zone for the duration of construction. No works, storage, plant, parking, mixing, or trenching to occur within the fenced zone;
- **Site housekeeping:** Keep the working area tidy. Store materials on pallets or raised supports where practicable, and avoid stockpiling arisings that could create ad-hoc refugia or hibernacula;



- **Excavations:** Any holes or excavation within the development boundary should be kept covered when not in use to prevent reptiles becoming trapped, checked regularly when not covered, and have an escape ramp installed to allow reptiles to escape; and
- **Lighting:** Implement a Wildlife-Sensitive Lighting Strategy (warm white  $\leq 2700$  K; no upward light spill; motion sensors where appropriate; luminaires mounted horizontally with no light above 90°; no UV-rich sources) to avoid unnecessary illumination of the boundary hedgerow and associated earth bank.

On the basis of the amended site layout and the above controls, the proposal will avoid adverse impacts to the hedgerow and vegetated earth bank, and harm to individual reptiles or hazel dormouse is reasonably unlikely. Horsham District Council can therefore be confident that, with suitable conditions securing the exclusion fencing and lighting strategy, the development can proceed lawfully and in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation and policy.

Should you require any additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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