
Job Name: DC/24/1699
Date: 22/01/2025
Prepared By: Alexia Tamblyn
Subject: Technical Response – Place Services Ref 13th January 2025

This technical response has been produced in response to the consultation from Place Services on Application: DC/24/1699 land at 518724 118628 Bines Road Partridge Green West Sussex RH13 8EQ.

Whilst there are general agreements and measures for mitigation and clearance should be conditioned. However, Essex Place Services identified that further information with regards to dormice are required. This are shown below;

We are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application and recommend that further information on Hazel Dormouse is provided prior to determination. The reasons for this are outlined below:

European Protected Species

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (The Ecology Partnership, October 2024) that there are no Hazel Dormouse records within 2km of the site and so no surveys were considered necessary. However, Hedgerows H1 to H6 are native, in good condition, and contain Hazel, Blackthorn, Elder, Field maple and Hawthorn (which provide suitable habitat for Hazel Dormouse) and two small sections of H1 on the northern boundary will be removed for access. In addition, we understand from the Lighting Strategy V3.5 (DFL Lighting Design, August 2024) that there may be a break in the hedge line to the south of the development for a cycle path connection. We therefore recommend the implementation of a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse or justification as to why precautionary measures are not required. We highlight that if precautionary working methods are required for this species, we recommend that the outline measures need to be submitted to the LPA prior to determination in order that the LPA has certainty of likely impacts on protected species, in accordance with Government Standing Advice.

The requirement for further surveys for dormice was scoped out of the assessment process due to the limited nature and extent of hedgerows and the limited impact. However, The Ecology Partnership would consider that RAMS / Sensitive working measures can be secured by condition and included in a CEMP or similar.

However, an outline to the recommended clearance procedure is detailed below to ensure that there is consensus that clearance is achievable and appropriate. As such, following best practice guidance and experience on dormouse projects, including licensed site work.

The RAMS / sensitive working practice is therefore recommended;

No clearance work should be undertaken during their vulnerable periods such as breeding and hibernation. This only leaves small windows of opportunity for works (i.e. April - May and September to October). The exact dates of the autumn period will depend on the onset of cold weather. Vegetation clearance can be undertaken in one stage during the autumn period, but should be undertaken in two stages if undertaken in Spring. Initial vegetation clearance should remove sufficient vegetation to persuade dormice emerging from hibernation in April or May to move to more appropriate habitat nearby, i.e. the remainder of the adjacent treelines which are to be maintained on site and subject to enhancements.

- Vegetation should be cut down by hand to around 30cm high to avoid hibernation habitat.
- All cut materials must be removed from site and chipped to avoid suitable dormouse and bird habitat being left on site.
- Clearance should be conducted using best practice guidelines and conducted under ecological watching brief.

All works must be agreed by all parties prior to start. All workers will be inducted to the site and an ecological tool box talk (TBT) given. All work will be conducted under ecological supervision. The detailed method statement of works is shown below.

All works must follow the following points as directed by an ecologist.

- The contractors will be informed of the likelihood of encountering dormice before they commence work. An ecological TBT will be given to everyone on site in all parties. The contractors will be shown pictures of dormice and summer/winter nests. If dormice are seen, all work which could disturb dormice will be halted and Natural England consulted. The contractors will be told not to touch the dormice unless an emergency situation arises.

Clearance works on site will be directed at all times by an ecologist and must follow the following points:

- Clearance will be undertaken by starting at one end of the section to be cleared, and working in one direction only. This method ensures that in the unlikely event of dormice being present in the areas dormice can move away from the works into retained habitat.

- All areas of trees and scrub will be finger tipped searched by an ecologist prior to clearance.
- All clearance must be with hand tools and under ecological supervision. No large tracked vehicles should be used, or heavy machinery. Trees and scrub should be moved by hand to the chippers or trailers, with some wood to remain on site.
- All arisings must be hand dragged to a pre-agreed works area, unless otherwise stated by the on-site ecologist.
- Areas of treeline edge habitat which are to be retained will be fenced off to prevent further disturbance during construction.
- All stumps and arisings from clearance (during the May clearance) to be taken to the adjacent woodland and spread into several invertebrate deadwood habitat piles. As directed by the ecologist. Care must be taken when positioning the stems and brash to avoid areas of quality understorey. These wood piles must be hand moved as no incursion into the retained woodland with machinery is considered to be necessary.

It is considered that this method statement would be sufficient to ensure no harm to dormice would occur. It is considered that this text is sufficient to remove objections from Place Services and this process should be conditioned as part of a CEMP or similar.