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West Sussex
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Our ref: 11936
Date: 14 January 2026

By email only: Planning Department, planning@horsham.gov.uk

Thank you for requesting advice on this outline 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/25/1269
Location: Land North of Guildford Road Bucks Green Rudgwick West Sussex
Proposal: Outline Planning Application for up to 90 no. residential dwellings (including 40% affordable) all matters to be reserved apart from access.

Thank you for re-consulting Place Services on the above outline application.

No ecological objection	<input type="checkbox"/>
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Further information required/Temporary holding objection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommend Refusal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Bat Appropriate Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please refer to Horsham District Councils advice regarding Water Neutrality requirements following [Natural England's Withdrawal Statement \(31st October 2025\)](#).

Summary

We have reviewed the documents supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats and identification of proportionate mitigation. Please note that comments on mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house. Additionally, we have been instructed to leave comments on Great crested Newts (European Protected Species) to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

The reviewed documents as of 24th October 2025 include:

- Landscape Masterplan (Scarp, August 2025)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Ecology Partnership, October 2025)
- Ecological Technical Note (Ecology Partnership, October 2025)
- Bat Activity Survey (Ecology Partnership, December 2024)
- Breeding Bird Surveys 2024 (Ecology Partnership, December 2024)
- Dormouse Survey Report (Ecology Partnership, December 2024)
- Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) (Ecology Partnership, June 2025)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Aspect July 2025)

The reviewed documents as of 14th January 2026 include:

- Report to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment – Screening Assessment (Ecology Partnership, November 2025)
- Technical Response Note (Ecology Partnership, November 2025)

We are now satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application. The reasons for this are outlined below:

European Protected Species: bats

Designated Sites – The Mens SAC

The site lies approximately 7.8km southwest of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore lies within the 12km Wider Conservation Area for the SAC (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). Our available records from Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) returned no records of this species within 2 kilometres of the site. [MAGIC maps](#) returned one European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSML) granted within 2km of the site: a) 1.4km to the northwest of the site in 2017 for Common Pipistrelle. There are over 200 records for bats within 2km of the site, including Bechstein's bat, Brown Long-eared bat, Common Pipistrelle, Whiskered/Brandt's bat, Noctule/Serotine, Soprano Pipistrelle and Serotine bat have also been recorded within 2km of the site (SxBRC – accessed under licence). The site lies approximately 10.5km northeast of Ebernoe Common SAC and is therefore within the Wider Conservation Area for the SAC. The site lies approximately 15.92km north of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.

Regarding impacts to the severance of flight lines, particularly as the plans include the removal of some trees to allow road access, the Report to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment – Screening Assessment (Ecology Partnership, November 2025) states the following *“The central tree line is to be largely retained, however a couple of trees are to be removed to allow the road to pass between the two fields. This is not considered to be ecologically significant, with low level use of this feature by barbastelles, and the*

enhancement and retention of eastern and western networks and enhancement and creation of new habitats along the northern and southern edges of the site. As such, it is considered the ecological functionality of the landscape is being retained." We are satisfied with this justification, as long as the other boundary vegetation is enhanced and buffered to ensure a commuting route is not lost. We recommend the need for a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), to ensure the appropriate mitigation is secured, this should be secured by a condition of any consent.

We support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application to avoid impacts from light disturbance. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures recommended by Guidance Note:08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) will be implemented:

- Do not provide excessive lighting. Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow.
- Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

We therefore believe that, with mitigation, there will be no Adverse Effect on Integrity of the SAC. We advise the LPA to prepare a project level HRA Appropriate Assessment to record its decision and retain on file.

Roosting bats

We previously commented on a lack of survey information on two trees previously classified as PRF-M, which are proposed to be removed (now referred to as T44 and T45). These trees have been subject to further surveys, with the Technical Response Note (Ecology Partnership, November 2025) stating the following "*Considering the investigations T44 can be removed after a final check in line with a CEMP. T45 can be retained and monitored. If the tree degrades further, then surveys will be conducted to assess the value for bats. This can be in line with a consented LEMP.*" We are satisfied that the further survey information is appropriate, with T44 now being downgraded to no bat roost potential but should be monitored due to being standing dead wood and T45, still being PRF-M, but now to be retained, with further surveys required should this be altered. As stated within the

document, we recommend the need for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Biodiversity, which should be secured by a condition of any consent.

Protected Species: reptiles

As stated previously, the site is a large area of arable pasture, which is stated to be regularly grazed. The site is intersected by a mature tree line and patches of dense scrub. The ecological report has ruled out the need for further reptile surveys, stating the available records for Grass Snake are separated from the site by road and the site is unsuitable for use by reptiles due to grazing. The Technical Response Note (Ecology Partnership, November 2025) has provided further justification regarding why further surveys are not considered necessary. We are now satisfied with the given justification and as stated within the submitted information, precautionary mitigation measures should be detailed within a CEMP: Biodiversity and secured by a condition of any consent.

As stated previously, we are still satisfied sufficient information relating to Dormouse, breeding birds and other protected and Priority species has been provided.

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

The mitigation measures identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Ecology Partnership, October 2025) and the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (Ecology Partnership, June 2025) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). Reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures are a separate matter to mandatory biodiversity net gains and the finalised details should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to be secured as a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.

Recommended conditions

1. **ACTION REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

“All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Ecology Partnership, October 2025) and the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (Ecology Partnership, June 2025) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.”

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

2. **CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS: PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT: CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY**

“A construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following.

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.*
- b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.*
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).*
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.*
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.*
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.*
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.*
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.*

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority”

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

3. **CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS: PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY**

“Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and*
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter.”

Reason: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

4. **CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS: PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME**

“Prior to occupation, a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and*
- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.*

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.”

Reason: To allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

5. **CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS: PRIOR TO OCCUPATION:
LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

“A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to the occupation of the development [or specified phase of development].

The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.*
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.*
- c) Aims and objectives of management.*
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.*
- e) Prescriptions for management actions.*
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).*
- g) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.*
- h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.*

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details”

Reason: To allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended)

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

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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.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.