

Horsham District Council
Albery House
Springfield Road
Horsham
RH12 1GB

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Hawkes,

Planning consultation: Hybrid application for a phased, mixed-use development.

Location: Land West of Ifield, Charlwood Road, Ifield, West Sussex.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 04 September 2025 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE IN RELATION TO WATER NEUTRALITY

NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

Natural England considers that without appropriate mitigation the application would:

- have an adverse effect on the integrity of Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>.
- damage or destroy the interest features for which Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest has been notified.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation options should be secured:

- The delivery, management and maintenance of measures identified and considered under Scenario C outlined in the submitted Water Neutrality Statement.

We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

A lack of objection does not mean that there are no significant environmental impacts. Natural England advises that all environmental impacts and opportunities are fully considered and relevant local bodies are consulted.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Natural England notes that the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has not been produced by your authority, but by the applicant. As competent authority, it is your responsibility to produce the HRA and be accountable for its conclusions. We provide the advice enclosed on the assumption that your authority intends to adopt this HRA to fulfil your duty as competent authority.

The appropriate assessment concludes that your authority is able to ascertain that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any of the sites in question. Having considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for all identified adverse effects that could potentially occur as a result of the proposal, Natural England advises that we concur with the assessment conclusions, providing that all mitigation measures are appropriately secured in any planning permission given.

Further Advice on Mitigation

The proposed development falls within the [Sussex North Water Supply Zone](#) (SNWSZ). As set out in Natural England's [Advice Note](#) regarding planning applications within the SNWSZ, the existing water supply in the zone cannot be ruled out as contributing to the declines in wildlife within the internationally protected Arun Valley SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites. Ensuring that there is no net increase in water consumption is recognised as a suitable method to rule out potential adverse effects on the integrity of these sites arising from development.

The applicant has undertaken a water neutrality assessment which demonstrates that the proposal will be water neutral and will therefore not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley designated sites. The submitted documents state that the existing water use is 10,420 litres per day and the proposed water use will be 967,661 litres per day, without mitigation measures.

While we concur with the conclusions of the water neutrality assessment that the proposal achieves neutrality, we have provided general comments as well as specific advice on each of the four mitigation scenarios below.

General Advice

Water Neutrality Calculations

Bespoke Occupancy Rate

We note that the applicant has deviated from the Horsham average occupancy rates recommended by your authority, which change depending on the size of the dwelling(s), instead opting for the national average of 2.4 persons per dwelling. So long as your authority, as competent authority, is satisfied that this is representative of the proposed development, we are content with a bespoke occupancy rate being utilised.

Proposed Water Use

We are pleased to see that the applicant has completed a thorough assessment of the proposed water use, using industry standard calculators (Part G, BREEAM) and best available evidence. We should however highlight that more detailed information will be required for certain development at the reserved matters stage – for example the proposed leisure centre as these water use figures are currently based on assumptions.

Construction Phase Water Use

While we are pleased to see that the applicant has taken construction water use into consideration in their submitted Water Neutrality Statement, totalling 16,222 litres/day for the first 14 years, this is not something that Natural England has asked for previously on other development within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone.

Rainwater Harvesting: Potable Water

We note that the applicant has proposed the implementation of rainwater harvesting to provide both potable and non-potable water to the development. We consider this mitigation suitable, provided that your authority is satisfied that appropriate treatment can be delivered and secured in perpetuity in accordance with the requirements of The Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016, as amended.

Should deliverability of the required treatment be uncertain, it is our advice that rainwater harvesting is not a suitable mitigation measure for potable water use in this case. The proposal's water neutrality budget will need to be reconsidered, and further mitigation may be required.

Scenario A1 – Further Information Required

Scenario A1 aims to achieve water neutrality through:

1. The closure of Ifield Golf and Country Club (10,420 litres/day)
2. Rainwater harvesting at residential properties for potable use (405,344 litres/day)
3. Sourcing water from an onsite borehole (120,000 litres/day)
4. Purchase of SNWCS credits for residual offset (174,564 litres/day)

While this is an acceptable mitigation strategy in principle, we would require further information to be submitted in relation to the proposed borehole if this were to be selected as the final approach. This is because there are several factors that need to be considered before it can be sufficiently certain. Firstly, the delivery of any proposed borehole must be sufficiently secured and likely to work before it can be considered at appropriate assessment.

As the proposed borehole will be abstracting $>20\text{m}^3$ per day, an abstraction licence will be required from the Environment Agency (EA). Until this is agreed, it is our advice that the proposed borehole is not sufficiently secure enough to be considered at appropriate assessment.

Scenario A2 – Further Information Required

Scenario A2 aims to achieve water neutrality through:

1. The closure of Ifield Golf and Country Club (10,420 litres/day)
2. Rainwater harvesting at residential properties for potable use (405,344 litres/day)
3. Sourcing water from two onsite boreholes (240,000 litres/day)
4. Purchase of SNWCS credits for residual offset (54,564 litres/day)

Please see our comments under Scenario A1 in relation to the proposed borehole(s).

Scenario B – Further Information Required

Scenario B aims to achieve water neutrality through:

1. The closure of Ifield Golf and Country Club (10,420 litres/day)
2. Rainwater harvesting at residential and commercial properties for potable use (466,604 litres/day)
3. Sourcing water from four onsite boreholes (466,604 litres/day)

Please see our comments under Scenario A1 in relation to the proposed borehole(s).

Scenario C – No Objection Subject to Robust Securing

Scenario C aims to achieve water neutrality through:

1. The closure of Ifield Golf and Country Club (10,420 litres/day)
2. Rainwater harvesting at residential and commercial properties for potable use (411,710 litres/day)
3. Purchase of SNWCS credits to residual offset (288,198 litres/day)

We note that the remainder of the water use resulting from the proposed development (288,198 litres/day) will be offset via the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS). As detailed in our letter to your authority on 31 January 2025, we are satisfied that this measure is sufficient to rule out an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley sites and recommend that you follow the agreed process of securing these via a Grampian-style condition.

Summary of Advice

To summarise, though four methods to achieve water neutrality have been put forward we are only able to agree with the conclusion of no adverse effect for Scenario C at this stage. We are happy for your authority to grant permission on this basis but note that should the applicant want to utilise measures outlined in Scenarios A1, A2 and B then further information will be required in relation to the proposed borehole at subsequent planning stages.

Other Advice

In addition, Natural England would advise on the following issues.

Bechstein's Bat Species

Natural England provided advice on this site throughout 2024 as part of Horsham's Local Plan review process, confirming in a letter dated 17 July 2024 (our reg. 482468) that Hyde Hill Wood and the immediate surrounding area supports a notable population of Bechstein's bats.

We note that further information has been submitted as part of this application, which our national bat specialist is currently reviewing. Our comments on impacts to Bechstein's bat species as a result of this development will be submitted separately, by the 23 October 2025.

Protected Landscapes

The proposed development is for a site close to a nationally designated landscape namely High Weald National Landscape (referred to in legislation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)).

Natural England has concluded that impacts on the nationally designated landscape and the delivery of its statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty can be determined locally by the local planning authority, with advice from its landscape or planning officers, and from the relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board.

Natural England is not confirming that there would not be a significant adverse effect on landscape or visual resources or on the statutory purpose of the area, only that there are no landscape issues which, based on the information received, necessitate Natural England's involvement.

We advise that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide

your decision and the role of local advice are explained below. Your decision should be guided by paragraph 189 and 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes, National Parks, and the Broads and states that the scale and extent of development within all these areas should be limited. Paragraph 190 requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated to justify major development within a designated landscape and sets out criteria which should be applied in considering this proposal.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the National Landscape is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose.

Furthermore, [Section 245](#) (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities (which includes local authorities) in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, the Broads or National Landscape (referred to in legislation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in England, to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area. The duty applies to local planning authorities and other decision makers in preparing development plans, making planning decisions on development and infrastructure proposals, as well as to other public bodies and statutory undertakers in undertaking their functions. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The relevant National Landscape body (Conservation Board or Partnership) may be able to offer advice in relation to the duty, including on how the proposed development aligns with and contributes to delivering the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

From the [Post 1988 ALC survey](#) available online for this site we consider this application falls outside the scope of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended) consultation arrangements, as the proposed development would not appear to lead to the loss of over 20ha 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land.

For this reason, we do not propose to make any detailed comments in relation to agricultural land quality and soils, although sustainable soil management should aim to minimise risks to the ecosystem services which soils provide, through appropriate site design, masterplanning and Green Infrastructure. Natural England would advise that any grant of planning permission should be made subject to conditions to safeguard soil resources, including the provision of soil resource information in line with the Defra guidance [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#).

Further guidance is available in The British Society of Soil Science [Guidance Note](#) Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction which we recommend is followed in order to safeguard soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the development.

If, however, you consider the proposal to have significant implications for further loss of BMV agricultural land, we would be pleased to discuss the matter further.

Final Comments

Please note that if your authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter, you are required under Section 281 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

Further general advice on consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me on Sophie.Moore@naturalengland.org.uk.

We would be pleased to provide advice on the discharge of planning conditions or obligations attached to any planning permission to address the issues above.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours faithfully,

Sophie Moore
Senior Officer for Sussex – Sustainable Development
Sussex & Kent Area Team

Annex A – Natural England general advice

Protected Landscapes

Paragraph 189 of the [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework) (NPPF) requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (known as National Landscapes), National Parks, and the Broads and states that the scale and extent of development within all these areas should be limited. Paragraph 190 requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated to justify major development within a designated landscape and sets out criteria which should be applied in considering relevant development proposals. Section 245 of the [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/2023/10/1/levelling-up-and-regeneration-act-2023/contents) places a duty on relevant authorities (including local planning authorities) to seek to further the statutory purposes of a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England in exercising their functions. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The local planning authority should carefully consider any impacts on the statutory purposes of protected landscapes and their settings in line with the NPPF, relevant development plan policies and the Section 245 duty. The relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board may be able to offer advice on the impacts of the proposal on the natural beauty of the area and the aims and objectives of the statutory management plan, as well as environmental enhancement opportunities. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to development and its capacity to accommodate proposed development.

Wider landscapes

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. This application may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes, including any local landscape designations. You may want to consider whether any local landscape features or characteristics (such as ponds, woodland, or dry-stone walls) could be incorporated into the development to respond to and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness, in line with any local landscape character assessments. Where the impacts of development are likely to be significant, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be provided with the proposal to inform decision making. We refer you to the [Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment \(GLVIA3\) - Landscape Institute](https://www.landscapeinstitute.org.uk/guidelines-for-landscape-and-visual-impact-assessment-glvia3) for further guidance.

Biodiversity duty

Section 40 of the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/2006/10/natural-environment-and-rural-communities-act-2006/contents) places a duty on the local planning authority to conserve and enhance biodiversity as part of its decision making. We refer you to the [Complying with the biodiversity duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-biodiversity-duty) for further information.

Designated nature conservation sites

Paragraphs 193-195 of the NPPF set out the principles for determining applications impacting on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and habitats sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)). Both the direct and indirect impacts of the development should be considered.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment is needed where a proposal might affect a habitat site (see [Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site) and Natural England must be consulted on 'appropriate assessments' (see [Appropriate assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/appropriate-assessment) for more information for planning authorities).

Natural England must also be consulted where development is in or likely to affect a SSSI and provides advice on potential impacts on SSSIs either via the [SSSI Impact Risk Zones \(England\) \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.arcgis.com) or as standard or bespoke consultation responses. Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 places a duty on all public bodies to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the features for which an SSSI has been notified ([Sites of special scientific interest: public body responsibilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sites-of-special-scientific-interest-public-body-responsibilities)).

Protected Species

Natural England has produced [Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-species-and-development-advice-for-local-planning-authorities) (standing advice) to help planning authorities understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Annex A – Natural England general advice

Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on protected species where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances. A protected species licence may be required in certain cases. We refer you to [Wildlife licences: when you need to apply](#) (www.gov.uk) for more information.

Local sites and priority habitats and species

The local planning authority should consider the impacts of the proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity site, in line with paragraphs 187, 188 and 192 of the NPPF and any relevant development plan policy. There may also be opportunities to enhance local sites and improve their connectivity to help nature's recovery. Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local environmental records centre, wildlife trust, geoconservation groups or recording societies. Emerging [Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK](#) (www.gov.uk) may also provide further useful information.

Those habitats and species which are of particular importance for nature conservation are included as 'priority habitats and species' in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. We refer you to [Habitats and species of principal importance in England](#) (gov.uk) for a list of priority habitats and species in England. You should consider priority habitats and species when applying your 'biodiversity duty' to your policy or decision making

Natural England does not routinely hold priority species data. Such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely.

Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land. We refer you to the [Brownfield Hub - Buglife](#) for more information and Natural England's [Open Mosaic Habitat \(Draft\) - data.gov.uk](#) (Open Mosaic Habitat inventory), which can be used as the starting point for detailed brownfield land assessments.

Biodiversity and wider environmental gains

Development should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the NPPF paragraphs 187(d), 192 and 193. Major development (defined in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) glossary) is required by law to deliver a biodiversity gain of at least 10% from 12 February 2024 and this requirement is also applied to small scale development from April 2024. For nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs), it is anticipated that the requirement for biodiversity net gain will be implemented from 2025.

[Biodiversity Net Gain](#) guidance (gov.uk) provides more information on biodiversity net gain and includes a link to the [Biodiversity Net Gain Planning Practice Guidance](#) (gov.uk).

The statutory biodiversity metric should be used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and intertidal habitats and can be used to inform any development project. We refer you to [Calculate biodiversity value with the statutory biodiversity metric](#) for more information. For small development sites, [The Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of the statutory biodiversity metric and is designed for use where certain criteria are met.

The mitigation hierarchy as set out in paragraph 193 of the NPPF should be followed to firstly consider what existing habitats within the site can be retained or enhanced. Where on-site measures are not possible, provision off-site will need to be considered.

Where off-site delivery of biodiversity gain is proposed on a special site designated for nature (e.g. a SSSI or habitats site) prior consent or assent may be required from Natural England. More information is available on [Sites of Special Scientific Interest: managing your land](#)

Annex A – Natural England general advice

Development also provides opportunities to secure wider biodiversity enhancements and environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 77, 109, 125, 187, 188, 192 and 193). Opportunities for enhancement might include incorporating features to support specific species within the design of new buildings such as swift or bat boxes or designing lighting to encourage wildlife.

[The Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool - Beta Test Version - JP038 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the statutory biodiversity metric.

[Natural environment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) provides further information on biodiversity net gain, the mitigation hierarchy and wider environmental net gain.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

The local planning authority should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 193 of the NPPF. The [Natural England Access to Evidence - Ancient woodlands Map](#) can help to identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced [Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (standing advice) for planning authorities. It should be considered when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

Best and most versatile agricultural land and soils

Local planning authorities are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) information to apply NPPF policies (Paragraphs 187, 188). This is the case regardless of whether the proposed development is sufficiently large to consult Natural England. Further information is contained in the [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

[Find open data - data.gov.uk](#) on Agricultural Land Classification or use the information available on [MAGIC \(defra.gov.uk\)](#).

The Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) provides guidance on soil protection, and we recommend its use in the design and construction of development, including any planning conditions. For mineral working and landfilling, we refer you to [Reclaim minerals extraction and landfill sites to agriculture - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), which provides guidance on soil protection for site restoration and aftercare. The [Soils Guidance \(quarrying.org\)](#) provides detailed guidance on soil handling for mineral sites.

Should the development proceed, we advise that the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of soils on site.

Green Infrastructure

For evidence-based advice and tools on how to design, deliver and manage green and blue infrastructure (GI) we refer you to [Green Infrastructure Home \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#) (the Green Infrastructure Framework). GI should create and maintain green liveable places that enable people to experience and connect with nature, and that offer everyone, wherever they live, access to good quality parks, greenspaces, recreational, walking and cycling routes that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all. GI provision should enhance ecological networks, support ecosystems services and connect as a living network at local, regional and national scales.

Development should be designed to meet the 15 [GI How Principles \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#). The GI Standards can be used to inform the quality, quantity and type of GI to be provided. Major development should have a GI plan including a long-term delivery and management plan. Relevant aspects of local authority GI strategies should be delivered where appropriate.

Annex A – Natural England general advice

The [Green Infrastructure Map \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk) and [GI Mapping Analysis \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk) are GI mapping resources that can be used to help assess deficiencies in greenspace provision and identify priority locations for new GI provision.

Access and Recreation:

Natural England encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help improve people's access to the natural environment. Measures such as reinstating existing footpaths, together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways should be considered. Links to urban fringe areas should also be explored to strengthen access networks, reduce fragmentation, and promote wider green infrastructure.

Rights of Way, Access land, Coastal access and National Trails:

Paragraphs 105, 185, 187 and 193 of the NPPF highlight the important of public rights of way and access. Development should consider potential impacts on access land, common land, rights of way and coastal access routes in the vicinity of the development.

Consideration should also be given to the potential impacts on any nearby National Trails. We refer you to [Find your perfect trail, and discover the land of myths and legend - National Trails](http://www.nationaltrails.org.uk) for information including contact details for the National Trail Officer.

The King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIIIECP) is a National Trail around the whole of the English Coast. It has an associated coastal margin subject to public access rights. Parts of the KCIIIIECP are not on Public Rights of Way but are subject to public access rights. Consideration should be given to the impact of any development on the KCIIIIECP and the benefits of maintaining a continuous coastal route.

Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated for any adverse impacts on Rights of Way, Access land, Coastal access, and National Trails.

Further information is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance on the [Natural environment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).