Date: 11 July 2025
Our ref: 517525
Your ref: DC/25/0741

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

T 0300 060 3900

Shazia Penne
Planning
Horsham District Council
planning@horsham.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms. Penne,

Planning consultation: Variation of Condition1 and Removal of Conditions 2 and 3 of previously approved application DC/24/1608 (Change of use of part of an agricultural building to Use Class B8 (storage) and erection of a toilet block (retrospective)) to amend the Water Neutrality Strategy.
Location: Aglands Farm, Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex RH13 8AN.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 26 June 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

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 (SAC), Special Protection (SPA) and Ramsar site.
- damage or destroy the interest features for which Amberley Wild Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Pulborough Brooks SSSI have been notified.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required:

- The delivery, management and maintenance of any measures identified in the applicant's water neutrality statement that are required to ensure that the proposed development will not result in increased levels of abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

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

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

Further Advice on Mitigation

The proposed development falls within the Sussex North water supply zone. As set out in Natural England's Advice Note regarding planning applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, the existing water supply in the Sussex North water supply zone cannot be ruled out as contributing to the declines in wildlife within internationally protected sites in the Arun Valley SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. 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.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Natural England notes that your authority, as competent authority, has undertaken an appropriate assessment of the proposal in accordance with regulation 63 of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). Natural England is a statutory consultee on the appropriate assessment stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

Your 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.

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 28I (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 Hannah.Lee@naturalengland.org.uk.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Lee
Sustainable Development
Sussex and Kent Area Team