Place Services
Essex County Council
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Date: 20 November 2026
Our ref: 24677

Hannah Darley
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
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RH12 1RL

By email only: planning@horsham.gov.uk

Thank you for requesting advice on this Permission in Principle 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.

Application: DC/26/1639
Location: The Warren Horsham Road Handcross West Sussex
Proposal: Permission in Principle for the erection of one dwelling on the southern side of Handford Way and one replacement dwelling in the residential curtilage south of The Warren. Retention of Estate Management Building and a 150 sq.m extension, for commercial, business and service use within Use Class E(g).

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above Permission in Principle application.

No ecological objection	☐
No objection subject to submission of ecological information at Technical Details stage	☒
Recommend Refusal	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the documents supplied by the applicant, including the following:

- Location Plan (MapServe, no date given)
- Application Form
- Covering Letter

Please note that comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house.

We note no ecological information has been submitted in support of this application. There are three parts detailed within the covering letter relating to this Permission in Principle application of which we have listed below and briefly summarised the potential ecological impacts.

a) One infill dwelling on the south side of Handford Way. The document states this will entail infilling between two existing houses. In the absence of further detailed ecological information the proposed infill could result in impacts to protected and Priority species.
b) One replacement dwelling, in the residential curtilage south of The Warren, together with merging Unit 4 and Unit 1 in the Warren. The document states this will not result in a net increase of residential dwelling, but rather one large dwelling. This will impact an existing building and could result in ecological impacts to European Protected Species: bats.
c) Retention of the Estate Management Building and 150sq.m extension, for commercial, business and service use within use Class E(g). The proposed building extension could result in ecological impacts to European Protected Species: bats.

We have undertaken a desktop assessment using MAGIC and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) – accessed under licence. MAGIC shows that the site is entirely encompassed by Priority habitat deciduous woodland, which could be impacted by the proposals. Additionally, the records provided by SxBRC show there are three bat records of Brown Long-eared and Common Pipistrelle recorded at this site, not details regarding whether these records pertain to a bat roost.

At the Technical Details stage, we recommend that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats on any buildings or trees to be removed is undertaken. Details of survey method, results, mitigation & enhancement measures are required to make this proposal acceptable.

The site lies outside of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 12km Wider Conservation Area for this SAC, for which significant impacts or severance to flightlines must be considered (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol).

To fully assess the impacts of the proposal we need ecological information for the site, particularly for particularly bats, which are all European Protected Species. These surveys are required prior to determination of Technical Details because Government Standing Advice indicates that you should survey for bats if any of the following criteria apply:

- *distribution and historical records suggest bats may be present – you can search the National Biodiversity Network Atlas by species and location*
- *the development site includes or is close to any built structures, on or underground, that provide commuting, foraging or roosting opportunities for bats*
- *the development site includes or is close to trees, shrubs, rock formations, quarries, natural cliff faces or water bodies that provide commuting, foraging or roosting opportunities for bats*
- *the development proposal includes lighting of buildings or green spaces close to habitats that bats tend to use*

The results of these surveys are required prior to determination because paragraph 99 of the ODPM Circular 06/2005 highlights that: "*It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.*"

This information will therefore be required at Technical Details stage to provide the LPA with certainty of impacts on legally protected species before a consent is issued and be able to secure appropriate mitigation either by a mitigation licence from Natural England or a condition of any consent. This will enable the LPA to demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and prevent wildlife crime under s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

We have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the NatureSpace Partnership.

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

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Hayley Dean MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
Place Services at Essex County Council

Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf 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.

Place Services have a policy relating to the use of AI. Unless otherwise stipulated, any AI use will be limited to basic proof-reading, grammar, and spelling correction. This response has been reviewed by the author(s). If you have any queries, please contact us for information about our AI guidance.