09 April 2024

Amanda Wilkes
Horsham District Council
Parkside,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

By email only

Thank you for requesting advice on this 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.

Dear Amanda

Application: DC/24/0408
Location: Stonehouse Farm Handcross Road Plummers Plain West Sussex RH13 6NZ
Proposal: Extension of residential curtilage and creation of new vehicular access

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

a) No ecological harm/No objection	
b) Requires further information	
c) Recommend grant permission subject to conditions	Yes
d) Recommend refusal	
e) Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Appropriate Assessment	Yes
f) Discharge of condition	

Please note that following receipt of Natural England's position statement on developments in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, decisions on planning applications should await the completion of a Sussex North water neutrality strategy.

Summary

We have reviewed the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024) supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of proportionate mitigation.

We note from the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024) that the farmhouse and outbuilding will not be impacted by the works and that the trees on the road boundary (H19) have negligible bat roost potential. We therefore agree that no further surveys for bats are required unless the plans change so that additional trees will be removed or the works are delayed for more than 12 months (Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024)).

We also note that treeline H19 provides sub-optimal habitat for Hazel Dormouse (Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024)) and therefore agree that no further surveys for this species are required.

As there is suitable commuting habitat for reptiles at the base of the hedgerow/treeline, we support the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles in Section 7.0 Table 2 of the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024)). This should be secured by a condition of any consent.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination. We have no objections on ecological matters excluding Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the NatureSpace Partnership.

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

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

The mitigation measures identified in the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 180[d] of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023). The enhancement measures should be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and secured by a condition of any consent for discharge prior to slab level.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. In terms of biodiversity net gain, the enhancements proposed will contribute to this aim.

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 and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024), as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local

planning authority prior to determination. This includes the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles in Section 7.0 Table 2 of the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024)) which avoids impacts on protected species.

This will 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 and enhance 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) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

2. **PRIOR TO BENEFICIAL USE: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT LAYOUT**
"A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout, providing the finalised details and locations of the enhancement measures contained within the Ecological Briefing Note (CSA Environmental, March 2024), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter."

Reason: To enhance Protected and Priority Species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Broad MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
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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.