Horsham District Council
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Matrix

The purpose of this HRA screening record is to assess the need for appropriate assessment in relation to the project detailed below.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) requires that a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening is carried out in relation to any plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on Habitats (European) sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Habitats sites are Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. Ramsar sites should also be given the same level of protection, as stated within the National Planning Policy Framework.

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU *People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta* C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a development is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats site.

Where an Appropriate Assessment is carried out a project may only be authorised after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned.

Table 1: HRA Screening matrix

Stage 1 HRA screening	
Brief description of the development project	**Application reference:** DC/26/1007
	Application address: St Johns Farm, Trout Lane, Brooks Green, West Sussex, RH13 0JN
	Application description: Demolition of existing buildings. Erection of 4no dwelling houses with associated parking and landscaping.
	Type of application: Full (minor)
	Planning officer: Daniel Holmes
Details of the development project	**Proximity to Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar**: Is the application site: A) Within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone (WSZ) **Yes. The Place Services HRA confirms that the development lies within Horsham District and is subject to the water neutrality issue affecting the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. However water neutrality is no longer a relevant consideration following resolution of the water resources issue and therefore no further assessment is required.** B) Within the 5km Zone of Influence for functionally linked habitats for Arun Valley SPA / Ramsar site **No. The Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site is located approximately 10.2km south-west of the application site. The application site is therefore outside the 5km Zone of Influence for functionally linked habitats associated with the Arun Valley SPA/Ramsar site.** C) Is the Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar potentially impacted by the development:

	No. The site lies approximately 10.2km from the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar and no direct or indirect impact pathways have been identified. D) If YES to question (A) is the planning application directly connected with or necessary to the management of the a SAC/SPA/Ramsar site? **No. The application relates to the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of four dwellings with associated parking and landscaping at St Johns Farm, Brooks Green. The proposal is not directly connected with, nor necessary for, the conservation management of any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site.**
Brief description of the Habitats sites within scope of this assessment	The following Habitats sites have been considered within this assessment: **Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar** The Arun Valley SAC, Arun Valley SPA and Arun Valley Ramsar Site are designated for internationally important wetland habitats, aquatic invertebrates and bird populations. The application site is located approximately 10.2km north-east of these designations. Accordingly, no pathway for likely significant effects has been identified. **The Mens SAC** The Mens SAC is designated for internationally important woodland habitat and populations of Barbastelle bats (Barbastella barbastellus). The application site falls within the identified Key Conservation Area associated with the SAC and therefore consideration must be given to potential impacts on habitat connectivity, commuting routes and foraging habitat used by Barbastelle bats. The submitted ecological information has been reviewed by Place Services, who are satisfied that the proposed development would not result in the loss or severance of important commuting or foraging habitat and have concluded that the proposal would have no Likely Significant Effect on the integrity of the SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. **Ebernoe Common SAC** Ebernoe Common SAC is designated for internationally important woodland habitats and populations of Barbastelle and Bechstein's bats. The application site falls within the Wider Conservation Area associated with the SAC and therefore the potential for impacts upon habitat connectivity and supporting bat habitat requires consideration. Place Services has reviewed the submitted ecological surveys and considers that the proposal would retain the key boundary vegetation and commuting corridors used by bats. Subject to the recommended mitigation measures and sensitive lighting controls, the development would not adversely affect habitat connectivity and would have no Likely Significant Effect on the integrity of the SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity	Key vulnerabilities affecting site integrity include: • Habitat loss and fragmentation of supporting habitat. • Severance of commuting and foraging routes used by Barbastelle bats. • Changes in land management affecting habitat availability. • Disturbance arising from lighting. • Hydrological changes. • Air pollution.

	The Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site has historically been subject to water neutrality considerations associated with water abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. However, Natural England issued a Withdrawal Statement on 31 October 2025 in relation to its previous Position Statement and interim advice. Accordingly, water neutrality considerations are addressed separately by Horsham District Council under the Council's current approach and are not relied upon as part of this bat SAC screening assessment
HRA Screening Assessment Criteria	
The individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site	The application seeks permission for 'Demolition of existing buildings. Erection of 4no dwelling houses with associated parking and landscaping' at St Johns Farm, Trout Lane, Brooks Green, West Sussex, RH13 0JN. The site lies approximately 5.5km from The Mens SAC and approximately 6.8km from Ebernoe Common SAC. The site falls within the identified Key Conservation Area (6km zone) associated with The Mens SAC and within the Wider Conservation Area (12km zone) associated with Ebernoe Common SAC. As such, consideration must be given to the potential for impacts upon habitat connectivity, commuting routes and supporting foraging habitat associated with qualifying bat species. The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal confirms that the site comprises a former farmstead and commercial yard containing buildings, hardstanding, areas of disturbed ground and boundary vegetation. The site is adjacent to Madgeland Wood Ancient Woodland and lies within an area utilised by commuting and foraging bats. Place Services has reviewed the submitted ecological information, including the bat surveys, and notes that bat roosts are present within two existing buildings. However, the consultee is satisfied that the development would not result in the loss or severance of important commuting or foraging habitat used by qualifying bat species associated with The Mens SAC or Ebernoe Common SAC. The majority of boundary vegetation and woodland edge habitat would be retained and the ecological surveys demonstrate that connectivity through the landscape would be maintained. Subject to the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, including bat mitigation, habitat retention and appropriate lighting controls, Place Services concludes that the proposal would not adversely affect habitat connectivity or supporting habitat relied upon by qualifying bat populations. Accordingly, the potential impact pathway requiring consideration is the effect of the proposal on commuting and foraging habitat used by qualifying bat species associated with The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC, having regard to habitat connectivity, lighting and disturbance effects, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects.

Test 1 the significance test: – Can a judgement be made as to whether there could be any potential significant impacts of the development on the integrity of the Arun Valley SPA/ SAC/Ramsar.	**Conclusion: Can a judgement be made as to whether there could be any potentially significant impacts on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar?** **No.** The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA or Ramsar Site. The application site is located approximately 10.2km from the designated sites and no direct habitat loss, fragmentation, disturbance, recreational pressure, air quality or other impact pathways have been identified. Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the development, it can be concluded that the proposal would not result in a Likely Significant Effect on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA or Ramsar Site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. **Conclusion:** The proposal will not give rise to a Likely Significant Effect on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA or Ramsar Site. No Appropriate Assessment is therefore required.

Approving Planner: Daniel Holmes
Date: 13.10.2026