



SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Registered charity 256936

www.sos.org.uk

30 Farnefold Road
Steyning
West Sussex
BN44 3SN
conservation@sos.org.uk

30th April 2026

By e-mail only to
planning@horsham.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: DC/26/0366 - Land North West of Southwater

I am writing on behalf of the Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) ⁽¹⁾ regarding the above planning application.

We recognise that this land has been designated for housing in the Horsham District Plan now being considered by HM Government. However, this Society is deeply concerned about the number of planning applications for large housing developments now coming forward across the District, not all of which are within the land allocations of the draft Local Plan, and which, taken together, risk undermining the excellent work being done under initiatives such as "Weald to Waves" and the Adur Recovery Project, as well as the impending West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

We endorse the concerns about the impact on woodland quality (and consequently on birdlife) raised by the Woodland Trust in their letter of 27th April and consider that these proposals run counter to the aims of the LNRS by increasing habitat fragmentation, rather than promoting the "bigger, better, more joined up" aspirations of the Strategy.

Were this application to be approved, we urge that Horsham District Council is guided as far as feasible by a positive guiding principle to ensure that any development will support delivery of the LNRS and achievement of the targets of the 2021 Environment Act. For example, we consider it vital that implementation of all the recommendations in 6.5 of the applicant's Breeding and Wintering Bird Assessment ⁽²⁾ are made conditions of approval:

(1) Where possible, retention of existing woodland, scrub, mature trees and grassland within the site, and enhancement of these habitats through sensitive management and complementary planting. Deadwood habitats should be encouraged where safe to do so.

(2) Retention and enhancement of the existing network of linear habitats within the site including hedgerows, treelines and mature scattered trees. Where this is not possible, alternative habitat corridors should be provided to allow movement of wildlife across and around the site.

(3) Use of SuDS to create new opportunities for wetland birds. SuDS for the proposed development could be used to provide a range of additional permanent and ephemeral waterbodies, ditches, swales, wet woodland and wet grassland habitats. This could also include restoration/enhancement of existing ditches.

(4) Provision of new high value habitats for birds and other wildlife within areas of proposed informal open space such as species-rich meadow and rough grassland, native woodland, species-rich hedgerows, orchard and scrub habitats.

(5) Planting schemes should use native species where appropriate, using species characteristic of the area, sourced from stock of local provenance where possible.

(6) Use of high value plants for foraging birds within the landscape planting scheme. This should include fruit and nut producing species in addition to those with high pollen and nectar yields (attracting invertebrate prey).

(7) Provision of a range of bird boxes situated on new buildings and existing trees within and adjacent to the proposed development area and wider site. Consideration should be given to the provision of Sparrow terraces and Swift boxes on suitable buildings, and Kestrel and Owl boxes on suitable retained mature trees overlooking areas of grassland within informal open space or the adjacent countryside.

With respect to (7) above, provision of bird boxes is only worthwhile if there is a long term arrangement for monitoring and maintenance, and this should also be a requirement.

Yours sincerely



On behalf of the Sussex Ornithological Society

(1) The SOS is the county bird society. Our aims are to record and study wild birds in the county, to assist in the conservation of birds and to engage, inspire and educate people to enjoy, appreciate and understand birds and their habitats. We have a large database of bird records, which are shared with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) and with other interested bodies. Our membership is approximately 1,900. For more information see – sos.org.uk

(2) Environmental Statement, volume 2, appendix 8.11