Date: 11 December 2024
Our ref: 495649
Your ref: DC/24/0104

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

T 0300 060 3900

Kate Turner
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms Turner,

Planning consultation: DC/24/0104 Outline Application for the erection of 1No. chalet dwelling with all matters reserved except access
Location: Dendrons, Kithurst Lane, Storrington, West Sussex

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 02 December 2024 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, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site *https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/*.
- damage or destroy the interest features for which Amberley Wild Brooks and Pulborough Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest has been notified.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required / or the following mitigation options should be secured:

- Delivery, management and maintenance of measures identified in the Water Neutrality Statement to achieve water neutrality.

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

A lack of objection does not mean that there are no significant environmental impacts. Natural England advises that all environmental impacts and opportunities are fully considered and relevant local bodies are consulted.

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

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.

Further Advice on Mitigation

The proposed development falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone (SNWSZ). As set out in Natural England's Advice Note regarding planning applications within the SNWSZ, the existing water supply in the 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.

The applicant has undertaken a water neutrality assessment which demonstrates that the proposal will be water neutral and will therefore not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley designated sites. The submitted documents state that the existing water use is 0 litres per day and the proposed water use will be 106.15 litres per day following the implementation of rainwater harvesting. The remaining water demand will be offset through the purchase of credits from a private offsetting scheme.

While we concur with the conclusions of the water neutrality assessment that the proposal achieves neutrality, we have the following comments to make on certain aspects of the assessment.

Private Water Credit Scheme

We note that the applicant is intending on paying into a private offsetting scheme, run by Nicholls Water Credits, to achieve neutrality at the proposed development. The applicant has evidenced their contribution to the scheme as well as the water savings being made, and we are therefore satisfied that this is a suitable mitigation measure. As competent authority you should be sure that any offsetting can be sufficiently secured in perpetuity. In addition, your authority should ensure that these 'water credits' generated by the offsetting cannot be utilised by any other developments within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone (i.e. double counting).

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 at Eleanor.Curran@naturalengland.org.uk.

We would not expect to provide further advice on the discharge of planning conditions or obligations attached to any planning permission.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Curran
Sustainable Development Officer
Sussex and Kent