27th February 2025

Shazia Penne
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.

Application: **DC/24/1689**
Location: **Hook Farm West Chiltington Lane Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9DP**
Proposal: **Conversion of barn and associated modern building into domestic accommodation. Removal of C20 workshop and conversion of outbuilding into ancillary use (Householder).**

Dear Shazia

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above householder 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) Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Bat Appropriate Assessment (screening only)	No
g) 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 unless they can demonstrate water neutrality.

Summary

We have reviewed the Bat Roost Potential Memo Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., February 2025) and Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. Please note that comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house.

We note from the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024) undertaken in August and September 2024 that no emergences of bats were observed from the barn. We also note from the Bat Roost Potential Memo Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., February 2025) that Workshop 1 and Workshop 2 have negligible bat roost potential. We therefore agree that no further surveys for bats are required.

The site lies approximately 7.3km east of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore lies within the 12km Wider Conservation Area for the SAC (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The qualifying feature for the SAC is Barbastelle bats, but there are no records for this species within 2km of the site (Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBIS) - accessed under licence and MAGIC maps).

One European Protected Species Mitigation License (EPSML) has been granted within 2km of the site approximately 50m to the south of the site in 2017 for Common Pipistrelle (MAGIC maps). There are approximately 20 records for bats within 2km of the site including Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bat, Common Pipistrelle, Serotine, Whiskered bat, Natterers' bat and Nathusius' Pipistrelle bat (SxBIS – accessed under licence). The site lies approximately 12.3km east of Ebernoe Common SAC and is therefore outside the Wider Conservation Area for this SAC. The site lies approximately 9.3km northeast of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.

We understand from the submitted documents that the site comprises three buildings and that there are no trees or hedgerows on site. Therefore, there will be no severance to the flight lines of foraging or commuting bats from the SAC and habitat connectivity within the site will be maintained.

We therefore believe there will therefore be no Adverse Effect on Integrity of the bat SAC. We advise the LPA to prepare a project level HRA Screening Report to record its decision and retain on file.

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.

The mitigation and enhancement measures identified in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 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.

If external lighting is required, we support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024)) to avoid impacts from light disturbance. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures recommended by Guidance Note:08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) will be implemented:

- Do not provide excessive lighting. Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow.
- Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and should be secured by a condition of any consent.

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

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 Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

This may 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).

2. **PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT LAYOUT**
"A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for the biodiversity enhancements listed in the Bat Emergence Survey Report (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd., October 2024) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following:
   a) *detailed designs or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements; and*
   b) *locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings.*

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 & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

If external lighting is required

3. **PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME**
"A lighting design scheme for biodiversity based on Guidance Note: 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall identify those features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance along important routes used for foraging; and show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority."

Reason: To 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.

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.