5th January 2024

Kate Turner
Horsham District Council

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 Kate,

Application: **DC/23/2088**
Location: **Wattlehurst Farm Dorking Road Kingsfold West Sussex RH12 3SD**
Proposal: **Outline Application for the erection of 1No. permanent rural workers dwelling with all matters reserved.**

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

Temporary Holding Objection	
No ecological objections	
Recommended Approval subject to attached conditions	Yes
Recommended Discharge of condition	
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Appropriate Assessment	Yes
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Bat Appropriate Assessment	

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. As the initial application contains a Water Neutrality Statement, the LPA as competent authority may accept the conclusion of this assessment and provide a Habitats Regulations Assessment - Appropriate Assessment to be approved by Natural England.

Summary
We have reviewed the submitted documents for this application, including the Supporting Statement (Kernon Ltd, November 2023), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination, as we agree that development is over 15 metres of the ancient woodland to the south of the site. In addition, we consider that the works upon the modified grassland is unlikely to result in impacts upon protected and Priority species.

However, if the LPA is minded to approve this application, we recommend that the below informative is secured as part of the decision notice to outline best practice measures for mobile species during the construction phase.

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.

Additionally, no biodiversity enhancement measures are identified in the documents provided. We recommend that, to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 180d and 186d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023). Therefore, reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be secured via a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout, which should ideally be informed by a suitably qualified ecologist.

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

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013.

We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.

Recommended Condition

1. **PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT LAYOUT**
   "A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for biodiversity enhancements 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 and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the NPPF 2023 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

Recommended Informative

1. **GENERAL GOOD PRACTICE MITIGATION TO AVOID ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS DURING THE CONSTUCTION PHASE**

To avoid killing or injuring small animals which may pass through the site during the construction phase, it is best practice to ensure the following measures are implemented:

a) Trenches, pits or holes dug on site should be covered over at night. Alternatively, ramps (consisting of a rough wooden plank) or sloped/stepped trenches could be provided to allow animals to climb out unharmed;
b) materials brought to the site for the construction works should be kept off the ground on pallets to prevent small animals seeking refuge;
c) rubbish and waste should be removed off site immediately or placed in a skip, to prevent small animals using the waste as a refuge; and
d) should any protected species or evidence of protected species be found prior to or during the development, all works must immediately cease and a suitably qualified ecologist must be contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
Place Services at Essex County Council
placeservicesecology@essex.gov.uk

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.