Technical Note – Peacocks Paddock

Reply to Comments for DC/25/0150 Peacocks Paddock

Our ref: 8680 Peacocks Paddock
Produced by: Louisa Standbrook-Jones MCIEEM

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This technical note provides additional ecological information for the planning application at Peacocks Paddock in relation to comments from Ecology Solutions in relation to the application. An ecology objection has been commissioned by an unknown client in response to the planning application, which has been provided by Ecology Solutions.

The objection has a number of inaccuracies, and this note provides clarification on the points raised. It should also be highlighted that the county ecologist at Horsham District Council agrees with the ecological assessment produced by Pro Vision and has raised no objection to the application based on ecology grounds.

The note by Ecology Solutions recommends that the application is refused based on an absence of suitable ecological survey, however the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has provided all necessary survey work to determine the impacts of the application based on the scale of development and potential for protected species to be present on site. A summary of the points raised is provided below for clarification.

No bat roosts will be impacted by the development as no trees will be impacted, as outlined within the arboricultural report provided by the applicant. The development will follow the measures outlined with the PEA with a sensitive lighting strategy provided to retain all foraging and commuting habitat on site. In the absence of impacts on suitable bat roosting habitat no further surveys are required to determine the application.

The suggestion that hazel dormouse surveys are required is based on inaccurate assumptions about the proposed works and not on the proposed plans provided as part of the application. All hedgerows will be retained as part of the development. As outlined within the planning documents no hedgerow removal is required and there will be no impacts to hazel dormouse habitat. The access to the site is sufficiently wide enough to facilitate the small-scale development on the site, with 15-metre-wide gates and a minimum width of drive at 11 metres. In the absence of impacts on suitable habitat no further surveys are required to determine the application.

The habitats on site are low quality for great crested newts and as demonstrated by the rapid risk assessment provided within the PEA the likelihood of an offence on the site is considered highly unlikely due to the scale of works and area of habitat involved. This tool has been devised by Natural England and is used to determine the requirement for licencing for great crested newts. Whilst there are no anticipated impacts to great crested newts the applicants have obtained a district licence from NatureSpace to provide additional mitigation measures for this species. In the unlikely event great crested newts are recorded on site the development will be covered by a licence, and no offence would occur.

Sufficient survey effort has been completed on the site to determine the impacts of the proposals to inform the planning application. The information has been reviewed by the county ecologist who has raised no objection to the development and there is no reason to refuse the planning application on ecology matters.