Place Services
Essex County Council
County Hall, Chelmsford
Essex, CM1 1QH
www.placeservices.co.uk

Date: 26 October 2026
Our ref: 22818

Sam Nye
Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

By email only: planning@horsham.gov.uk

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.

Application: DC/26/1423
Location: New Barn Farmhouse Capel Road Rusper Horsham
Proposal: Demolition of existing equestrian buildings, the erection of 10 dwellings, construction of replacement equestrian facilities including stables, horse walker and sand school and all ancillary works

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	☐
Recommend approval subject to attached conditions	☐
Further information required/Temporary holding objection on: • **Non-Statutory designated site (Local Wildlife Site – Horsegills Wood)** • **Irreplaceable habitat (Ancient Woodland)** • **Priority habitat (Lowland deciduous woodland)**	☒
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (eas ltd, April 2026), Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (eas ltd, May 2026) and the Proposed Site Plan (LDV Architecture, June 2026) supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats and identification of proportionate mitigation. Please note that comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house.

We are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application. The reasons for this are outlined below:

Approximately 300m south of the site lies Horsegills Wood Local Wildlife Site (LoWS), a non-statutory designated site which is also identified as both Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat and Ancient Woodland (irreplaceable habitat). Within this area is a watercourse known as Highams Gill. The submitted Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (EAS Ltd, May 2026) states that surface water runoff and treated effluent will continue to discharge into Highams Gill. The drainage strategy indicates that this arrangement reflects the existing drainage regime.

However, no assessment has been provided of the potential effects of increased surface water runoff and treated effluent inputs on the downstream ecological receptors, including the Local Wildlife Site, Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat woodland. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to determine whether the proposed drainage strategy would result in adverse impacts to these ecologically sensitive habitats, or whether appropriate mitigation measures can be secured.

As a result, further information should be provided prior to determination to assess the potential hydrological and water quality impacts of the proposal on Horsegills Wood LoWS and associated irreplaceable habitat, and to demonstrate that any impacts can be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated where necessary.

We also note the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (eas ltd, April 2026) has assessed impacts upon these habitats in relation to recreation and lighting.

Government Standing Advice in relation to Ancient Woodland states in relation to potential impacts "*You and the developer should identify ways to avoid negative effects on ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees. For example, selecting an alternative site for development or redesigning the scheme".*

This information is therefore required to provide the LPA with certainty of likely impacts on legally protected sites and habitats and be able to secure appropriate mitigation by a

condition of any consent. This will enable the LPA to demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and prevent wildlife crime under s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Additional Comments:
We are satisfied the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (eas ltd, April 2026) has sufficiently assessed impacts upon protected and Priority species. We note the survey identified a stand of Japanese Knotweed on site, which is a Schedule 9 Invasive Species. We recommend appropriate measures are implemented to remove and prevent the spread of this species. This should be detailed within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Biodiversity. Should the LPA be minded to grant consent this should be secured by a condition of any consent.

We note matters relating to Great Crested Newt have not been considered as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the NatureSpace Partnership.

We look forward to working with the LPA and the applicant to receive the additional information required to support a lawful decision and overcome our holding objection.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Hayley Dean MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
Place Services at Essex County Council

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.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.

Place Services have a policy relating to the use of AI. Unless otherwise stipulated, any AI use will be limited to basic proof-reading, grammar, and spelling correction. This response has been reviewed by the author(s). If you have any queries, please contact us for information about our AI guidance.

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