



Date: 08 September 2026

Our ref: 21623

Matthew Porter
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Parkside,
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RH12 1RL

By email only: Planning Department, planning@horsham.gov.uk

Thank you for requesting advice on this outline 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/26/1168
Location: Land North of Melton Drive Storrington West Sussex
Proposal: Outline application, with all matters reserved, for the phased development comprising: Phase 1 construction of the access road (to be delivered through a subsequent Reserved Matters Application pursuant to Outline Permission DC/24/2006); and Phase 2 residential development of up to 56 dwellings with associated landscaping, pedestrian and vehicular access

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above outline application.

No ecological objection	☐
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	☐
Further information required/Temporary holding objection: • Protected species and habitats	☒
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

[Please refer to Horsham District Councils advice regarding Water Neutrality requirements following Natural England's Withdrawal Statement \(31st October 2025\).](#)

Summary

We have reviewed the Ecological Impact Assessment (The Ecology Co-op April 2026) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of proportionate mitigation. Please note that comments on mandatory 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 and recommend that details of survey results, mitigation & enhancement measures for protect species and habitats are provided prior to determination. The reasons for this are outlined below:

Protected species and habitats

We note that the red line boundary in the Ecological Impact Assessment (The Ecology Co-op April 2026) does not include the access to the west, which is shown on the Horsham District Council Planning Portal as within the red line boundary. We therefore recommend that an addendum or updated ecology report is submitted to include the access element of the application.

The survey information for protected species is required prior to determination because paragraph 99 of the ODPM Circular 06/2005 highlights that: *“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.”*

This information is therefore required to provide the LPA with certainty of likely impacts on legally protected species and be able to secure appropriate mitigation either by a mitigation licence from Natural England or 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.

See Appeal Decisions Ref: APP/P1560/W/24/3344547 at The Oaks, Clacton Road Weeley Essex CO16 9EF and APP/W3520/W/17/3174638 Pooles Farm, Thorney Green Road, Stowupland IP14 4AJ, where the appeals were dismissed as one of the main issues was the effect of the proposal on protected species. The Inspector could not be sure that there would be no adverse effect on protected species in the absence of ecological information. We also highlight that this information is also requested by the Inspector even where ecology has not been a reason for refusal.

Furthermore, the Local Planning Authority, as a competent authority, should have regard to the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) when reaching planning decisions and must not leave this until the licence

application stage. Therefore, if a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence is required for this application, appropriate mitigation measures to support the provision of the licence must also be outlined prior to determination to allow certainty to the LPA that a licence will likely be granted.

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

Additional Comments

The site lies approximately 9.1km southeast of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) ([MAGIC maps](#)) and is therefore within the 12.0km Wider Conservation Area for this SAC, within which significant impacts or severance to flightlines must be considered. This is because the Wider Conservation Area is the full extent of the range of foraging areas required by Barbastelle bats, which are the qualifying feature of the SAC (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The site lies approximately 14.9km southeast of Ebernoe Common Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore lies outside the 12.0km Wider Conservation Area for this SAC and lies approximately 3.6km east of Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.

Please note that we have no comments on Great Crested Newt 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.

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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.

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.

AI may have been used in the preparation of this response, but its 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.