Date: 30 May 2024
Our ref: 477008
Your ref: DC/23/1865

Mr Robert Hermitage
Horsham District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY
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Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Hermitage

Planning consultation: Demolition of the existing car showroom and ancillary buildings and the erection of a new car dealership building and standalone workshop structure, and the reconfiguration of the car parking layout associated hard and soft landscaping

Location: Harwoods Garages Ltd London Road Pulborough West Sussex RH20 1AR

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 17 May 2024 which was received by Natural England on 17 May 2024.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Further information on when to consult Natural England on planning proposals is here- Planning and transport authorities: get environmental advice on planning - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Natural England is not able to provide specific advice on this application and therefore has no comment to make on its details. Although we have not been able to assess the potential impacts of this proposal on statutory nature conservation sites or protected landscapes, we offer the further advice and references to Standing Advice.

Natural England advises Local Planning Authorities to use the following tools to assess the impacts of the proposal on the natural environment:

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)- Screening stages
If this consultation is regarding the Screening stages of an HRA, step by step guidance is provided on the GOV. UK website.

When assessing the Likely Significant Effect (LSE), you must check if the proposal could have a significant effect on a Habitats (European) Site, as defined in NPPF that could affect its conservation objectives. If you cannot rule out the risk of the proposal having a significant effect, you will need to do an appropriate assessment. If there's no likely significant effect on the site, either alone or in combination, then you do not need to carry out an appropriate assessment.

Following the *People Over Wind* ruling by the European Court of Justice, mitigation may not be taken into account at screening stage when considering 'likely significant effects', but can be considered at appropriate assessment. In the light of this, these measures should be formally checked and confirmed by your authority, as the competent authority, via an appropriate assessment in view of the European Site's conservation objectives and in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Impact Risk Zones:
Natural England has provided Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) with Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) which can be used to determine whether the proposal impacts statutory nature conservation sites. Natural England recommends that the LPA uses these IRZs to assess potential impacts. If proposals do not trigger an Impact Risk Zone then Natural England will provide an auto-response email.

Standing Advice:
Natural England has published Standing Advice. Links to standing advice are in Annex A

If after using these tools, you consider there are significant risks to statutory nature conservation sites or protected landscapes, please set out the specific areas on which you require Natural England's advice.

Further information on LPA duties relating to protected sites and areas is here-
Protected sites and areas: how to review planning applications - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Further guidance is also set out in Planning Practice Guidance on the natural environment Natural environment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and on Habitats Regulations Assessment Appropriate assessment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Non detailed advice from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not the proposal is consistent with national and local environmental policies. Other bodies and individuals may provide information and advice on the environmental value of this site and the impacts of the proposal on the natural environment to assist the decision making process.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Please send any further correspondence, to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk quoting our reference **477008**.

Yours sincerely

Helen Churchill
Consultations Team
Natural England