



Date: 26 February 2026

Our ref: 14114

Sam Nye
Horsham District Council
Parkside,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

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.

Application: DC/26/0083
Location: Sir Roberts Farm Goose Green Lane Goose Green West Sussex RH20 2LW
Proposal: Demolition of existing building. Erection of a replacement barn style 4 bed dwelling, together with a detached garage and associated access. Change of use of land from paddock to residential curtilage.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	☐
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	☐
Further information required/Temporary holding objection – out of date ecological report and European Protected Species (bats)	☒
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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Phlorum Limited, August 2022) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. 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 on protected species/designated sites available for determination. This is because the ecological assessment (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Phlorum Limited, August 2022)) is out of date to support this application, in line with CIEEM Guidance¹ and paragraph 6.2.1 of British Standard (BS) BS42020 'Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development 2013'. This is because the initial site walkover was undertaken in May 2022. In addition, this report relates to the Dutch Barn. We note that the covering letter (dated 17th January 2026) refers to the 'demolition of existing garages' although this proposal refers to the 'demolition of the existing building'. Therefore, we request clarification of the building to be demolished.

European Protected Species - bats

We note that a building will be demolished and therefore an up to date bat survey is required. [Government Standing Advice](#) says you should ask for a survey if:

- distribution and historical records suggest bats may be present
- the development site includes or is close to [any built structures](#), on or underground, that provide commuting, foraging or roosting opportunities for bats

The survey information for bats 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.

¹ CIEEM (2019) Advice note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys - <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

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).

As a result, we recommend that the applicant's ecologist provides an ecological report, including a Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats, to support this application. This will require a site visit including surveys for protected species and desk study information.

In addition, the site lies approximately 9.7km southeast of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore lies within the 12.0km Wider Conservation Area for The Mens SAC, within which significant impacts or severance to flightlines must be considered (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The qualifying feature for the SAC is Barbastelle bat, and there are no records for this species within 2km of the site (Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre). There are approximately 43 other records for bats within 2km of the site, comprising Brown Long-eared Bat, Whiskered and Common Pipistrelle species (SxBRC). Two European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) have been granted within 2km of the site: a) 1.7km to the northeast for Common Pipistrelle bat in 2017; and b) 1.8km to the southwest for Brown Long-eared and Common Pipistrelle bat in 2016 ([MAGIC maps](#)).

The site lies approximately 15.0km southeast of Ebernoe Common SAC and therefore lies outside the Wider Conservation Area for this SAC (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The site lies approximately 5.7km east of Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site.

Therefore, the LPA will need to prepare a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Appropriate Assessment to record its decision and consult Natural England on the conclusion

This is necessary as Government Circular 06/2005 identifies that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Therefore, it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed application, is established before planning permission is granted.

Therefore, this further information is required to provide the LPA with certainty of impacts on protected and priority species and enable it to demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, as well as its biodiversity duty under s.40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Additional comments

We also recommend that reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species should be identified by a suitably qualified ecologist and implemented to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures need to be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and secured by a condition of any consent.

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.

Hayley Dean MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
 Place Services at Essex County Council
 Email: 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.*
- *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.*