4th February 2025

Marie Riggs
Horsham District Council
Parkside,
Chart Way,
Horsham,
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

By email only

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/24/1745**
Location: **The Pools Shoreham Road Henfield West Sussex BN5 9SE**
Proposal: **Installation of a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) array to the southern edge of the site.**

Dear Marie

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

a) No ecological harm/No objection	
b) Requires further information	
c) Recommend grant permission subject to conditions	Yes
d) Recommend refusal	
e) Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the Water Neutrality Appropriate Assessment	Yes
f) Discharge of condition	

Please note that following receipt of Natural England's position statement on developments in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, decisions on planning applications should await the completion of a Sussex North water neutrality strategy unless they can demonstrate water neutrality.

Summary

We have reviewed the Habitat Survey Report (submitted 11th November 2024), which provides limited ecological information on the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. Please note that comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided by Horsham District Council in-house.

As construction will include trenches which could be open overnight, we recommend the implementation of a Precationary Method Statement for mobile protected species, including Hedgehog and reptiles. This should be secured by a condition of any consent.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. Please note 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.

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

We also recommend that reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species should be identified 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 should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and should be secured by a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.

Recommended conditions

1. **PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT: PRECAUTIONARY METHOD STATEMENT FOR MOBILE PROTECTED SPECIES**
   "A Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This will contain precautionary mitigation measures and/or works to reduce potential impacts to mobile protected species during the construction phase.

   The measures and/works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter."

   Reason*:* To conserve protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

2. **PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY**
   "Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected and Priority or threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

a) *Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;*
b) *detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
c) *locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
d) *persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and*
e) *details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).*

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter."

Reason: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Please contact us with any queries.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Broad MCIEEM MSc BSc (Hons)
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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.