



Date: 08 July 2026

Our ref: 19061

Bethan Tinning  
Horsham District Council  
Parkside  
Horsham  
West Sussex  
RH12 1RL

By email only: Planning Department, [planning@horsham.gov.uk](mailto: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/26/0856  
**Location:** Sweetmans Barn The Village Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AP  
**Proposal:** Erection of a single storey linked extension and conversion of outbuilding into habitable living space.

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

|                                                                                                                                               |                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| No ecological objection                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| No ecological objection subject to attached conditions                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Further information required/Temporary holding objection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• European Protected Species (bats)</li></ul> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Recommend Refusal                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment                                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

[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 (Alex Rosenfeld, February 2026), supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on 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 and recommend that further information relating to bats is required to make this proposal acceptable prior to determination. The reason for this is outlined below:

### **European Protected Species: bats**

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Alex Rosenfeld, February 2026) that a further survey for roosting bats is required for Building B1 (western barn) between May and August. This is because the building has 'low' bat roost potential and [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.*

To fully assess the impacts of the proposal the LPA needs ecological information for the site, particularly for bats.

The information 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.

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 including the Favourable Conservation Status licensing test 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**

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Alex Rosenfeld, February 2026) that Building B2 (eastern barn) has negligible bat roost potential and we therefore agree that no further surveys are required for this building.

We support the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a Priority and threatened species) in Sections 8.25 and 8.27 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (Alex Rosenfeld, February 2026). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Ecological Impact Assessment (Alex Rosenfeld, February 2026) 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 Layout and should be secured by a condition of any consent.

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](#).

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.*