



Date: 6 October 2026

Our ref: 16537

Joanne Fisher
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

By email only: planninginfo@midsussex.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 Mid Sussex District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development.

Application: DM/26/0833
Location: Chownesmead Chownes Mead Lane Cuckfield Haywards Heath
Proposal: Amendments to hotel layout approved under DM/18/2193 and DM/18/2201, new single storey extension to main building and erection of new detached two-storey spa building, provision of relocated secondary access to Chownes Mead Lane, new parking area and landscaping of the site. UPDATED INFORMATION received 22/06/2026 in relation to flood risk assessment and site drainage strategy and 04/08/2026 and 14/08/2026 addressing Conservation Officer comments including updated plans, revisions to landscaping and lighting and Design and Access Statement and submission of an Outline Schedule of Conditions and Repair. UPDATED BNG metric, statement and accompanying plans received 16/09/2026.

Thank you for re-consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	☐
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	☒
Further information required/Temporary holding objection	☐

Recommend refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Revision 02 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, September 2026), Statutory Biodiversity Metric (September 2026) and accompanying landscape documents. We understand from the Covering Letter (DMH Stallard, September 2026) that the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) documents have been revised to include 16 additional trees to ensure that the development continues to provide the minimum 10% BNG on site. We note that there will now be an increase of +10.24% BNG on the site, compared to the previous increase of +10.50% BNG shown in the Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Revision 01 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, March 2026).

We also note that the Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Revision 2 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, September 2026) contains Figure 01 Site Habitat Plan, Figure 02 Proposed Habitat Plan and Appendix A Condition Assessment for Existing Habitats.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Revision 02 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, September 2026) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (September 2026). Biodiversity net gains is a statutory requirement set out under [Schedule 7A \(Biodiversity Gain in England\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and we are satisfied that submitted information provides sufficient information at application stage. As a result, a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement.

In addition, a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) (HMMP) should be secured for all [significant on-site enhancements](#). However, Mid Sussex are taking the approach that minor developments do not contain significant on-site enhancements and are not required to be monitored for a period of 30 years from the completion of development via a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). As a result, we are satisfied an HMMP will not be required for the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

Therefore, we are still satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. However, 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](#).

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. For clarity, we have shown the conditions below which we

recommend for submission for approval. Implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent.

Recommended conditions

1. ACTION REQUIRED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL RECOMMENDATIONS

“All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Bat Emergence Survey Report Revision 01 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, March 2026), Reptile Survey Report Revision 01 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, March 2026) and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Revision 02 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, March 2026), as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination. This includes the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse in Section 4.4.12 and the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected and Priority species in Sections 4.4.8 and 4.4.11 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Revision 02 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, March 2026). This avoids impacts on European Protected Species and protected species.

This will include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.”

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority 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 COMMENCEMENT OF ANY WORKS WHICH WILL IMPACT THE BREEDING / RESTING PLACE OF BATS: SUBMISSION OF A COPY OF EPS MITIGATION LICENCE OR EVIDENCE OF SITE REGISTRATION UNDER A BAT MITIGATION CLASS LICENCE FOR BATS

“Any works which will impact the breeding / resting place of bats, shall not in in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

- a) a licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) authorizing the specified activity/development to go ahead; or*
- b) evidence of site registration supplied by an individual registered to use a Bat Mitigation Class Licence; or*
- c) a statement in writing from the Natural England to the effect that it does not consider that the specified activity/development will require a licence.”*

Reason: To conserve protected 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 s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

3. **PRIOR TO ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY MEASURES STRATEGY**

“Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Measures Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Revision 02 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, March 2026), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed measures or features;*
- b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*
- c) locations of proposed measures or features by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);*
- d) persons responsible for implementing the measures or features; 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 and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) N2 Part F and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

4. **PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: WILDLIFE SENSITIVE LIGHTING DESIGN SCHEME**

“Prior to occupation, a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and*
- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.*

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority."

Reason: To 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).

Biodiversity Gain condition

Natural England advises that the biodiversity gain condition has its own separate statutory basis, as a planning condition under [paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). The condition is deemed to apply to every planning permission granted for the development of land in England (unless exemptions or transitional provisions apply), and there are separate provisions governing the Biodiversity Gain Plan.

The local planning authority is strongly encouraged to not include the biodiversity gain condition, or the reasons for applying this, in the list of conditions imposed in the written notice when granting planning permission. However, it is highlighted that biodiversity gain condition could be added as an informative, using [draft text](#) provided by the Secretary of State:

"Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and*
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.*

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Mid Sussex District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun

because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.”

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Yours sincerely,

Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
 Place Services at Essex County Council



Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Mid Sussex 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.

Place Services have a policy relating to the use of AI. Unless otherwise stipulated, any AI 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.