



Date: 20 June 2025

Our ref: 05507

Steven King
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

By email only: Planning Department, 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. 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: DM/25/0014
Location: Land West Of Turners Hill Road And South Of Huntsland Turners Hill Road Crawley Down West Sussex
Proposal: Outline planning application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved) for the erection of up to 200 dwellings, and associated infrastructure including new access points off of Turners Hill Road with associated spine roads and car and cycle parking; the provision of open space and associated play facilities; utilities infrastructure, surface water drainage features, and associated features, on land west of Turners Hill Road and south of Huntsland, Crawley Down, West Sussex. 'Additional information received on 27/03/25 regarding Transport, Flood Risk, Landscapes, Heritage and an updated access and movement parameter plan, illustrative masterplan.' 'Additional ecology information received 03/04/2025'.

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

No ecological objection	<input type="checkbox"/>
No ecological objection subject to attached conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Further information required/Temporary holding objection	<input 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"/>

Summary

We have reviewed the documents supplied by the applicant, relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats and identification of proportionate mitigation. This includes the Ecological Appraisal (North of Huntsland) (Aspect Ecology, January 2025) and Confidential Appendix: Badger Survey Results and Assessment (Aspect Ecology, December 2024) further 'Consideration of Planning Consultation Response from Place Services (dated 24th March 2025)' (Aspect Ecology, April 2025).

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains.

We also note that a Draft HRA has been produced by the Council, as the competent authority, to address recreational pressures upon Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC. Therefore, we note that this HRA has been approved by Natural England. As a result, we have no further comment.

As a result, we are now satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application, following the submission of the additional biodiversity net gain information.

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.

The mitigation measures identified in the Ecological Appraisal (North of Huntsland) (Aspect Ecology, January 2025) and Confidential Appendix: Badger Survey Results and Assessment (Aspect Ecology, December 2024) further 'Consideration of Planning Consultation Response from Place Services (dated 24th March 2025)' (Aspect Ecology, April 2025) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This should be secured via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) prior to commencement. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

Therefore, we also support the conclusions of further 'Consideration of Planning Consultation Response from Place Services (dated 24th March 2025)' (Aspect Ecology, April 2025). As a result, it is indicated that we note that 'TG24' and 'TG26' were categorised as 'FAR' (Further Action Required), even though they have been assessed as having no potential roost features, as they contained Ash dieback. Consequently, any additional pre-commencement surveys can be outlined as part of the CEMP.

In terms of the Ancient Woodland, we still support the proposed mitigation measures outlined within the Ecological Appraisal (North of Huntsland) (Aspect Ecology, January 2025), including the new cycle route. This is because the route will be located on existing trackway,

with a cellular confinement system laid across the existing track filled with granular fill, permitting water and air flow to the soil.

Furthermore, it is highlighted that we have to comments to make on Great Crested Newts, as we have been requested to leave this to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#) on the request of the Council.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted pre-development baseline calculations. 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, which also includes the following:

- a) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values.
- b) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- c) Legal agreement(s)
- d) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- e) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

In addition, a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan](#) (HMMP) should be secured for all [significant on-site enhancements](#). Based on the submitted post-intervention values, it is suggested that this includes the following habitats:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Urban Trees
- Mixed Scrub
- Traditional Orchard
- Other neutral grassland
- Species-rich native hedgerow

The maintenance and monitoring outlined in the HMMP should be secured via the s.106 agreement at application stage for a period of up to 30 years. Alternatively, the management and monitoring of significant on-site enhancements could be secured as a condition of any consent. The monitoring of the post-development habitat creation / enhancement will need be provided to the LPA at years 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, unless otherwise specified by the LPA. Any remedial action or adaptive management will then be agreed with the LPA during the monitoring period to ensure the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Gain Plan are achieved.

We are generally satisfied that the post-intervention values are realistic and deliverable. However, it is recommended that the following matters will need to be considered by the applicant as part of the biodiversity gain condition:

- The proposal to create Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland has a high degree of difficulty. Therefore, we would expect further clarification to set out how this will be delivered.
- It is indicated that a 10% biodiversity net gain for biodiversity units will need to be secured per application. It will not be reasonable to combine units for north and south applications.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended 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: CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY

“A construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, in line with the in line with the ‘Ecological Appraisal (North of Huntsland) (Aspect Ecology, January 2025) and Confidential Appendix: Badger Survey Results and Assessment (Aspect Ecology, December 2024) further ‘Consideration of Planning Consultation Response from Place Services (dated 24th March 2025)’ (Aspect Ecology, April 2025).

The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following.

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.*
- b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.*
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).*
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.*
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.*
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.*
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.*
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.*

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority”

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 ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

“Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Ecological Appraisal (North of Huntsland) (Aspect Ecology, January 2025), 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 NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

3. 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 (through provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) 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).

Optional condition:

Management and monitoring for significant on-site enhancements should be secured by planning obligation as part of the biodiversity gain condition, to allow aftercare and monitoring to be secured for the 30-year period and the LPA to cover its monitoring costs. However, if the LPA would prefer that this is secured via a separate condition, the following pre-commencement condition could be used:

4. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT: HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN (HMMP)

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for significant on-site enhancements, prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the local authority, prior to commencement of development, including:

- a) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;*
- b) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the on-site significant enhancements in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;*
- c) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development;*
- d) the monitoring methodology in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority; and*
- e) details of the content of monitoring reports to be submitted to the LPA including details of adaptive management which will be undertaken to ensure the aims and objectives of the Biodiversity Gain Plan are achieved.*

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- initial enhancements, as set in the HMMP, have been implemented; and*
- habitat creation and enhancement works, as set out in the HMMP, have been completed after 30 years.*

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, monitoring reports shall be submitted in years 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 to the Council, in accordance with the methodology specified in the approved HMMP.

Reason: To satisfy the requirement of Schedule 7A, Part 1, section 9(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that significant on-site habitat is delivered, managed, and monitored for a period of at least 30 years from completion of development.

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) 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 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

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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.

