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By Email Only (RichardAllen@peoplespartnership.co.uk)

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Our ref: JK/24/24c

Eastlands Farmhouse, Hurstpierpoint: Hazel Dormouse Precautionary Working Method Statement

JWK Wildlife Surveys Ltd was commissioned to produce a precautionary working method statement in regard to Hazel Dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), to guide works that could potentially impact this species and to ensure no negative impacts on this species as a result of the proposed development occur.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, 2024) for findings of an initial site assessment and results of a data search from the local records centre.

Background

Initial survey findings (JWK Wildlife Surveys, 2024) highlighted the potential for dormice to utilise boundary hedgerow and scrub features, however, the limited floral diversity and more optimal offsite habitats are considered to limit the usage of onsite areas by significant populations of this species.

Under current proposals no significant vegetation removal will be undertaken beyond general pruning works and some minor widening of the existing site access point. The majority will be limited to either side of an existing gap, therefore not considered to cause any habitat fragmentation significantly beyond the baseline conditions.

Working Method Statement

The below working methods should be used to guide works specifically in relation to vegetation clearance.

- A toolbox talk will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist for all site workers before any works commence. This should cover hazel dormice identification, ecology and what to do if an individual is found. All workers will need to ensure they are fully briefed and aware of the need for careful working practices on site to avoid committing an offence to hazel dormice or their habitats.
- All works to remove vegetation to ground level will be undertaken using hand tools only.
- All works will be overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Clearance should be carried out in conjunction with appropriate mitigation in regard to breeding birds.

- The vegetation will be subject to a detailed search by the onsite ecologist to ensure no active dormice nests are present within the working area.
- Where no nests are found, the careful removal of vegetation from top to base will be undertaken over two days to encourage any dormice present to move to retained areas.
- Once the vegetation has been reduced to a height of 0.4m this will be subject to a detailed finger-tip search to ensure no nests are present.
- Only when the base of the vegetation has been fully checked will the uprooting of the feature be permitted.

Should any dormice be found during development, all works should cease and the project ecologist contacted to devise a suitable mitigation plan.

Similarly, should the current extent of vegetation removal change and more extensive clearance be required an up to date mitigation strategy should be devised that will minimise any potential negative impacts. This may involve targeted surveys for this species group to allow accurate data to be used to devise the most appropriate strategy.

I trust the above summary relating to proposed works at the site is satisfactory, however if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Jack Kellett
Ecologist