



Date: 2 October 2025

Our ref: 03632

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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/25/0209
Location: Holly Tree House Cuckfield Road Burgess Hill West Sussex
Proposal: Proposed 4 dwellings as 2 x pair of semi detached properties (Additional ecology information received 18.03.2025)

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 re-assessed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2025), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats with identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains. This includes the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (JWK Ltd, May 2025), the updated pre-development and post-development habitat maps and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool and condition assessment.

Following the updated location plan and updated BNG documents, we are still satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2025) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

However, 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](#).

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted pre-development baseline values included in the BNG documents. 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).

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:

- We note that the post-intervention values have been updated to include a strip of habitat to the back of the new dwellings. As significant on-site enhancements are not typically secured for minor development, the LPA should confirm whether this proposal is acceptable.
- The proposed strip of habitat appears to include significant number of trees in areas of other neutral grassland, due to significant tree planting we query whether this habitat should be classified as 'mixed scrub' as the trees will overshadow the grassland in a short period of growing time.

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 Layout and should be secured by a condition of any consent. Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. In terms of biodiversity net gain, the enhancements proposed will contribute to this aim.

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. 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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2025) 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 4.3.5 and the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and mobile protected species in Sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.6 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2025). 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 ANY WORKS ABOVE SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT LAYOUT

“Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (JWK Wildlife Surveys, January 2025), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

- a) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;*

- b) *locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (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 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) 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)

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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.