



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

Our ref: 11997
Date: 26 January 2026

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.

Application: DM/25/3020
Location: Land To The West Of Courthouse Farm Copthorne Common
Copthorne
Proposal: Outline planning application for the erection of an extra-care retirement community (Use Class C2) and community pavilion, including associated parking, outdoor amenity space, landscaping and drainage, with all matters reserved except for the new access proposed from Copthorne Common Road

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above outline planning 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 following documents relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of appropriate mitigation measures and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain:

- Bat Activity Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., November 2025)
- Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025)
- Hazel Dormouse Survey Report (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025)
- Reptile Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025)

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains, including the Biodiversity Net Gain Design Feasibility Assessment Version PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric Option D (October 2025). We note that the Biodiversity Net Gain Design Feasibility Assessment Version PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025) contains Appendix 2 Habitats Prior to Development Option 2, Appendix 4 Post-Development Habitat Plan Option 2 and the habitat condition assessment in Table 4.

We note from the Bat Activity Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., November 2025) that trees T01, T02, T03, T04, T07, T09 and T10 (all Oak) have Potential Roost Features for individual bats (PRFs-I). However, we understand that all of these trees will be retained. It does not appear from the submitted documents that there are any buildings on site, although the map on the website says 'stables' to the north of the off-site farm. Therefore, we agree that no further surveys are required.

We note from the Hazel Dormouse Survey Report (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025) that this species has been recorded on site and Hedgerows H1 and H2 are considered to provide good quality habitat for Hazel Dormouse. We support the planting of c53m of species-rich native hedgerow as compensation for the loss of Hazel Dormouse habitat (Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025)). As only 30m of hedgerow will be lost to provide access, we support the implementation of the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse in Sections 6.68 to 6.73 of the Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025). This approach is in line with the Dormouse Mitigation Handbook (Wells et al. 2025).

As there are four outlier Badger setts within the site, we also support the recommendation to undertake Badger surveys prior to works and the implementation of the Precautionary Method Statement for Badger in Sections 6.82 to 6.85 of the Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We also support the implementation of the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species (including Hedgehog, which is a Priority and threatened species) in Sections 6.35 to 6.39 and 6.110 of the Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We are 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](#).

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 Bat Activity Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., November 2025), Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025), Hazel Dormouse Survey Report (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025) and Reptile Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 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, including bats, Hazel Dormouse Badger, reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species. The finalised measures should be provided in a Construction and Environmental Management Plan - Biodiversity to be secured as a pre-commencement condition of any consent.

We also support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025)) to avoid impacts from light disturbance. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures recommended by [Guidance Note:08/23 \(Institute of Lighting Professionals\)](#) will be implemented:

- Do not provide excessive lighting. Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.
- All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow.
- Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in

modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Statement Revision 01 (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, November 2025) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (May 2025). 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) A Biodiversity Gain Plan form (Ideally using the Government's template: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan>)
- b) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values.
- c) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- d) Legal agreement(s)
- e) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- f) 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](#) as part of the Biodiversity Gain Plan. Based on the submitted post-intervention values as they are currently submitted and Government Guidance on what constitutes a significant on-site enhancement, it is suggested that this includes the following habitats:

- Rural tree - creation
- Pond (non-priority habitat) – creation
- Modified grassland to Other neutral grassland (enhancement)
- Species-rich Native Hedgerow – creation (additional planting required as compensation for Hazel Dormouse compensation).

The decision on whether significant on-site enhancements are present is ultimately up to the Council. Where present, the maintenance and monitoring of significant on-site enhancements should be secured via planning obligation for a period of up to 30 years from the completion of development. This will be required to be submitted concurrent with the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition. Therefore, the LPA can secure this as a part of a planning obligation at application stage or as part of the biodiversity gain condition. 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, 3, 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 also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended in the Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025) 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. 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 Activity Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., November 2025), Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025), Hazel Dormouse Survey Report (Lloydbore Ltd., October 2025) and Reptile Survey Report Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 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 Sections 6.68 to 6.73, the Precautionary Method Statement for Badger in Sections 6.82 to 6.85, and the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and mobile protected and Priority species in Sections 6.35 to 6.39 and 6.110 of the Ecological Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 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. CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS 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.

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).

**3. CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS 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 Impact Assessment Revision PO2 (Lloydbore Ltd., October 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).

**4. CONCURRENT WITH RESERVED MATTERS 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 Hazel Dormouse 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 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.