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West Sussex
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Our ref: 14232
Date: 27 February 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/26/0182
Location: Hazelden Farmhouse Hazelden Place East Grinstead West Sussex
Proposal: Formation of track and hardstanding

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above full planning application.

No ecological objection	☐
Recommend approval subject to attached conditions	☐
Further information required/Temporary holding objection: Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gains	☒
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the documents supplied by the applicant and we are not satisfied that appropriate information with regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains has been supplied for the application prior to determination. The reasons for this are outlined below:

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gains:

Applications are required to deliver a mandatory 10% measurable biodiversity net gain, unless exempt under [paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and the [Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Exemptions\) Regulations 2024](#).

Biodiversity net gains is a statutory requirement set out under [Schedule 7A \(Biodiversity Gain in England\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). This legislation was inserted into the 1990 Act by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, and was amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2024 made consequential amendments to other parts of the 1990 Act.

The [Biodiversity Net Gain Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#) sets out how mandatory biodiversity net gains should be applied through the planning process and Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 74-011-20240214 sets out what information should be submitted as part of a planning application if the statutory biodiversity gain condition applies.

As a result, we have reviewed the Small Sites Metric – Calculation Tool and Location Plan and are not satisfied that appropriate information has been provided prior to determination. This is because of the reasons set out below:

- The submitted Small Sites Metric should be based on the redline boundary of the application, in line with the Small Sites Metric – User Guide. Therefore, the red line boundary of this application either needs to be updated or all the habitats within the red line boundary included within the pre-development baseline. This may require the submission of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool, as the red line boundary would be greater than 1ha.
- A habitat map of the pre-development baseline has not been submitted to support the Small Sites Metric. This should be included for the red line boundary of the application.

Where mandatory biodiversity net gains apply, the planning authority will be required to secure a biodiversity gain condition as a pre-commencement requirement. 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](#) and should be included as an informative within the decision notice. The biodiversity gain condition should secure the provision of a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to commencement, which 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](#). However, based on the LPAs position that significant on-site enhancements only apply for major development, it is indicated that significant on-site enhancements are not considered to be present and will not be required to be managed and monitored for a period of 30 years from the completion of development.

We note that post-intervention values have also been provided. As a result, it is recommended that the following matters will also need to be addressed as part of the biodiversity gain condition:

- The Small Sites Metric states that the on-site 'Other Neutral Grassland' will be removed and will be replaced with 'Mixed scrub'. In addition, 110m of new native hedgerow will be planted. However, this does not reflect the proposals to create a new hard standing track. Therefore, it is indicated that all 'Other Neutral Grassland' to be affected by the proposals should be recorded as 'Developed land; sealed surface'. As a result, it is recommended that the applicant considers whether appropriate on-site enhancements can be delivered to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain. If this is not possible, then off-site units should be secured from a habitat bank registered on the biodiversity gain site register. Alternatively, Statutory Biodiversity Credits could be purchased from the Government at a last resort.

Additional Comments:

We do not consider that the proposals will likely result in impacts upon designated sites, protected or Priority species / habitats. However, it is indicated that we have no comments to make with regard to Great Crested Newts as we have been instructed by the Council to leave all comments on this European Protected Species to the [NatureSpace Partnership](#).

We look forward to working with the LPA and the applicant to receive the additional information required to support a lawful decision and overcome our holding objection.

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.

