



Date: 3 October 2025

Our ref: 06113

Rachel Richardson
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/25/1467
Location: Land At Old Vicarage Field And The Old Estate Yard Church Road
Turners Hill West Sussex
Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and the development of 40 dwellings (including affordable housing) with open space, access, parking, drainage, landscaping and other associated works as well as the creation of a new community car park and replacement parking for Lion Lane residents.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommend approval subject to attached conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further information required/Temporary holding objection: • European Protected Species (Hazel Dormouse)	<input checked="" 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 Ecological Impact Assessment (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats, and identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

We have also reviewed the information submitted to meet the requirements of mandatory biodiversity net gains, which includes the Ecological Impact Assessment (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025), Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement (June 2025). We note that the on-site habitat condition assessments are included in Appendix 4 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025) and the baseline habitats and post-development plans are also included within the EcIA.

We are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application and recommend that further information on the mitigation measures for protected species is required prior to determination. The reasons for this are outlined below:

European Protected Species: Hazel Dormouse

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025) that a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) for Hazel Dormouse will be required before commencement of any works. This is because one Hazel Dormouse nest was found in May 2022 and four nests were found in October 2022, including one nest containing an adult Hazel Dormouse, and hedgerow H3 (approximately 75m in length) will be removed, together with an area of secondary woodland and bramble scrub. Therefore, it is recommended that further information is provided on the proposed mitigation and compensation strategy to be secured under EPSML.

This is required because, the Local Planning Authority, as a competent authority, should have regard to the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) when reaching planning decisions and must not leave this until the licence application stage. Therefore, as European Protected Species Mitigation Licence is required for this application, appropriate mitigation measures to support the provision of the licence must also be outlined prior to determination to allow certainty to the LPA that a licence will likely be granted.

It is recommended that this could be secured via an updated Ecological Impact Assessment or a separate ecological addendum.

This is needed to enable the LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

Additional comments:

We note from the Ecological Impact Assessment (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025) that the three buildings on site (a garage, a workshop and a storage building), all have negligible bat roost potential. We also note that one tree with high bat roost potential was inspected using an endoscope and no evidence of bats was found. The remaining trees to be removed have negligible or low bat roost potential. Therefore, we agree that no further surveys for bats are required.

We highlight that appropriate compensation will be required in advance of works for trees with Potential Roost Features for Individual bats (PRFs-I) to avoid loss of roost resource (Reason and Wray (2023) UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management). We also highlight that the felling of these trees needs to be undertaken under a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for bats. This needs to include inspection of any affected trees by endoscope on the day and felling under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist, as required in Table 6.3 of 4th Ed. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Bat Conservation Trust (Collins ed., 2023).

We support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Ecological Impact Assessment (Sam Watson Ecology, May 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 Ecological Impact Assessment (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025), Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool (Sam Watson Ecology, May 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement (June 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. However, we welcome the intention of the applicant to provide off-site biodiversity enhancements as the current calculations indicate a net loss of -8.83% in habitat units. 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. However, we note that the post-intervention values have been provided and that no significant on-site enhancements are proposed in the proposals.

However, off-site enhancements will be required to demonstrate a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain. As a result, we note that the applicant intends to use blue line boundary land to secure off-site enhancements. As a result, it is indicated that this land will need to be registered on the biodiversity gain site register and a legal agreement secured with the Council to manage and monitor the land for a period of 30 years from the completion of development. In addition, further off-site units will likely be required from an off-site habitat bank registered on the biodiversity gain site register to meet the unit deficit and address the trading rules issues.

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.

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](#).

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 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
 Email: PlaceServicesEcology@essex.gov.uk



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.