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Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
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Our ref: 16238
Date: 21 May 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/26/0568
Location: Network Rail London To Brighton Railway - Copyhold Junction To Haywards Heath Station Clair Road Haywards Heath
Proposal: The installation of an 8.1m pole supporting four antennas, with one equipment cabinet on steel mesh grillage with a handrail and screw pile foundations

Thank you for re-consulting Place Services on the above Prior Notification 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 Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026), 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 relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains, including the Application Form.

We note that our previous concerns relating to impacts on the ancient and semi-natural woodland have been answered and clarified within the Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026). In addition, we note that from the Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026) that works will be contained within the rail corridor and therefore there are unlikely to be impacts on the Wickham Woods County Wildlife Site.

We note that there is a Birch tree which may have Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats and therefore, if this tree requires management or removal, then further assessment will be required. We highlight that if the Birch has PRFs for individual bats, then appropriate compensation will be required in advance of works 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). In addition, a non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for bats will be required, which includes 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). If the tree has PRFs for multiple bats, then further assessment will be required.

We support the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse in the Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026), which should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We also support the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles in the Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026), which should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We are now satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application. 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 Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026) 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 Hazel Dormouse and reptiles.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that 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](#). As a result, we are satisfied that this application is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gains, as the development meets the permitted development exemption.

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

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 Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026), 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 and the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles in the Ecological Constraints Plan (Western Ecology, February 2026). This avoids impacts on European Protected Species and protected species.

This may 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).

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.