



Date: 29 September 2026
Our ref: 22290

Andrew Horrell
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

By email only: 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/26/2015
Location: Stables Southgate Farm Cuckfield Lane Warninglid
Proposal: Conversion of stable building to single residential dwelling.
Resubmission of previously approved application (DM/20/4322)

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above application.

No ecological objection	☐
Recommend approval subject to attached conditions	☐
Further information required/Temporary holding objection on: European Protected Species (bats)	☒
Recommend Refusal	☐
Subject to Natural England's formal comments on the conclusion of the LPA's Appropriate Assessment	☐

Summary

We have reviewed the Bat Scoping Report (The Ecology Co-op, June 2021) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & 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 are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application and recommend that details of survey results, mitigation & enhancement measures are required to make this proposal acceptable. The reasons for this are outlined below:

European Protected Species – bats:

We note that the ecological assessment Bat Scoping Report (The Ecology Co-op, June 2021) is out of date to support this application, in line with CIEEM Guidance¹ and paragraph 6.2.1 of British Standard (BS) BS42020 'Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development 2013'. This is because the initial site walkover was undertaken in May 2021.

As a result, we recommend that the applicant's ecologist provides an ecological addendum or an updated ecological report to support this application, which would require an additional site visit and may require updated desk study information. The ecologist will be required to provide appropriate justification, on:

- The validity of the initial report;
- Which, if any, of the surveys need to be updated; and
- The appropriate scope, timing and methods for the update survey(s).

If additional impacts to protected species are identified as a result of the additional ecological assessment, then any necessary further surveys for protected species should also be provided prior to determination. This is necessary as the Government Circular 06/2005 highlights that: *"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision."*

This information is therefore required to provide the LPA with certainty of likely impacts on legally protected species and be able to secure appropriate mitigation either by a mitigation licence from Natural England or a condition of any consent. This will enable the LPA to

¹ CIEEM (2019) Advice note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys - <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

demonstrate compliance with its statutory duties, including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and prevent wildlife crime under s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

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 - Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gains

The de-minimis exemption, as set out under the [Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Exemptions\) Regulations 2024](#), applies to development that does not impact a Priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats (e.g. hedgerows or watercourse)

The de-minimis threshold refers to impact and not size of the red-line boundary. A development 'impacts' a habitat if it [decreases the biodiversity value](#).

Providing that the development does not affect any more than 25m², we are satisfied that the development is exempt from the statutory requirement of mandatory biodiversity net gains.

We also recommend that reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species should be identified by a suitably qualified ecologist and implemented to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) N2 Part F. The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Measures Strategy and 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.

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.

Place Services have a policy relating to the use of AI. Unless otherwise stipulated, any AI use will be limited to basic proof-reading, grammar, and spelling correction. This response has been reviewed by the author(s). If you have any queries, please [contact us](#) for information about our AI guidance.

