



Our ref: 16276
Date: 20 April 2026

Rachel Richardson
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
RH16 1SS

By email only:

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/26/0769
Location: Visitors Centre Standen West Hoathly Road East Grinstead
Proposal: Extension to existing Visitor Reception Building within main car park to make provision for staff and volunteer welfare facilities

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above full 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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, August 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption Statement (National Trust, February 2026) 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.

We have also reviewed the information submitted relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains. We have been instructed to leave comments on GCN to NatureSpace.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, August 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.

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, we agree with the Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption Statement (National Trust, February 2026) that the site is exempt from Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain due to no Priority Habitat being impacted. There is a small area of woodland that is listed as Priority Deciduous Woodland on Magic Maps however the exemption statement shows photos of this area and it is low quality open habitat that would only be temporarily impacted and therefore we agree that the exemption would apply due to the habitat not meeting the requirements for the Priority habitat and the temporary nature of the works, which is to be undertaken in this area with hand tools.

We recommend that reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species should be secured to provide bespoke species enhancements 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 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op,

August 2025) should as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

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).

2. **PRIOR TO OCCUPATION: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY**

“Prior to occupation, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, 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)

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Hooton CEnv MCIEEM BSc (Hons)
Principal Ecological Consultant
 Place Services at Essex County Council



Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf 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.