

Ecological Response to Planning Application DM/25/0589

Site: Land at Grid Reference 532037 120185, Leylands Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex

I should like to submit my comments on the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) submitted by Betts Ecology in support of planning application DM/25/0589

1. The survey was conducted in December, which as the report itself concedes, is outside the optimal survey season (March–September for most species), meaning key protected species may have been undetectable at the time. Mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates may have been inactive or hidden. Local residents have observed regular sightings over the years of badgers, foxes, rabbits and even the occasional deer, though sadly the latter are in decline due to large scale housing construction eroding much of their natural habitats.

2. The report fails to consider the proposed site's value as part of a habitat corridor alongside the railway and adjacent green spaces. This is contrary to Paragraph 174 of the NPPF and ecological principles regarding landscape-scale conservation.

3. The claim that Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is not required is questionable given the size of the site and habitat clearance. The LPA should request a biodiversity metric assessment in line with Environment Act 2021 obligations.

Conclusion

The contents of the report are highly speculative and do not comply with Natural England guidance or good ecological practice. These deficiencies require that no planning permission is granted unless and until robust, seasonally-appropriate surveys are conducted and shared for public and expert review.