

Date: 15 May 2025
Our ref: 512482
Your ref: DM/25/0016, DM/25/0017



Mid Sussex District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Steven King

Planning consultation: Outline SMR up to 150 dwellings, 65 bed care home, community facility, assoc. infras. incl. new access points, spine road & car/cycle parking; open space, play facilities, utilities infrastructure, surface water drainage features.

Location: Land W of Turners Hill Rd & S of Huntsland, Crawley Down, W Sussex RH10 4HB

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 09 May 2025 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

Natural England considers that without appropriate mitigation the application would have an adverse effect on the integrity of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required / or the following mitigation options should be secured:

- the maintenance and management of the bespoke mitigation in perpetuity
- financial contribution to an agreed strategic solution

We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

A lack of objection does not mean that there are no significant environmental impacts. Natural England advises that all environmental impacts and opportunities are fully considered and relevant local bodies are consulted.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Further advice on mitigation

Natural England advises that the specific measures (including financial contributions) identified in the strategic solution can prevent harmful effects from increased recreational pressure on those

European Site within the ZOI.

Natural England is of the view that if these measures are implemented, they will be effective and sufficiently certain to prevent an adverse impact on the integrity of the European Site within the ZOI for the duration of the proposed development.

The appropriate assessment concludes that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any of the sites as highlighted above (in view of [its conservation objectives](#)) with regards to recreational disturbance, on the basis that the strategic solution will be implemented by way of mitigation.

Having considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for all identified adverse effects likely to occur as a result of the proposal, Natural England advises that we concur with the assessment conclusions. If all mitigation measures are appropriately secured, we are satisfied that there will be no adverse impact on the sites from recreational pressure.

Other advice

In addition, Natural England would advise on the following issues.

Protected Landscapes

The proposed development is for a site within or close to a nationally designated landscape namely High Weald National Landscape (defined in legislation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Natural England has concluded that impacts on the nationally designated landscape and the delivery of its statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty can be determined locally by the local planning authority, with advice from its landscape or planning officers, and from the relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board.

Natural England is not confirming that there would not be a significant adverse effect on landscape or visual resources or on the statutory purpose of the area, only that there are no landscape issues which, based on the information received, necessitate Natural England's involvement.

We advise that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide your decision and the role of local advice are explained below. Your decision should be guided by paragraph 182 and 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes, National Parks, and the Broads and states that the scale and extent of development within all these areas should be limited. Paragraph 183 requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated to justify major development within a designated landscape and sets out criteria which should be applied in considering this proposal.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the relevant National Landscape Partnership or Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the National Landscape is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose.

Furthermore, [Section 245](#) (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities (which includes local authorities) in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

The relevant National Landscape body (Conservation Board or Partnership) may be able to offer advice in relation to the duty, including on how the proposed development aligns with and contributes to delivering the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan.

Further general advice on consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

Should the developer wish to discuss the detail of measures to mitigate the effects described above with Natural England, we recommend that they seek advice through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me on annabel.widdop@naturalengland.org.uk.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours sincerely

Annabel Widdop
Sustainable Development Sussex & Kent