

Date: 16 October 2018
Our ref: 254773
Your ref: WA/2018/1239



Waverley Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
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Crewe Business Park
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Dear Rebecca Clarke,

Planning consultation: Erection of 262 dwellings etc. 131 sqm building for community use etc.

Location: Ockford Wood Farm, Ockford Wood, Cottage No. 19 and 21 Aarons Hill, Godalming

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 01 August 2018 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

FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS ON PROTECTED SPECIES

As submitted, the application could have potential significant effects on protected species. Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

The following information is required:

- Information which firmly ascertains the presence or absence of Hazel Dormouse at the application site. Additional mitigation measures may be necessary if Hazel Dormouse is found to be present on site.
- Confirmation of the inclusion of additional mitigation measures for roosting and commuting bats.

Without this information, Natural England may need to object to the proposal.

Please re-consult Natural England once this information has been obtained.
Natural England's advice on other issues is set out below.

Additional Information required

Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

We do not consider that the justification provided to screen out Hazel Dormice from further assessment (as described within paragraphs 9.30 – 9.34 of the extended Phase 1 Habitats Survey, 04-18) is sufficient to be confident that this species is not present on the site. Therefore we consider that additional information should be submitted to firmly ascertain the presence or absence of this species. Additional survey effort in line with best practice guidelines in the hazel dormouse

handbook (PTES) may be required. If dormice are found to be present on the site then appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed and incorporated into the design of the development where necessary.

Bats: Surveys and Mitigation Measures

Both the static detector and transect surveys have identified that the treeline along the north-eastern boundary of the site is an important commuting corridor for a number of bat species, including Barbastelle, a rare species which is listed in Annex II of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC, the Habitats Directive. Therefore, we advise that confirmation is sought that the recommendations proposed in Paragraphs 6.6 – 6.29 of the Phase 2 Bat and Reptile Survey Report and Mitigation Plan (09-18) will be adopted and any necessary amendments to the plans made. The CEMP currently includes a number of mitigation measures in relation to bats, but many of the recommendations do not appear to have been included. Measures should include the retention of trees along the identified commuting along the North-Eastern boundary of the development, and lighting in this area should be designed to retain a dark corridor, such that it remains suitable for use by commuting bats, including Barbastelle. This may be appropriately detailed in a lighting plan.

Further mitigation measures may need to be proposed pending the results of the proposed aerial climbing assessments of the trees on site assessed as either containing bat roosts or to have bat roosting potential (Para 1.6, Phase 2 Bat and Reptile Survey Report and Mitigation Plan, 09-18). The adequacy of mitigation proposals will be assessed when Natural England come to review an application for an EPS bat license, as would be required to undertake works affecting existing bat roosts on site.

For further advice on reviewing planning applications in relation to protected species, please refer to our [Standing Advice](#).

Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons Special Protection Area (SPA)

It is now widely recognised that additional housing development within the vicinity of the SPA has the potential to adversely affect its interest features, namely nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler, which are the three internationally rare bird species for which it is classified. Planning authorities must therefore apply the requirements of regulation 61 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012 (as amended), to housing development in the vicinity of the SPA. The authority must decide whether a particular proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the SPA.

Natural England are aware of a separate application submitted to Guildford Borough Council for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), with the intention that capacity at this SANG will be allocated to the development at Aaron's Hill. Natural England have reviewed the proposals and consider that they are acceptable in principle, and that the SANG will effectively mitigate for increased recreational disturbance on Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SPA. A Grampian condition should be applied to the present application to ensure that no associated residential accommodation is occupied until the required SANG capital works are complete and it is operational and accessible.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me at Chris.Baines@naturalengland.org.uk.

Should the applicant wish to discuss the further information required and scope for mitigation with Natural England, we would be happy to provide advice through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

Please consult us again once the information requested above, has been provided.

Yours sincerely

Chris Baines
Lead Sustainable Development Adviser

