

**AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**UPDATE SHEET**

WA/2023/02273 Bourne Hall, The Bourne Hall, Vicarage Hill, Farnham GU9 8HG

**Additional consultation response**

**County Highways Authority (CHA):**

No objection, subject to conditions.

The proposals seek to provide a new parking area for six cars to be accessed off of a private track, and maintain the existing driveway parking provision for the parking of a further two cars, with a total of eight parking spaces provided within the site. The applicant has demonstrated in Drawing 23053-001 that vehicles accessing the proposed six bay parking area are able to enter and leave the highway in forward gear, and the access benefits from good visibility onto Vicarage Hill, therefore the CHA is satisfied with the use of this access to serve the new parking area. It should be noted that the access to the six new parking spaces and the turning/manoeuvring space for these spaces are outside of the red-line boundary. The CHA has issued this response based on the assumption that this can be amended / achieved. The LPA should take this into consideration in their decision making process.

The CHA understands through liaison with the applicant that the existing driveway access onto Vicarage Hill will be unchanged, and the gradient will not be increased as a part of the proposals. The use of the existing driveway as a parking area to serve one of the dwellings represents a marked decrease in usage in planning terms than when compared with the site's existing use, therefore the CHA does not object to the usage of this driveway as a parking area for the northernmost dwelling. The proposed parking provision meets SCC's Parking Standards of '2+ per dwelling' for this type of residential development. However, it should be noted that Waverley's Parking Standards differ from SCC's guidelines and require 2.5 spaces per dwelling, and the LPA should consider this in making their assessment.

It is not considered that the proposed development will result in a significant increase in vehicular trips on the surrounding highway network, nor does the CHA consider that the proposal will have a material impact on highway safety. It nonetheless remains important that cycle parking and electric vehicle charging are provided in order to ensure that the use of sustainable modes of transport is enabled and encouraged.

**Natural England:**

No objection subject to securing appropriate mitigation for recreational pressure impacts on habitat sites (European sites). Natural England notes that the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has not been provided with the application. As competent authority, and before deciding to give permission for the project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European Protected Site, you must carry out a HRA and adhere to its conclusions.

### **Surrey Wildlife Trust:**

A Habitat Regulations Assessment, to include screening assessment, has not been submitted. As the 'Competent Authority', the LPA assess whether they have suitable evidence and information to determine whether significant effects are likely to result due to the proximity to these designated sites. If the local authority is unable to conclude that significant effects are not likely, the Proposed Works must be subject to additional assessment in accordance with the Habitats Regulations. In the absence of an ecological assessment, which includes at least a Stage 1: Screening Assessment, the LPA appears to have insufficient information to assess whether significant effects are likely to result due to the proximity to the Thames Basin Heaths and Wealden Heaths Phase 1 SPA.

There is a reasonable chance of a bat roost being present (in the existing building) and we would not conclude that there is a sufficient evidence-base to fully assess of the potential roosting features. Given this uncertainty, we would advise that a bat presence / likely absence survey should be submitted prior to determination.

### ***Officer comment:***

In the event that members resolve to approve the application or to defer a decision, the above comments can be addressed as follows:

- Conditions requested by the CHA would be required for any planning permission.
- Further survey work of the existing building and reconsultation would be also required to resolve the last issue noted above by SWT, prior to a decision being made. Additional information would also be required in the form of a Stage 1: Screening Assessment, and the LPA would be required to carry out a Habitat Regulations Assessment to assess whether significant effects are likely to result, due to the proximity to the Wealden Heaths Phase 1 SPA.
- As noted in the main report, mitigation for impacts on Thames Basin Heaths SPA could be provided by way of a satisfactory section 106 legal obligation.

Bat survey work is generally carried out between May and August, so any deferral would need to take into account the likely submission date for further information.

In the event that members refuse the application, the additional reason for refusal that is set out below is recommended. Other matters noted in the consultation responses above can be highlighted to the applicant by way of informatives, to highlight matters to be resolved as part of any new application.

### ***Additional reason for refusal:***

The application has not conclusively demonstrated that the existing building does not provide bat roosts, and does not include an ecological assessment that includes (at minimum) a Stage 1: Screening Assessment of potential impacts on protected sites. The application has not demonstrated that it will not impact on protected species and sites and as such, it is contrary to Policies NE1 and NE3 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018, Policy DM1 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023, Policy FNP13 of the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan 2020 and the National Planning Policy Framework.