

Date: 21 March 2025  
Our ref: 506322  
Your ref: 250148



Wokingham Borough Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam

**Planning consultation:** Full planning permission for the erection of 3no. two storey buildings each comprising of six apartments (18 in total), together with associated ancillary development, hardstanding, landscaping and footpaths

**Location:** Liberty House, Strand Way, Earley, Wokingham, RG6 4EA

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 13 March 2025 which was received by Natural England on 13 March 2025.

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 DESIGNATED SITES**

The proposed development has the potential to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and those Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Natural England's statutory advice on these potential impacts is set out below.

**Designated sites**

**Further information required - recreational pressure impacts to Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)**

This development site is within the 5km to 7km zone of influence (Zol) for recreational pressure impacts to Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

Within this Zol, proposals for residential developments of 50 or more units will have a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the SPA through increased recreational pressure when considered either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Your authority has measures in place to manage these potential impacts through a strategic solution which Natural England considers will be effective in preventing adverse impacts on the integrity of the site(s).

Notwithstanding this, Natural England advises that these measures should be formally checked and confirmed by your authority, as the competent authority, via an **appropriate assessment** in view of the [Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites](#) and in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Providing the appropriate assessment concludes that the measures can be secured, it is likely that Natural England will be satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA in relation to recreational disturbance.

Where the proposal includes bespoke mitigation that falls outside of the strategic solution, Natural England should be consulted.

Reserved Matters applications, and in some cases the discharge/removal/variation of conditions, where the permission was granted prior to the introduction of the strategic approach, should also be subject to the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and our advice above applies.

### **Discretionary Advice**

Natural England may provide further advice to the applicant through the discretionary advice service (DAS). Refer to [Developers: get environmental advice on your planning proposals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for more information.

### **Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

We publish Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs), a GIS-based tool designed for use during the planning application validation process to help local planning authorities to determine if a proposed development is likely to affect a terrestrial SSSI and when to consult Natural England. For more information and to access the SSSI IRZs and user guidance, please visit the [Natural England Open Data Geoportal](#).

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

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours faithfully

Samuel Norton  
Consultations Team