

**Attn:** Mark Bristow

Dear Mark

Thank you for consulting Natural England on your scoping report. My brief comments are as follows.

§ Horstead Keynes is surrounded by grade 3 agricultural land. Assuming this settlement is to be the focus of development, then the issue is about the need for green field development weighed against the loss of what may be the best and most versatile. Some consideration of options may be appropriate.

§ The area immediately around the settlement does not include BAP habitats, except for the area to the north which shows as Woodland Pasture and Parkland, nor are there designated habitats close by.

§ The first main concern is impact on Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC, and this may be addressed once the mitigation strategy is finalised and adopted in relevant plans.

§ The second main concern is the impact on the designated landscape. This should be informed by consultation on matters of site selection and the nature and scale of development, with the AONB unit and the use of tools such as LCA and LVIA if needed.

Due to the current pressure of consultations on land-use plans, I have not been able to spend the time I would have wished to review and comment on your scoping report. Nevertheless, I hope you find these comments helpful.

If there are issues I have not covered, please let me know and I will respond as quickly as possible. If discussion would be helpful, please give me a call.

John Lister