

Ecology response for F/25/99382 VILLAGE HOTEL EASTLEIGH, BOURNEMOUTH ROAD,
CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 3YJ

Construction of 2no. outdoor padel courts with canopy roof structure, perimeter fencing, lighting and landscaping on existing grass area.

Clare Martin

10/6/25

Objection due to impact on SINC and woodland priority habitat.

I raise an ecological objection to this application due to the location of the proposal within the retained ecology area designated in application F/18/82275 and the lack of appropriate buffers to the adjacent SINC and woodland priority habitat.

Freespace Hicknor Hill SINC is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and is designated 6A (sites which support one or more notable species) and 6B (sites which regularly support a significant population of a species which has a restricted distribution or has substantially declined in population or range). These species are common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, adder *Vipera berus* and hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*. A minimum of 20 m must be maintained as a SINC buffer, measured from the canopy edge and free of all built structures.

For this application to progress an updated site plan showing 20 m buffers free from development for both of the SINC woodlands would be required.

Dormice are nocturnal animals and any lighting and noise in this area would disturb this protected species. The woodland area to the south of the site is continuous with the SINC. This is Cox's Rough, lowland mixed deciduous woodland priority habitat, and may also be suitable for dormice. A 20 m buffer from this woodland edge would also be required.

The previous application F/23/96070 for an outdoor gym area with lighting was approved, but only after it was moved to the western edge of the site, so that the SINC buffer could be maintained. The proposed padel courts would fill most of this buffer area between the outdoor gym and the SINC. This area must be kept as an ecology buffer, with no development, noise or lighting.

The proposed addition of padel courts would increase the disturbance due to noise and lighting in this area. Operating hours are proposed between 6am - 10pm Monday to Friday and 8am - 6pm weekends, the same hours as the previously approved outdoor gym.

Wall mounted floodlights are proposed to be mounted on the glass screens at 5 m high. Light spill from this area would impact the woodland edge.

In addition, I share the concerns of the landscape officer that construction in this area may negatively impact existing Oak trees along the eastern and southern boundaries. The site of the proposed courts is on sloping ground so levelling and digging gravel trenches around the court would cause further disturbance in this buffer zone and to the root protection zones of retained trees.

If this proposal is permitted, new trees planted as part of the original development would need to be removed, which would cause further disturbance. These trees would need to be replaced, and additional trees added in line with the EBC tree policy.

The landscape officer noticed a significant number of dead and dying new trees and failed native transplant trees during his site visit.

Biodiversity net gain

The submitted metric shows an enhancement of other neutral grassland and planting one tree to provide an on-site uplift of 0.03 biodiversity units (18.25%). This is acceptable.

Surface water drainage

The drainage strategy technical note March 2025 included the outdoor gym area and the proposed padel courts. Gravel trenches with a downstream orifice plate are proposed to slow storm water drainage into the existing network which includes an attenuation tank. If this development is permitted, surface water drainage calculations are required to show that the existing system is able to accommodate the extra drainage that would occur as a result of this proposal.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist