

1st December 2025

Planning Officer
Eastleigh Borough Council

Dear Mr Chapman

RM/25/100430 One Horton Heath - Quobleigh Breach, Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Eastleigh Submission of Reserved Matters relating to Layout, Scale, Appearance, and Landscaping pursuant to Condition 4 (Reserved Matters Submission) of Outline Planning Permission O/20/89498 for the erection of 269 dwellings within Phase 6 (Quobleigh Breach), with associated public open space, landscaping, and cycle and vehicular parking, to include details relevant to the following Outline Planning Permission conditions...

I am writing to you on behalf of Hampshire Swifts, a charity devoted to the conservation of Swifts in Hampshire and part of a national network of Swift groups throughout the UK.

As yet, no details of the proposed ecological enhancements for birds have been provided with this application, though in their Ecological Impact Assessment the contract ecologists ECOSA say (section 5.8.5) *"As a measure of enhancement, two Woodstone Build in Swift nest boxes (or swift boxes of a similar design) installed in pairs, should be installed into a number of the new buildings on site. The exact amount will be determined as part of the planning condition to take into consideration enhancement measures that will be implemented as part of the wider One Horton Heath development."* 269 homes are proposed in this development. ECOSA's current recommendation does not meet current best practice guidance as regards type of bird boxes installed on buildings or accord with the latest government guidelines in the National Planning Policy Framework or Eastleigh Council's current Biodiversity Strategy (see below).

According to current best practice guidance as laid out in BS 42021:2022, bird boxes on buildings should be integral swift bricks and new developments should include at least 1 swift brick per home and from four to 10 on a small block of flats. See <https://knowledge.bsigroup.com/products/integral-nest-boxes-selection-and-installation-for-new-developments-specification-1?version=standard&tab=overview>.

Swift bricks are a universal integral nest brick for small bird species, including Red-Listed swifts and house sparrows (e.g. see NHBC Foundation: Biodiversity in New Housing Developments (April 2021) Section 8.1 Nest sites for birds, page 42: https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/S067-NF89-Biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments_FINAL.pdf). While a range of cavity nesting species can use swift bricks, swifts are not able to use house sparrow terraces.

Swift bricks are the only type of bird box specifically mentioned as valuable to wildlife in national planning guidance (NPPG Natural Environment 2019 paragraph 023). The National



Model Design Code Part 2 Guidance Notes (2021) also recommends bird bricks (Integrating Habitats section on page 25 and Creating Habitats section on page 26).

The latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>) states in Paragraph 187 (d) on page 54 "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:...incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs; The use of swift bricks is particularly important in this context because swifts rely on urban cavities for nesting, and the national loss of suitable nesting sites through building renovation has been part of the reason for the species' decline. Developments should include integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) where possible, with the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box per unit. Nest boxes can provide important habitat for other species as well as swifts, such as starlings and sparrows. Extensive guidance is available on wildlife friendly features, including the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code which illustrate how well-designed places can support rich and varied biodiversity by facilitating habitats and routes for wildlife. More specific support for the selection and installation of swift bricks can be found in the British Industry Standard BS 42021:2022 the Future Homes Hub Homes for Nature Guidance, and the RSPB's Guide to Nestboxes."

According to Eastleigh Borough Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2024-34, swifts are one of its key species for nature recovery and one aim is to "Use the planning system to maximise species restoration opportunities (e.g inclusion of built-in habitat such as swift bricks". See <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/15850/1267010-biodiversity-strategy-2024-2034-update-aug-2025.pdf>

We request that there should be at least 1 swift brick per home on average across this development.

Yours sincerely

Prof Catharine Gale
Trustee