

7th November 2021

Planning Officer
Havant Borough Council

Dear Mr Oliver

Re: Outline application for demolition of the existing buildings and development of the site to provide 31 homes with associated parking, access and landscaping. | Dairy Crest Depot, Dunsbury Way, Havant

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.

We were pleased to read in the ecological appraisal by the Ecosupport that each of the proposed dwellings will include an integral Swift brick. Swift bricks are in effect a universal nest brick, used not just by Swifts but also by red-listed House Sparrows and Starlings and other species. The integration of nest sites for birds is in keeping with the following national policy and guidance:

- Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, states: **"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."**
- Section 174(b) of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019), states: *"To promote and **enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: ...identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity...**".* This is explained further by the accompanying guidance notes (NPPF, Natural Environment Guidance, paragraph 023): *"...relatively small features can often achieve important benefits for wildlife, such as **incorporating 'swift bricks'** and bat boxes in developments..."*
- Furthermore, the government's support for such measures was stated explicitly in the accompanying government press release: *"...expectations on how developers can protect specific species, including using **hollow swift bricks – which are installed into the walls of new build homes, allowing the birds to nest safely.*** <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/brokenshire-orders-house-builders-to-protect-wildlife>.

The above is of particular relevance to 3 species of urban bird, the red-listed House sparrow and Starling and the amber-listed Swift (expected to be red-listed at the next review). All 3 species are undergoing major declines caused mainly by the loss of nesting sites on existing houses due to re-roofing and replacement of soffits and fascias. Swifts, for example, have



Hampshire Swifts

experienced a catastrophic decline of nearly 60% in the last 20 years. **All these species readily use Swift bricks when these are integrated into new developments.**

Integration of Swift bricks is very easy to include into routine building practices and results in a permanent, discrete, maintenance-free biodiversity enhancer which will provide much-needed breeding spaces for declining species of birds.

Further information on Swift bricks, including advice on where they should be installed and how many to use can be obtained from Hampshire Swifts, info@hampshireswifts.co.uk.

Please ensure that these integrated nest bricks are included in this development by making this a condition of approval if granted.

Yours sincerely

Catharine Gale
Trustee of Hampshire Swifts