

Hazel Dormice – Method Statement template to support a licence application

The Method Statement will be used to determine the impact of the proposal on the favourable conservation status (FCS) of the species concerned (Regulation 55(9)(b)).

You are strongly advised to refer to the Dormouse Conservation Handbook. Please use recent photographs to support your application.

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Important advice:

The format below must be used. Please enter text below each heading keeping information as concise as possible.

All maps/figures that will become part of any annexed licence granted must be submitted as separate documents (with the site name and date included on the map/figure. See section 1 for list – all others may be included within the Method Statement document (e.g. survey maps/figures) if preferred).

A separate Work Schedule must also be submitted on form WML-A35a-E5a&b to accompany the Method Statement.

A Executive summary

Provide an overview (no more than 1 side of A4) of what works are proposed and how the impacts identified will be addressed in order to ensure no detriment to the maintenance of the population at a favourable conservation status.

The Rother Valley Railway Ltd proposed to reinstate a 3.4 km section of a former railway line (Kent – East Sussex Railway). The missing section proposed to be reinstated will connect the existing operational section of the railway that runs between Tenterden Kent in the East to the B422 Junction Road and a recently re-constructed short section of line that runs between Robertsbridge Station and Northbridge Street in Robertsbridge. The overall scheme will be constructed as a multi phased development. The original construction program was proposed to last 2 years. However, delays to the original works program has occurred and completion is now proposed in 2020 (refer EPSM Master Plan).

This dormouse EPSM application solely relates to works within central a section of railway track between Junction Road B2244 and Austen's Bridge (hereafter referred to the Site). Planning permission RR/2014/1608/P was granted by Rother District Council on 22/03/2017. The site covers an expanse of 1.659ha of which 1.638ha was assessed as suitable dormouse habitat and a total of 0.527ha of the suitable dormouse habitat is proposed to be lost.

A dormouse nest tube survey (CLM, 2018) was carried out at the site and confirmed the presence of hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, within the site boundaries which contained an area of secondary woodland and dense scrub.

An EPSM licence is required to enable the works to be carried out within the legislative framework. Dormouse mitigation to be implemented under this EPSM includes: 0.335ha habitat manipulation via way of single stage summer clearance (May – June 2019), 0.117ha habitat manipulation via way of single stage autumn clearance (October 2019) and 0.092ha habitat manipulation via way of two-stage autumn/summer clearance (October 2019 and August-September 2020). In addition, a 170m line of trees will be coppiced along the sites eastern boundary to provide a visibility splay for traffic. Habitat creation to a total of 0.598ha of new scrub/tree planting, management of existing woodland through the provision of a 5 year woodland management plan and the provision of 40 new dormice nest boxes will be provided as compensation for the loss of the existing suitable dormouse habitats present at the

site. The boxes are to be monitored as part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Program (NDMP) for at least five years post construction and all records are to be submitted to People Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) to help inform species distribution within the local area.

Impacts upon dormice present within the zone of influence of the site will occur as a result of the proposed development and include increased vibration and noise disturbance and loss of suitable dormouse habitat. However, it is considered likely that if all the dormouse mitigation measures set out within this dormouse EPSM application are implemented, the proposed development will not result in any long term adverse permanent impacts upon the local dormouse population and dormice are proposed to be retained within the local area at favourable conservation status.

B Introduction

B1 Background to activity/development:

Include a brief summary of:

- Why the activity and a licence are necessary (e.g. *site preparation for a new housing development will remove hedgerows which dormice are known to nest in; the installation of an underground pipeline will require the removal of sections of hedgerow used by dormice; blocks of woodland inhabited by dormice will be removed for construction of the proposed road scheme*).

The development proposals for the Rother Valley Railway involved the reinstatement of a section of track between Junction Road B2244 and Austen's Bridge. This will require the clearance of all secondary woodland and dense scrub along an existing bund and an area of dense scrub in the north-east corner of the site and located upon and around an active badger (main sett).

- Include the site/project name and provide an OS grid reference to 8 figures (e.g. format AB 12345678).

The Rother Valley Railway site is located between Junction Road B2244 and Austen's Bridge, approximately 2.5km east of Robertsbridge. The Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference for the site is TQ 76882414

- Include current status of planning permission (if applicable) e.g. *full planning permission with all relevant wildlife conditions discharged; permitted development; demolition with prior notification of demolition issues resolved*.

Full planning permission RR/2014/1608/P was granted by Rother District Council on 22/03/2017. Planning permission and all relevant conditions relating to wildlife have been formally discharged.

B2 Relationship with other nearby development and cumulative impacts

B2.1 Is the current application part of a larger development project? For example, is it part of a phased or multi-plot housing development that will require more than one dormouse licence? Enter Yes, No or N/A in the text box below. If yes, note a separate master plan document will be required.

Yes

Important Advice: If yes to the above, please note that sections in this Method Statement on impact assessment and mitigation measures must explicitly relate *only* to impacts from the works currently proposed.

A project-wide master plan must detail the overall impact assessment and mitigation and explain where, and why, each of the dormouse licences will be required. The master plan must be included as a separate document to this application: see http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WML-G11_tcm6-9930.pdf for details that are to be included in this separate document. The separate master plan is expected to take due regard of the overall project to ensure that in-combination effects are considered, and mitigation and compensation measures are both sufficient and coherent.

If the current development is part of a larger development project, summarise very briefly here how the current application relates to the larger project and how the in-combination effects are considered and mitigation/compensation is sufficient.

This EPSM application is for the reinstatement of a single section of the disused rail line between Junction Road B2244 and Austen's Bridge (approx.0.5km (50 ha). In total a further 3.7km (370ha) of line will be reinstated to the west of the site leading up to currently live track by Robertsbridge. Suitable dormouse habitat is present across the overall scheme and dormice are assumed present in

all potentially suitable habitats across the scheme. However, due to access constraints, only land within the current site boundary covered by this EPSM has been subject to a formal dormouse survey. Therefore, to ensure dormice are retained at the site at a favourable conservation status, each phase of works will be subject to survey, an EPSM application (where required) obtained and mitigation will be provided to ensure there is no net loss of suitable dormouse habitat across the overall scheme. A dormouse EPSM masterplan has been drafted and considers the in-combination accumulative impacts upon the local dormouse population. The masterplan will be updated for each new EPSM submitted.

Important Advice: to accompany this Method Statement also include Figure B2.1 for a Master plan overview - and see section I "Map checklist" at the end of this document.

B2.2 Apart from any mention in B2.1, please inform us of any past or future development or other projects (in the last 5 years or next 5 years) in the vicinity which may have significantly impacted or are likely to significantly impact on the same population/s of dormice as this application. You must make reasonable efforts to establish this, including discussions with your client and the Local Planning Authority – stating below what you undertook. A brief summary of the project/s should be provided including the site name and location, dates and if known the licence reference number(s).

Please note we are not expecting details of every licence/planning permission issued within the vicinity of the site – we are only concerned with projects that have the potential to significantly impact or have impacted on same population of dormice. Note: Natural England is aiming to make available licensing records from the last 5 years publically available.

A review of historic EPSM licences on MAGIC revealed that there is one EPSM licence for dormice within a 5km radius of the site.

The following EPSM licence has been issued within the last five years':

EPSM 2015-17996-EPS-MIT – located 4.5km south-west of the site between 04/01/2016 and 31/12/2021. This is considered unlikely to affect the same population, given the distance between the sites.

Important Advice: locations of other dormice mitigation sites in relation to this proposal must be shown on Figure B2.2.

C Survey and site assessment (also see section 3 of the Dormouse Conservation Handbook and Natural England's Interim guidance [Dormice surveys for mitigation licences](#))

C1 Pre-existing information on dormice at the survey site:

Please undertake a historical data search within a 1km search radius and provide a summary of the results of this search. For example, records from local environmental records centres, local dormice/wildlife groups and previous survey work undertaken at the site is all relevant.

- Should no historical records be found from your search please state this – and specify what searches you undertook.
- Note that you must not include records from National Biodiversity Network (NBN) without first obtaining written permission from the relevant Data Provider.

Historical data was requested from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) in March 2018. SxBRC provided six records for hazel dormouse within 2km of the site. The records were dated between 2013 and 2016. The nearest dormouse record was located 0.07km south-west of the site in 2016, adjacent to the River Rother.

C2 Status of the dormouse population: Briefly detail conservation status at the local, county and regional levels. Please complete the following table, justifying your assessment. If the status is unknown then please enter 'unknown'.

Conservation status assessment		
Local	County	Regional
Dormice appear to be widespread within the Rother District from a review of records held by the SxBRC. The population on site is not considered to be of local	Dormice are considered to be common in the county of East Sussex as a whole (ptes.org/house-a-dormouse/dormice-in-decline website accessed on 15/03/18).	The south of England is the national stronghold for the hazel dormouse, with widespread populations present across the counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Isle of Wight,

conservation importance, but of conservation importance within the immediate vicinity of the site. The population across the whole scheme is likely to be considered of local value.	Given the relatively small size of the site, and its location within a county in which the species is considered to be common, the population is not be considered to be of county conservation importance.	Hampshire, Surrey and Kent, as well as Sussex (Bright et al, 2006). Given the sites location within the south of England the population is not be considered to be of regional conservation importance.
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C3 Objectives of the survey to inform this proposal: Please complete the following table, entering 'Yes', 'No' or N/A' to indicate the objective of your survey and provide comments/explanation where necessary:

Survey objective	Yes / No / N-A	Comments
Determine presence / absence of dormice	Yes	The objective of the survey was to determine presence/likely absence of the species within the site
Determine dormouse usage of site (e.g. use of various habitats (specify)).	No	
Provide estimate of population size class	No	
Other (explain)	N/A	

C4 Site/habitat description: Please provide:

- A brief description of the site including:
 - Total size of the development site (ha) (most often within the red line planning boundary)
 - A breakdown of the different habitat types the site is comprised of (ha of each habitat type present) – i.e. regardless of their value to dormice
 - An indication of the habitat types on site with potential value to dormice (e.g. 4 ha habitat of ancient woodland, 400m of coppiced hedgerow; 1 ha of scrub, etc), differentiating between those surveyed and not surveyed, with an explanation why.

Ensure habitat types are referenced and consistently indicated on relevant figures and tables.

The existing baseline for the site covered approximately 1.659ha, comprising:

- 1.506ha of broadleaved semi-natural woodland - surveyed
 - 0.132ha of dense bramble scrub -surveyed
 - 0.012ha of tall ruderal vegetation - surveyed
 - 0.005ha of poor semi-improved grassland – not surveyed
 - 0.004ha of bare ground – not surveyed
- =1.659ha

Habitat with potential to support dormouse comprised the following:

- 1.506ha of broadleaved semi-natural woodland
 - 0.132ha of dense bramble scrub
- =1.638ha (of which 0.527ha is proposed to be lost)

All habitats with potential to support dormouse were included in the survey.

- A description of adjacent areas/offsite habitats, specifying any relevance to dormice, including descriptions of habitat/s relevant to dormice connectivity to and from the site.

The site is bordered immediately to the north and south by grassland fields which do not represent suitable dormouse habitat.

The site is directly connected to very large areas of suitable dormouse habitat present to the west/south-west including wooded habitats along the old railway line, River Rother and Fowlbrook Wood (Ancient Replanted Woodland), which in turn is connected to Wellhead Wood (Ancient Replanted Woodland), Lordship Wood (Ancient Replanted Woodland) etc.

The site is bordered by Junction Road B2244 to the east, which is not considered to pose a barrier to

dormouse dispersal. The site is therefore indirectly connected to suitable dormouse habitat to the east-south-east including Crainham Wood (Ancient Replanted Woodland), which in turn is connected to Holmans Wood (Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland), Ren's Wood (Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland) etc.

- Please also include annotated (cross reference the habitats) and dated photographs as these are very useful as an assessment aid. These can be inserted below or submitted as a separate (referenced) document.

Photograph 1

The south-eastern boundary of the site, showing grassland and bare ground areas grading into dense bramble scrub and secondary woodland. (14/03/2018)



Photograph 2

The north-eastern boundary of the site, showing areas of dense bramble scrub. (14/03/2018).

This area is now due to be cleared in October 2019.



Photograph 3
Centre of the site showing broadleaved semi-natural woodland. (14/03/2018)



Photograph 4
Northern boundary of the site showing gaps in the broadleaved semi-natural woodland. (14/03/2018)



C5 Field survey(s): See requirement for location map (C5a) and survey area (C5b) in Checklist I.

Please complete the following tables and add additional lines where necessary (*right click in any cell outside the grey box area. Choose Insert > Insert rows below*). Please enter 'N/A' if the table is not applicable to your survey:

Dates survey undertaken (e.g. format 01/06/13 to 15/10/13)	Survey method (e.g. tubes/nest boxes; nut searches; other – please specify)
June 2017 (installation)	50 tubes were installed in scrub and woodland across the site.
Comments (include # of tubes/boxes/quadrats/other field signs etc):	
17/08/17 (check)	50 tubes were checked in scrub and woodland across the site.
Comments:	
26/09/17 (check)	50 tubes were checked in scrub and woodland across the site.
Comments:	
14/12/17 (check)	50 tubes were checked in scrub and woodland across the site.
Comments:	
Comments:	

Please provide surveyors names (including Class Licence registration number if applicable).

Jonathan Bramley (licence number 2016- 21555-CLS - CLS) and Jason Armstrong (licence number 2016-21626-CLS-CLS).

Please explain any constraints on the survey/s undertaken (time of year, cold weather, refused access, safety issues preventing access etc – justify as necessary and include evidence where required). If access was refused please provide evidence (letter/email) to demonstrate this.

If standard survey effort was not undertaken please justify why.

At the time of the last survey session in December many of the survey tubes had been taken down or destroyed. However, given that presence had already been established and the time of year that this happened, it was not considered to have significantly impacted the results.

- Please confirm (Yes, No, N/A) that a walk over survey/check has been carried out within 3 months prior to application submission to ensure that conditions have not changed since the most recent survey was undertaken. If 'yes' – provide the date/s undertaken and details of any changes to conditions and habitats on site since the surveys were undertaken. If no walk-over survey/check has been undertaken please explain why.

Yes, a walk over survey was undertaken on 14/03/2019 and there were no changes to the conditions and habitats on site since the surveys were undertaken. The most recent visit to site is 19/08/2019.

C6 Survey results: Summarise your findings in the tables below and cross reference to **Figure C6** (which must also include locations of positive field signs – see Checklist I). If you did not undertake a specific survey type please add N/A to the relevant table/s. Raw data is to be appended to the Method Statement.

When completing “**Findings**” include reference to *direct observations, presence of field signs, etc.*

Nest tubes & nest box check results

Date (e.g. format 01/06/14 to 15/10/14)	Evidence (Yes / No)
June 2017 (installation)	N/A
Findings: n/a	
17/08/17 (1st check)	Yes
Findings: One unoccupied dormouse nest found at TQ 7696724175. One occupied dormouse nest with one adult dormouse found at TQ 7702724258.	
26/09/17 (2nd check)	Yes
Findings: Two unoccupied dormouse nests found at TQ 7702724258 and TQ 7694924210. Two occupied dormouse nests with one dormouse in each found at TQ 7673624084 and TQ 7696424177.	
14/12/17 (3rd check)	Yes
Findings: Six unoccupied dormouse nests found at TQ 7703124256, TQ 7698624227, TQ 7696324219, TQ 7679924120, TQ 7678724109 and TQ 7677124099.	

Provide further (brief) comments/explanation if required:

Nut search results

Date (e.g. format 01/06/14)	Quadrat site
N/A	N/A
Findings (include % of nuts opened by dormice):	
Findings:	
Findings:	
Findings:	
Findings:	
Findings:	

Provide further (brief) comments/explanation if required:

'Other' results

Date (e.g. format 01/06/14)	Survey type
n/a	n/a
Findings:	
Findings:	
Findings:	
Findings:	

Provide further (brief) comments/explanation if required:

C7 Interpretation/evaluation of survey results: Please provide the following:

- A best estimate of dormouse numbers based on data collected, available habitat and published data

Total habitat suitable for dormice within the site covered approximately 1.638ha. The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright et al, 2006) states that optimal habitat (diverse deciduous woodland with abundant scrub and vigorous understorey) can support a mean spring density of 4 to 10 individuals per ha. The density for scrub habitat is unknown but would be no more than for optimal habitat. An estimate of the maximum number of dormouse present on site and within each habitat is given below:

- dense bramble scrub 0.132ha x 10 = 1.32 individuals
- broadleaved semi-natural woodland 1.506 ha x 10 = 15.06 individuals

Total number of dormouse present likely to be present within the site boundaries = 17 individuals (16.38)

- Status and significance of the population

The estimated population size of up to 17 individuals represents a moderate population of dormice within the site boundaries. However only 5 individuals are estimated to be present within the licensable area (habitats to be lost) and will be displaced. The significance of the population within the wider landscape is considered to be relatively low, given the very large extent of ancient woodland in the wider surrounds.

For example, a review of the ancient woodland inventory reveals that Fowlbrook/Lordship/Wellhead Wood (Ancient Replanted Woodland sites) present to the south-west of the site cover over 120 ha.

The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright et al, 2006) states that conifer woodland (assuming these are conifer woods) can support a mean spring density of 1 to 3 individuals per ha. This means approximately 360 dormice could be present in these woods alone.

The site is directly connected to these Fowlbrook/Lordship/Wellhead Wood so the dormice on-site could be seen to represent less than 5% ($17/360 \times 100$) of the dormice population in the wider surrounds.

- Habitat quality

The site is dominated by diverse deciduous woodland with species present considered to be of value to dormice (Bright et al, 2006) including oak, bramble, birch, rowan, hornbeam and hawthorn. Although this is secondary woodland it is likely to be considered optimal habitat for dormice and of high quality.

The site also contained areas of dense bramble scrub, which is considered a key species of value to dormice and of high quality.

Provide further (brief) comments / explanation if required:

N/A

Important Advice:

Survey maps that must be included in this section of the Method Statement, or as separate documents if preferred, are listed in section I "Map checklist" at the end of this document.

Insert survey figures, photographs etc below here if not submitting them as separate documents:

D Impact assessment in absence of mitigation or compensation (also see section 5 of the Dormouse Conservation Handbook). Where appropriate you must take into consideration cumulative impacts of your proposals on the dormouse population/s identified in your survey in each section.

D1 Initial impacts: The impact/s of activities undertaken on site pre-development and during works must be considered and explained. **Consider disturbance** (such as human presence, noise, vibration, use of machinery for site preparation works etc), **temporary damage and temporary loss of habitats and injuring/killing.**

E.g. Removal of Xha of woodland habitat for new quarry excavations - Major negative impact at a site level; medium negative impact on a local level; low level impact at a national level.

In the absence of mitigation, the habitat clearance works would pose a risk of killing, injury or disturbance to any dormice present. This is considered to represent a major negative impact at the site level, a low level impact at the local level and a low level impact at the national level.

There is potential for temporary disturbance to dormice within retained off-site and adjacent habitat during the site clearance and construction phase whilst machinery and personnel are on site. This is anticipated to have a low level impact at a site level.

D2 Long-term impacts: habitat loss or modification Consider and explain the impacts of the proposed works on the dormouse population at a site, local, regional, and national level.

E.g. Removal of Xha scrub habitat for railway embankment stabilisation scheme – Medium negative impact on a site level; medium negative impact at a regional level; low level impact at a national level.

Removal of 0.527ha of dormouse suitable habitat during the site clearance and construction works would comprise the loss of:

- dense bramble scrub 0.132ha affecting 1.32 individuals
- broadleaved semi-natural woodland 0.395 ha affecting 3.95 individuals

In addition, a 170m line of trees will be coppiced along the sites eastern boundary to provide a visibility splay for traffic.

The resulting permanent loss of dormouse suitable habitat is considered to represent a medium negative impact at the site level, a low level impact at the local level, a low level impact at the regional level and a low level impact at the national level.

The likely density of dormice in surround woodland post-displacement would be unlikely to exceed the carrying capacity ($360 \text{ dormice} + 5 \text{ dormice} / 120\text{ha} = 3.04/\text{ha}$). This is using maximum figures as a precaution and doesn't take into account natural mortality rates which would also serve to reduce densities.

Please include details of area (ha) of dormouse habitat types and percentage losses (i.e. disturbed, damaged or destroyed) of available habitat on site that will be impacted as a result of the proposal.

Available dormouse habitat type (ha)	Impact (specify whether disturbance/damage/destruction)	Percentage loss of the available dormouse habitat
Broadleaved semi-natural woodland 1.506ha	Disturbance, destruction	26.23% ($0.395/1.506 \times 100$)
Dense bramble scrub 0.132ha	Disturbance, destruction	100% ($0.132/0.132 \times 100$)

Please ensure consistency with figures provided with section C4.

D3 Fragmentation and isolation: Will the proposed works result in these types of impacts? *E.g. loss of linear features such as hedges, tree lines, severance of dispersal routes by roads/rail lines, loss of connectivity between existing wooded or hedgerow habitats as a result of the proposal, etc.* Please explain.

No as wooded habitat will remain along the north and south side of the bund maintaining direct connectivity to the west/south-west and indirect (due to the presence of Junction Road B2244) connectivity to the east/south-east.

D4 Post-development interference impacts: e.g. human activity as a result of new housing development, by new motorway, increased risk of predation from domestic cats, etc. Please also consider other direct or indirect post development impacts which may include disturbance/ injuring/killing.
E.g. Occupancy of proposed 200 unit housing development will result in an increased recreational use of retained/created 'woodland' 'dormouse' areas leading to a likely increase in disturbance and possible increase in predation risk (by cats, dogs etc). Moderate to high negative impact at a site and local level.

Very minimal post-development interference impacts are considered likely as a result of the proposed development.

Trains will be running infrequently through the middle of the woodland strip but it is considered that the risk of injuring or killing dormice crossing the track would be low. Vibration and noise from the passing trains is considered to potentially result in a minor adverse impact at the site level due to disturbance. However, over time it is anticipated that the dormice would become habituated to this disturbance, as dormice are known to commonly occur along busy railway sidings.

D5 Predicted scale of impact of this development/activity on species status: Please complete the following table to explain what impacts are likely to be at the site, local/county and regional levels.

Estimated #s of dormice likely to be affected by proposal	Predicted scale of impact (<i>insert Low, Medium, High in columns below</i>)			Notes (include impact on population)
	Site	County	Regional	
5 individuals	Medium	Low	Low	Impacts of killing, injury and disturbance to individual dormice during clearance works has the potential to affect approximately 29% ($5/17$) of the population of dormouse on site given the proportion of habitat to be removed.
12 individuals	Medium	Low	Low	Impacts of temporary disturbance on retained and adjacent habitats during clearance and construction works is likely to affect the remaining population of dormouse.
5 individuals	Medium	Low	Low	Impacts of permanent habitat loss have the

				potential to affect approximately 29% (5/17) of the population of dormouse on site given the proportion of habitat to be lost.
12 individuals	Low	Low	Low	Impact from vibration and noise could have an effect on activity.

****Please note that you can add more rows to the table: right click in any cell outside the grey box area. Choose Insert > Insert rows below.**

Provide further comments/explanation as required, particularly should cumulative impacts be incurred (this information helps develop an understanding of how the impacts will be mitigated or compensated when assessing information provided in Section E):

n/a

Important Advice:

Please ensure that a separate 'Impact map' is provided (**Figure D**) which must indicate all areas and habitat types (clearly referenced) that will be disturbed, damaged and / or destroyed (please specify the level of impact on the figure). Also see section I "Map checklist" at the end of this document.

E Mitigation and Compensation (please also see section 4 & 5 of the Dormouse Conservation Handbook)

E1 The mitigation solution being proposed in the method statement should be the one that delivers the 'need' with the least impact on the dormouse population.

Please explain why this design was chosen over other potential solutions – clearly set out what other designs were considered and why they were not feasible (e.g. *if the proposal for a road scheme will directly impact on a small section of woodland inhabited by dormice, explain why it is not possible to retain that section of woodland and to avoid the impact; if timings to undertake the works are at a time of year when dormice are breeding explain why the works cannot be timed to avoid this most sensitive period, etc*).

No other designs were considered for the proposals as the route identified had already been approved by the Rother District Council (see below). The route involves the reinstatement of a railway line that previously existed in that location.

The Rother District Local Plan (2006) features a policy in support of the Rother Valley Railway development:

Policy EM8 - An extension to the Kent and East Sussex Steam Railway from Bodiam to Robertsbridge, along the route identified on the Proposals Map, will be supported, subject to a proposal meeting the following criteria:

- (i) it must not compromise the integrity of the floodplain and the flood protection measures at Robertsbridge;
- (ii) it has an acceptable impact on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- (iii) it incorporates appropriate arrangements for crossing the A21, B2244 at Udiam, Northbridge Street and the River Rother.

Habitat creation and enhancement is proposed to ensure no net loss of suitable dormouse habitat at the site. Site clearance works are to be timed to avoid the breeding and hibernation seasons for dormice.

E2 Methodology

E2.1 Search and clearance of dormouse habitat (If not applicable to your proposals please state 'N/A' in the relevant text boxes). **Also provide Figure E2.**

Provide details on:

- The methodology to be undertaken in each area (including timings and tools to be used in clearance of habitats).
- The areas involved in search/clearance of habitat (this detail must be in line with impacts **Figure D** and timings consistent with the **Work Schedule WML-A35a-E5a&b – see section E5**).

Ensure that:

- The methodology for action taken during active and hibernation periods is clearly outlined where both apply.
- A protocol for breeding nests where clearance occurs in the active season is included.
- If animals are to be translocated during clearance - even within site - please include details below in section E2.2 and indicate areas on **Figure E2**.

Toolbox Talk

Prior to any works commencing, all contractors involved will be briefed about the presence of dormice, dormouse identification, best practice methods and procedures to follow in the unlikely event that a dormouse is found during the works.

Habitat Loss

In total **0.132ha** of dense bramble scrub and **0.395ha** of broadleaved semi-natural woodland will be removed, which represents **32.17% (0.527/1.638 x 100)** of the available suitable habitats on-site.

Habitat Management

In addition, a 170m line of trees will be coppiced along the sites eastern boundary to provide a visibility splay for traffic.

Timing

0.335ha of suitable dormouse habitat within the site will be cleared in a single stage summer clearance May/June 2019 and during the active season. The works are timed to avoid the hibernation and the breeding season. In accordance with the current guidance (Bright et al, 2006), 0.335ha will be removed by taking out small amounts each day to allow animals time to move of their own accord into suitable adjacent habitats.

0.117ha of suitable dormouse habitat within the site will be cleared and a 170m line of trees will be coppiced in a single stage autumn clearance October 2019 and during the active season. The works will be carefully timed to avoid the hibernation and the breeding season. In accordance with the current guidance (Bright et al, 2006), 0.117ha will be removed by taking out small amounts each day to allow animals time to move of their own accord into suitable adjacent habitats.

0.092ha of suitable dormouse habitat within the site will be cleared in a two-stage autumn/summer clearance (October 2019 and August-September 2020) and during the active seasons. The works are timed to avoid the hibernation and only stump removal will be undertaken during the breeding season (Aug-Sept), to coincide with proposed badger sett destruction works (also to be carried out under licence). In accordance with the current guidance (Bright et al, 2006), 0.092ha will be removed by taking out small amounts each day to allow animals time to move of their own accord into suitable adjacent habitats.

The reason for clearing 0.117ha as a single stage approach and 0.092ha in a two-stage approach is due to the presence of a main badger sett at the far western part of the site. The single stage clearance of 0.117ha is the area of dense bramble scrub in the north-east corner of the site and the two-stage clearance of 0.092ha is the area of woodland in the western part of the site.

Methodology – Single Stage Clearance

Prior to the clearance commencing, a hand search for nests as part of an Ecological Watching Brief will be carried out by an experienced and licensed dormouse handler. This will involve a thorough search in and around all trees and scrub to be removed, including around the base of the vegetation. Where necessary, gloves will be worn to allow areas of bramble to be searched with greater ease.

The vegetation removal will involve an initial cut of scrub, trees and secondary woodland at a height of between 200mm-500mm, to be undertaken using hand tools only i.e. strimmers and chainsaws. Clearance will start at the eastern end of the site, persuading displaced dormice to move north, south, or west into retained habitat. A soft-felling technique will be employed to reduce the height of the trees to be removed which will involve cutting the timber into sections and carefully lowering each section to the ground. An ecologist will be present on site to oversee this work. Arisings will be carried, not dragged, from the working area ensuring that disturbance to the leaf litter is kept at a minimum. Arisings will be chipped 'off site' and removed to prevent disturbance to dormice.

Following this (except for the trees to be coppiced) the stumps and other remaining cut vegetation will be grubbed out using a small 360° excavator and removed from site.

In the unlikely event that breeding dormice are found, they shall be left undisturbed until such time that the young dormice have become independent of their mother. Vegetation supporting and immediately adjacent to the nests (within 5m) will be retained during this time, and clearance of other vegetation on the site will proceed where possible with caution to prevent unnecessary disturbance. Vegetation will not be removed that is likely to result in the isolation of any occupied nests, and a corridor of habitat shall be temporarily retained where necessary to allow animals to move into permanently retained habitat.

Methodology – Two-Stage Clearance

Prior to the clearance commencing, a hand search for nests as part of an Ecological Watching Brief will be carried out by an experienced and licensed dormouse handler. This will involve a thorough search in and around all trees and scrub to be removed, including around the base of the vegetation. Where necessary, gloves will be worn to allow areas of bramble to be searched with greater ease.

The vegetation removal will involve an initial cut of scrub, trees and secondary woodland at a height of between 200mm-500mm, to be undertaken using hand tools only i.e. strimmers and chainsaws. Clearance will start at the eastern end of the site, persuading displaced dormice to move north, south, or west into retained habitat. A soft-felling technique will be employed to reduce the height of the trees to be removed which will involve cutting the timber into sections and carefully lowering each section to the ground. An ecologist will be present on site to oversee this work. Arisings will be carried, not dragged, from the working area ensuring that disturbance to the leaf litter is kept at a minimum. Arisings will be chipped 'off site' and removed to prevent disturbance to dormice.

Following this in August-September 2020 (once badgers have been excluded from the area) the stumps will be grubbed out using a small 360° excavator and removed from site.

In the unlikely event that breeding dormice are found, the works will be halted immediately and the dormice will be left undisturbed until such time that the young dormice have become independent of their mother. Vegetation supporting and immediately adjacent to the nests (within 25m) will be retained during this time, and clearance of other vegetation on the site will proceed where possible with caution to prevent unnecessary disturbance. Vegetation will not be removed that is likely to result in the isolation of any occupied nests, and a corridor of habitat shall be temporarily retained where necessary to allow animals to move into permanently retained habitat.

E2.2 Capture and release (if applicable):

Please confirm that you agree to undertake the following procedures if a dormice is encountered during works:

Where active dormice are discovered during works and it is possible to allow them to move independently to safe habitats, outside high risk work areas, this will be the first course of action. Where this is not possible, either:

- In the active season, dormice that are active or torpid will be relocated in their existing nest to suitable habitat, or a specially erected dormice nest box (if applicable), within 100m of the 'capture' location.*
- During hibernation, dormice found outside high risk areas, such as haul routes, must remain in situ. Where hibernating dormice need to be moved, the existing nest must be relocated, with surrounding material, to a location within 100m of this site similar in condition and aspect to the existing hibernation nest location. It must then be covered by suitable material, i.e. a log or clay tile for protection. In the unlikely event of the animal rousing from hibernation it should be taken into captivity until it can be released within 100m of its capture site at a suitable time.*

Where a breeding nest is discovered, works must stop and provision be made for the nest to remain in situ, undisturbed and connected to contiguous habitat, until the young have been weaned and allowed to disperse naturally. Only following dispersal of all young from the nest shall licensable works in this location re-commence.

Yes, I agree / No, I don't agree

Yes

If NO, please provide justification below. Please use this text box to describe any additional information on protocols to be employed if dormice are found during works.

Should your proposals include capture (taking) and release please see requirements for Figure E2 (in Checklist I) and specify below:

- Numbers of dormice that are likely to be affected at the time the works are to be undertaken. Note: *this may be different to the maximum number of dormice estimated during survey as timings for works should be at a time when dormice are least likely to be directly impacted.*

No trapping or translocation of dormice is proposed. In the highly unlikely event of a dormouse being discovered that has not moved of its own accord into the adjacent habitat during clearance of vegetation, the individual will be captured by hand by a licenced ecologist. After being checked for injuries, any captured animals will be transported immediately in cotton drawstring holding bags to the closest artificial nest box, not further than 40m from where the animal is discovered. If a dormouse is discovered in a nest then the nest will also be placed in a cotton drawstring bag and transported with the animal.

If an injured or sick animal is found during works, it will be transported safely in a lined shoebox to the RSPCA's Mallydams Wood wildlife rehabilitation centre which is located approximately 12 miles from the site.

Given the small area of habitat to be removed and the methodology which will be adopted during clearance the risk of encountering dormice is considered to be low.

E3 Dormouse mitigation and compensation: Please detail how all impacts to dormice (as identified in sections C and D) will be mitigated. If not applicable to your proposals please state 'N/A' in the relevant text boxes. Also note requirement for **Figure E3 and E4** below).

E3.1 Enhancement and / or replacement of dormouse habitat – Provide details of all works including:

- Details of any enhancements to existing habitat (e.g. canopy thinning of standards, selective removal, coppicing, supplementary planting). Explain how these will be beneficial to the population.

Retained woodland measuring 1.118ha located along the northern and southern boundaries of the site will be enhanced for dormice with new scrub planting in the gaps (10% of the area) equating to new habitat creation of 0.112ha (refer Woodland Management Plan). The following mitigation measures are proposed as part of the habitat creation and enhancements (refer Figure E3a) and include:

- A new woodland understorey to be created by planting a mosaic of scrub species.
- New scrub planting to total habitat creation of 0.112ha. Species composition will comprise 17% bramble, 17% blackthorn, 17% Guelder Rose, 17% hazel, 17% honeysuckle and 17% hawthorn.
- Scrub understorey to provide a rich food resource for dormice year round.
- New planting and woodland to be managed for five years in line with measures set out within the Woodland Management Plan (refer Figure E4).

Habitat enhancement will be undertaken November 2020 once the track works have been finalised (to prevent damaged to the new planting).

- Details of habitat type and area (ha) to be enhanced (m if hedgerow).

Existing woodland (0.118ha) to be enhanced through new understorey planting and habitat

management prescriptives set out within the five year Woodland Management Plan.

- Habitat replacement or creation (following works resulting in temporary impacts). State the length of hedgerow planting (m) and areas (ha) of other planting to be provided such as woodland and anticipated establishment period etc.

n/a

E3.2 Creation of new habitats (including dormouse boxes, bridges or other linking structures etc).

Note – creation of mitigation or compensation for high impact cases (e.g. dormouse bridges to mitigate for fragmentation impacts) must be protected in the long term.

Please specify:

- The areas of new habitat to be created (habitat type and size (ha) must be specified)
- Species composition where applicable
- Justify variation from the original habitat if applicable (e.g. like for like cannot be provided)
- Location details (to also be shown on a mitigation figure)
- Number of boxes to be deployed, which must also be included on **Figure E3**. Note the requirement for an 8-figure grid reference is not required for positions of individual boxes).
- Temporary connectivity measures e.g. bridging gaps in hedgerows
- For bridges or other linking structures – please provide details of
 - Planting
 - Siting, including why and how area/location for creation was selected
 - 8-figure grid reference on location
 - Design (including length, width, height, installation details and materials to be used)
 - Evidence (if necessary) to provide reassurance that such a design is used or will be used by dormice (also see requirement for **Figure E3** and the need for long term site safe guard, security and monitoring and maintenance of such a mitigation measure in section E4).

To compensate for habitat loss on site, an area of 0.598ha of mixed native scrub and trees will be planted along the railway corridor approximately 450m north-east of the site (refer Figure E3b). Planting will comprise a mix of species with recognised value to dormice (Bright et al, 2006) including oak (10%), hornbeam (15%), hazel (10%), hawthorn (30%), blackthorn (30%) and honeysuckle (5%). All plants will be of local provenance where possible. The new planted areas will comprise a higher diversity of species than is currently present on the site within the scrub and secondary woodland and will also increase the proportion of species providing food for dormice such as hazel and honeysuckle.

All of the scrub and tree planting will be carried out during November 2019 after receipt of the licence.

To mitigate for the temporary loss of nesting sites and enable long term monitoring of the site 40 dormouse boxes will be installed at 15-20m intervals within woodland along the northern and southern site boundaries (refer Figure E3a). Boxes will be installed in May 2019 so that they are in place before habitat clearance takes place.

The boxes are to be monitored (refer Figure E4a) as part of the national Dormouse Monitoring Program (NDMP) for five years. All results will be submitted to People Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) to provide data on dormouse distribution for the local area. The boxes will be monitored and maintained in line with measures set out within the Woodland Management Plan.

Rother Valley Railway Ltd (the client) has agreed in writing to accept all responsibility for providing the boxes, undertaking monitoring and maintenance in line with measures set out within this EPSM application and agree to carry out habitat creation, enhancement and managements prescriptive in line with measures set out within the Woodland Management Plan.

E3.5 Wider biodiversity gains:

Please indicate if enhancements, over and above what is necessary to mitigate the impact of the activity of the licence proposal, are being provided. Please indicate if enhancements are included to satisfy the requirement of a planning permission, and if so state the relevant planning condition, or other consents in your response below.

Please also state if an applicant wishes to provide more than is typically required to mitigate for the impacts. Enter N/A if this is not applicable to your application.

Note: Any licence granted will only cover mitigation and compensation required to fulfill licensing requirements, but will acknowledge additional biodiversity enhancements to be provided.

n/a

Important Advice:

Scaled maps/plans of mitigation/compensation must be provided as separate maps/figures (also **see section I "Map checklist" at the end of this document for more detail**). Please remember to date your maps/figures and include a relevant site name and / or grid reference.

- **Figure E2** to show search and clearance of dormouse habitat and indicate which areas will be subject to the different methodologies showing direction of displacement where applicable (ensure this is clearly labelled and consistent with other mandatory maps/figures).
- **Figure E3** to show specifications for mitigation / compensation to be provided, and or retained/enhanced habitats, and annotate where it will be provided. Indicative locations of dormouse boxes must also be shown. Should the scheme be large or complicated it may be necessary to submit more than one figure (note: this will be necessary should linking structures be required see Checklist I – as the design detail must also be provided).

NOTE: It must be possible to compare these with the survey results plan (**Figure C6**) and 'Impacts' Figure (**D**).

E4 Post-development site safeguard: Further guidance and explanation on post-development monitoring requirements are included within our 'How to get a licence' document http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/wml-g12_tcm6-4116.pdf.

E4.1 Habitat/site management and maintenance:

Is any specific post-development habitat management and site maintenance planned? If 'No'; state 'N/A' in the text boxes below. If 'Yes' include the following:

- The period (years and months) for which habitat management and maintenance will take place. Ensure that this is consistent with the post development works detailed in section **E5b** of the **Work Schedule document, WML-A35a-E5a&b**.

Five years management of new scrub/tree planting and the existing woodland will be carried out in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and in line with measures set out within the Woodland Management Plan.

- Detail what will be undertaken in terms of habitat management and site maintenance required to ensure long-term security of the dormouse population (e.g. woodland management, hedgerow management, box clearance and replacement or repair, establishment of compensatory planting and 'beat up' where necessary etc). Ensure this relates to **Figure E3**.

New scrub/tree planting and woodland management to be carried out in accordance with measures set out within the Woodland Management Plan in 2019 (planting) 2020 – 2024 (management). Where required, changes to the woodland management plan will be made to ensure the establishment of compensatory habitat.

Repairs to the boxes will be made where required and in line with the Woodland Management Plan

Note – for phased or multi-plot developments a separate habitat management and maintenance plan is required, which must be submitted with the master plan: see guidance on phased developments.

Important Advice:

Please include **Figure E4** as a separate figure to show which structures and habitats will be managed, maintained and monitored post development as part of your proposal – also see section I "Map checklist" at the end of this document).

E4.2 Population monitoring, habitat usage etc: Where required, please include details of:

- Timing – state the years and months post development monitoring or other will be undertaken. Ensure that is consistent with the post development works detailed in section **E5b** of the **Work Schedule document WML-A35a-E5a&b**.

Dormouse boxes to be monitored as part of the National Dormouse Monitoring Program (NDMP) for at least 5 years post site clearance 2020 – 2024. Boxes will be monitored by the licence holder or accredited agent. All records to be sent to Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) to help monitor dormouse distribution on a national basis.

- The type of monitoring which will be undertaken (e.g. nut searches, nest tube/nest box survey, hair tubes, camera traps, etc) – include survey methods and equipment to be used as necessary.
If it is expected any dormice are to be captured (taken) (and released where found) or disturbed during this post development monitoring period please state anticipated numbers.

Nest box survey minimum of 2 x inspections carried out annually between May – September and in accordance with PTES guidelines.

- Specify which compensation/mitigation measures will be subject to monitoring (and ensure these are clearly referenced on **Figure E4**).
Note: any bridges or linking structures deployed must be monitored.

40 x dormouse nest boxes (refer Figure E4a)

Please include a commitment to undertake remedial action in your Method Statement should monitoring identify that further management/maintenance is required of any compensation/mitigation measure provided (e.g. dormouse nest boxes or bridges/linking structures) to ensure that they are working effectively and are fit for purpose.

Important advice: Please always consider whether any *post development* monitoring effort should be staggered over alternate years in cases where use of the compensation measures may not occur in the same year of provision.

E4.3 Mechanism for ensuring safeguard of mitigation/compensation and post-development management, maintenance and monitoring works:

Please explain what mechanism is in place to ensure safeguard of mitigation/compensation provisions (e.g. Restrictive Covenant, clause to relinquish future development rights in S106 agreement, NERC Act agreement, explicit recognition of site in local planning documents, designation as County Wildlife Site or similar.) The need for this, and the type of mechanism, will vary with the scheme and impact. For substantial impact schemes, some mechanism is always required. If you offer no specific mechanism, explain how you believe the population will be free of threats as far as can be reasonably determined (the expectation of the granting of a licence should not be used for this purpose).

In signing this EPSM application the licensee agrees to ensure safeguard of mitigation/compensation provisions.

Explain how all post-development works (management, maintenance (including remedial action) and monitoring, as appropriate) will be ensured? Include a commitment that the monitoring, habitat management and maintenance work will be undertaken. Mechanism/s for ensuring delivery must be in place before applying for a licence (also see Section F).

In signing this EPSM application the licensee agrees to provide all the mitigation measures and post monitoring surveys set out within this dormouse EPSM licence application. Failure to provide the measures outlined and within the timescales specified will prevent the site being clearance in preparation for development. The named ecologist to carry out regular compliance checks as and where required.

E5 Timetable of works: Please complete the **Work Schedule document WML-A35a-E5a&b** found on the 'dormouse' application form web page and append to your application pack.

Important Advice: Please note that from July 2014 a separate Work Schedule is a mandatory requirement to support a new dormouse licence application when using this template.

F Declarations

If the mitigation/compensation area/s is/are not owned by the applicant, you must have consent from the relevant land owner(s). You must have also secured details of how any measures to maintain the population in the long term will be achieved (e.g. a legal agreement).

F1 Declaration Statement(s) – You must include the following declarations within your Method Statement and include the appropriate answer (Yes/No/Not applicable):

F1.1 Re: section E1 - I confirm that relevant landowner consent/s has/have been granted to accept dormice onto land outside the applicant's ownership:

N/A

F2.2 Re: section E2 - I confirm that landownership consent/s has/have been granted to allow the creation of the proposed compensation on land outside the applicant's ownership

N/A

F2.3 Re: section E3 - I confirm that consent/s has/have been granted by the relevant landowner/s for monitoring, management and maintenance purposes on land outside the applicant's ownership

N/A

Comments if applicable:

Important Advice:

Unsecured consents statement:

If you have been unable to secure consents for any of the three declarations please explain why and detail any plans you have in place to obtain the consent(s) or provide details of any right(s) or agreement(s) that will enable the lawful implementation of the proposed mitigation, compensation and monitoring. Failure to provide the appropriate landowner consents means that the Method Statement is unlikely to meet the requirements for the FCS test to be met. It is therefore in your interest to ensure that the appropriate consents have been secured *before* applying for a licence.

G References: List any references cited, and include credits for source information.

H Annexes (supporting documents please append to your application pack)

H1 Pre-existing survey reports;

H2 Raw survey data.

I Check list of figures to be submitted with each Dormouse Method Statement

With your Method Statement and supporting documents please submit the following maps/figures – see table below. Note that some can be included within the Method Statement itself (if preferred) and others must be submitted individually (i.e. separate documents).

Maps/Figures must include the title, site name as referenced on your application form, date and figure reference. If a grid reference is more applicable (e.g. a dormouse bridge is being provided please include this). Include a scale bar (appropriate to the situation e.g. 100m on site maps, 1km on location maps) and direction of North etc.

Additional maps, photographs or diagrams should be included where necessary to adequately explain the scheme.

Figure	Mandatory as	Mandatory for	What it must show (also see details above on site
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reference	will be included in the annexed licence, if applicable	assessment purpose only, but will not be included in the annexed licence	reference, dating and naming).
Figure B2.1	Yes, if the application is part of a phased or multi-plot development where more than 1 licence is required	-	Master plan overview- note – this is not the same as a master plan document, for which you should follow the guidance as stated in section B2.1.
Figure B2.2	-	Yes, if applicable	Locations of other nearby dormouse licensed sites, or sites which will be impacted on by future development.
Figure C5a	-	Yes	Location map at an appropriate scale for the application (often 1:50,000 or 1:25,000)
Figure C5b	-	Yes	Survey area showing all habitats that are within the survey area and distinguishing those that were surveyed and those that were not. Aerial photographs should be provided where possible (ensure you have permission to use copy righted maps). If boxes or tubes were used or transect/quadrat routes, ensure that these routes are indicated as appropriate.
Figure C6	-	Yes	Survey results - provide clear, annotated and cross-referenced maps/plans/photographs to show the survey results (location of nests/dormice, etc). Ensure Figure is at a suitable scale to show the results.
Figure D	Yes	-	Impacts plan – map/figure to show impacts and where licensable works will take place: clearly indicate areas of habitats and habitat types to be impacted by the works (specify whether damage, and temporary impacts, destruction or disturbance will occur).
Figure E2	Yes	-	Locations and habitats where all capture and exclusion activities will be undertaken (ensure this is clearly labelled and consistent with other mandatory maps/figures). Indicate direction of displacement with arrows. This Figure must also indicate habitats and areas where individuals will be released.
Figure E3	Yes – depending on proposals more than one figure may be required – particularly if the proposal is large or complicated or linking structures are provided	-	Specifications for mitigation / compensation Mitigation / compensation figures must show all habitat creation, restoration/enhancement, indicate where boxes will be erected etc. Non-standard structures: Include design and dimensions for dormice bridges / other linking structures and materials to be used etc and provide an 8-figure grid reference for each structure.
Figure E4	Yes – when monitoring and maintenance will be included in the licence	-	Monitoring, management and maintenance map. Please indicate the specific structures and habitats that are to be managed, maintained and monitored as part of this licence proposal. Ensure that they are correctly referenced and are consistent with other parts of the Method Statement and figures.