

Planning application DC/25/1392 (Original application is DC/24/1506)

Nutbourne Place farm, Nutbourne Lane, Nutbourne.

Replacement of existing nursery building and erection of dwellinghouse and associated staff facilities, ground mounted solar panels, upgrading of glasshouses to make them energy and water efficient And biodiversity enhancements

Water Neutrality Statement

Horsham's Water Neutrality advice has recently been updated and confirms that:

"On 31 October 2025, Natural England issued a [Withdrawal Statement](#) confirming that its Water Neutrality Position Statement of September 2021 has been withdrawn.

Whilst the Position Statement has now been withdrawn, it remains the case that Horsham District Council remains the competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, and therefore must be assured that the mitigation will be effective in practice and suitably secured. Given the licence change has not yet taken place (the withdrawal statement refers to March 2026), we cannot be certain that the issue is yet fully resolved. We do though recognise and welcome the statement from Natural England as a significant step forward in finally addressing water neutrality at a strategic level.

For individual applications, we will now be using the 2024/25 water efficiency savings made by Southern Water to allow all development to move forward as water neutral from 1st November 2025. These savings were previously to be used by the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), and amount to some 3,240,000 litres per day. SNWCS, for the avoidance of doubt, will no longer be launched.

For applicants, this means that:

- 1. No water neutrality statement is now required;*
- 2. No payment into SNWCS is needed to use the Southern Water capacity referred to above;*
- 3. No bespoke conditions or s106 obligations are required to demonstrate water neutrality.*

Please note that given the area remains at significant water stress, all applications for new housing will be required by condition to comply with the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical Standard (currently 110 l/p/d) as required by Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. We would welcome and support any applicant who still wishes to include water efficiencies below this standard.

To ensure continued compliance with the Habitats Regulations until the licence change has taken effect, please note that officers will continue to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of your proposals as part of their overall considerations. This will ensure your development remains compliant with the Habitats Regulations, Policy 31 of the HDPF, and Paragraph 193 of the NPPF. Natural England have provided [standing advice](#) to assist officers in meeting their duties under Reg 63(3) of the Habitats Regulations.

*For applicants who have existing planning permissions with conditions and s106 obligations requiring compliance with bespoke water neutrality mitigation, we will consider applications under s.73 of the Town and Country Planning Act to remove those conditions, and any associated applications to vary or discharge any relevant s106 obligations. **If your permission is for new dwellings, we will instead apply a condition requiring compliance with the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical***

Standard referred to above. This is the same condition we applied to all new dwellings prior to the 2021 Position Statement.”

The existing farm building was last used for a café, which generates a considerable demand for water. The proposed dwelling will similarly generate a need for water.

As required by HDC's latest advice I confirm that the new build dwelling and staff facilities will fully comply with the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical Standard Section G2, which equates 110 litres per person per day. This is lower than the standard requirement set out in section G2 which is 125 litres per person per day. (See section 36. G2 (2).

This is a matter that can be secured through a standard planning condition as set out in section 36. G2 and through Building Control.

I also confirm that the water efficiency measures proposed for the nursery remain an integral part of the proposal and will reduce water usage on the nursery.