



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Former Novartis Site Parsonage Road Horsham West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Residential development comprising approximately 206 dwellings, including the conversion of 'Building 3' and demolition of 'Building 36'. Vehicular access taken from Wimblehurst Road. Car and cycle parking, landscaping and open space and associated works. The replacement of the existing cedar trees at the site.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/0629
RECOMMENDATION:	Modification / More Information

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

Since the first round of comments, a draft HMMP has been provided. Further comments are provided with regards to the HMMP, which will need to be addressed at pre-commencement condition stage (or earlier if the need for a legal agreement is triggered, whereby a response to this concern as emboldened below is required prior to grant of consent). No other comments appear to have been addressed. It is requested that the issue pertaining to tree retention is clarified prior to any grant of planning permission.

The on-site BNG proposal is considered feasible, however it is noted that there is a large unit net loss for the development, as the quantum of development has filled the site and has left no further room habitat creation. At present, the metric demonstrates that the development will have a net loss of -17.74 units in the area habitat module, and a net gain of 0.28 units in the hedgerow module. To reach the 10% requirement for the area habitat module, the stated intention is to purchase off-site units (in accordance with the trading rules) from the BNG market, with 5 off-site providers having already been approached and two of these having off-site compensation available within the same National Character Area as the site. It is preferable for the units to also be within the Local Planning Authority area as well.

More information is requested with regards to post-development habitats and the metric amended where necessary.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The comments below relate solely to the BNG requirement for the above application. All other ecology matters will be reviewed and commented on by Place Services.

As the overall net change does not exceed 0.5 units, and no gain (with reference to the hedgerow module) relates to habitats of medium distinctiveness, this is not considered significant on-site BNG and therefore a S106 legal agreement to secure is not required.

See comments relating to need for legal agreement in HMMP comments below.

Post-development habitats

1.0 The ornamental lake or pond habitat in the metric has been entered as being poor condition, however the BNG Assessment Report states the habitat is moderate condition. Please can the correct condition be confirmed and amended where necessary.

This does not appear to be addressed. Please see point on ornamental pond condition in HMMP section.

1.1 It is noted that tree planting is proposed within the private gardens of the dwellings. Note that these cannot be counted separately and must be included within the 'vegetated garden' entry of the metric as per the metric user guide, as they cannot be secured. Confirmation is therefore sought on whether these trees have been counted separately, and where they have been, the metric needs amending to remove the appropriate number of individual trees from the entry.

This does not appear to be addressed.

1.2 This also applies to the trees to be retained that are located within proposed private gardens. As these will be absorbed into the private gardens, these cannot be secured, and their retention cannot be guaranteed. In line with the metric user guide, please can further justification be sought as to why these trees have been marked as retained.

In the new suite of submitted documents, further clarification is requested as to whether T007 is going to be absorbed into private garden. The HDC Arboricultural Officer comments pertaining to trees with RPA conflicts should be adhered to ensure certainty of retention.

1.3 Confirmation is requested on whether the introduced shrub mapped around the dwellings is to be included within private ownership of the dwellings. If so, this entry needs to be removed from the metric and included within the vegetated garden entry in the metric, as this cannot be secured.

1.4 The PEA (Greengage, 2024) for DC/25/0415 stated that scrub habitat should be included within the soft landscape planting design, to provide replacement shelter and foraging opportunities for hedgehog, with the aim to also connect areas of greenspace. It was therefore recommended including scrub along the western boundary, which in turn would also provide for nesting bats, reptiles, amphibians and foraging and commuting bats. It is therefore encouraged to do the same for this application, and in doing so increase the connectivity across the entirety of the whole site.

Does not appear to be addressed.

HMMP

2.0 There is no draft management information on how the condition criterions for the proposed habitats on-site will be achieved. This information is requested; however, it is not expected to be in great detail, but instead a summary on how the conditions will be reached. Further information is requested on how other neutral grassland throughout the development site is to reach moderate condition, passing Criterions A and B, with particularly emphasis on the road verges throughout the development. Given the probable high levels of recreational damage on these parcels, it is considered that modified grassland is more appropriate.

A draft HMMP has been provided – with thanks. The point above relating to suitability of ONG on road verges still stands.

Points on the draft HMMP submitted:

- It is noted in Table BI-T04, at baseline the ornamental pond has been stated as being in moderate condition, however this is entered as poor within the metric. Given the accompanying description regarding condition criterions passed, this should state poor condition.
- There are slight discrepancies between the species mixes for rain garden, grassland, and hedgerow in the HMMP and the submitted draft planting palette (Fabrik, Drawing no. D3385-FAB-00-XX-DR-L1000). Please can the correct species mix be confirmed.
- Similar to that for the HMMP submitted under DC/25/0415, for table PM-T01, installation of bird and bat boxes is not considered a 'natural ecological niche' as part of the tree itself, and therefore it is considered that the use of a box cannot pass Criterion E. Veteranisation techniques will need to be presented to HDC in monitoring reports with robust Arboricultural evidence that this is appropriate.
- Topsoil stripping or inversion should be a last resort management method for the initial establishment of other neutral grassland. With an appropriate cutting regime and weed control, it is not deemed suitable to consider this in the first instance.
- It is advised that fruit bearing individual trees are left to fruit prior to taking a cut over the winter period.
- Similar to that for the HMMP submitted under DC/25/0415, in places where herbicide is mentioned, it is recommended that all other manual techniques are explored and pursued prior to resorting to herbicide (excluding in the case for eradication of INNS listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Where herbicide is considered absolutely necessary, it should only be for spot treatment purposes.
- Note that restrictions relating to the nesting bird season should also apply to individual trees.
- It is noted that a minimum of 5 woody species as listed in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 is listed within the hedgerow mix. Note that, if there are 5 or more woody species within a 30m section, this would constitute as a species-rich native hedgerow as per UKHab classification, and therefore the metric entry would need amending. **Note that if this amendment is made, then the BNG will need to be secured via a legal agreement as per HDC's definition of significant on-site BNG.** As such, please provide further clarification as to whether 5 or more woody species will be planted within each 30m section of hedgerow. **This also applies for DC/25/0415.**

2.1 A full HMMP will be required to discharge the pre-commencement condition. It is requested that the full HMMP also includes further detail on what the GT4 grass mix will contain, and where the different seed mixes will be sown.

2.2 Note that for purchasing habitat bank units, a HMMP for off-site is not required.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

Informative -

Scenario 1: BNG Required

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

Pre-commencement condition:

1.1 The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:

- (a) a non-technical summary;
- (b) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan; and
- (c) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan from the completion of development.

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Regulatory Condition:

1.2 The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years after the completion of development, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NAME:	Linsey King Ecology Officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning - Specialists
DATE:	22/05/25 <u>11/12/2025</u>