



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land at 518724 118628 Bines Road Partridge Green West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Development of 101 dwellings (including 45% affordable), creation of new access, public open space, creation of a cycle path, allotments and associated landscaping.
REFERENCE:	DC/24/1699 & DC/25/1922
RECOMMENDATION:	Holding objection / More information No objection

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The BNG proposals result in a 18.68% net gain in area habitat and a 58.96% net gain in hedgerows, with all net gains to be delivered on-site. Further information is required with regards to baseline habitat classification, habitat retention, and target condition assessment criteria, and minor amendments to the metric are requested.

Further information relating to the hedgerow classifications are required prior to a grant of planning permission. The suggested amendments would result in the development not reaching the 10% BNG requirement in the hedgerow module. In the absence of this information, I recommend refusing the application as the baseline assessment is considered incorrect. Also note that comments/amendments in response to concerns on habitats for protected species, strategic significance and species mixes does not appear to be provided. Amendments and additions to the HMMP will need to be made prior to signing of any legal agreement.

The concerns have been appropriately addressed and the metric amended where required. The proposal now demonstrates a 21.07% net gain in area habitat and a 22.95% net gain in hedgerows. There is a question pertaining to private gardens and hedgerow below, however these concerns can be resolved prior to the legal agreement.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The comments below relate solely to the BNG proposals within the above application.

Baseline

Confirmation is requested as to how the classification of native hedgerow was arrived at for the baseline, as opposed to species-rich native hedgerow (and **species-rich native hedgerow associated with bank or ditch**, as Para 3.10 of the BNG report states 'a dry ditch was also present along both hedgerows 5 and 6 within the development area'), with reference to the UKHab classification descriptions.

This does not appear to have been addressed – this must be commented on prior to determination, because misclassification of these hedgerows will affect the BNG calculation, and result in the 10% in the hedgerow module not being met. This concern has been raised because all hedgerows recorded have at least 5 woody species present (as listed under Schedule 3 of The Hedgerow Regulations 1997), as presented in Table 3 of the BNG Report. **In the absence of these comments, it is considered the baseline habitats have been incorrectly classified, and in this instance the metric is considered incorrectly completed.**

These have been amended in the metric and BNG report. Concern resolved, with thanks.

Irreplaceable Habitat

Veteran trees are present on site (T3, T20, T21, T23, T25 and G10). These will be protected and retained. If the Council's Arboricultural Officer raises any concerns as to impacts on these trees that cannot be resolved, then bespoke compensation will need to be agreed with the Council (which will not count towards BNG).

Metric

1. It is not clear whether some habitat creation or enhancements are being used for mitigation or compensation purposes for protected species. Please can this be clarified, and if so, this should be detailed in the metric next to the relevant habitat entries so HDC can be assured that these efforts only count towards no net loss.

This does not appear to be commented on.

Resolved, with thanks.

2. Note that one of the hedgerow creation entries within the metric has not been correctly filled, and therefore no units have been calculated. Please can this be corrected.

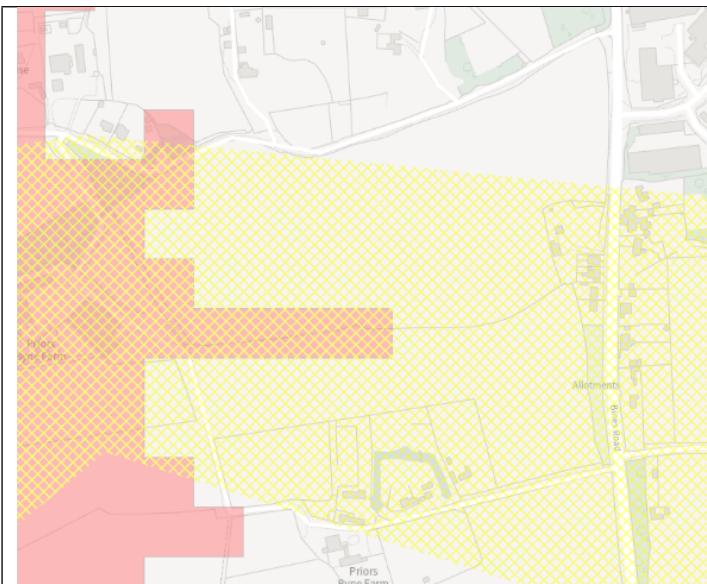
Resolved, with thanks.

Location

The site falls partially within the Wilder Horsham District Nature Recovery Network (WHD NRN). In the absence of a published Local Nature Recovery Strategy for West Sussex, any habitats of biodiversity value greater than zero as calculated by the metric are considered as having medium strategic significance if they lie within the WHD NRN. Therefore, please can the strategic significance for baseline and post-intervention habitats be amended to reflect this.

Not addressed.

The ecologist has chosen not to apply the above strategic significance. Given the justification provided, this can be considered acceptable.



Landscape Plan

1. A larger variety of species should be incorporated into the landscape plans. As per the Landscape Strategy Plan, three native tree species, three native thicket species and two native hedgerow species is considered low. It is recommended that a further two species (minimum) are incorporated into the hedgerows, for example dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) or wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) could be included. This will ensure a good quality native hedgerow, and a higher variety of species will provide a buffer to any failing plants. These species can also be incorporated into the mixed scrub / thicket habitats. The proportions of the species should also be provided. The grassland planting will also require a greater diversity of species, including along the margins of the hedgerows and around the SuDS and swales – see meadow mixtures for wet soils.

Does not appear to be addressed. This is particularly important for the proposed species-rich native hedgerow, which requires a minimum of 5 woody species, and criterion A of mixed scrub which requires a minimum of 3 woody species.

The ecologists confirm that these are their recommendations, however these do not carry over into the Landscape Strategy Plan. It is also noted that Figure 8 in the updated BNG Report clearly marks the different hedgerows to be created on site.

Please note that there are few proposed hedgerows that closely border dwellings. If these are to be sold and absorbed into private ownership, then these cannot be secured and must therefore be removed from the metric and included within the vegetated garden entry. These amendments can be made if required, prior to the legal agreement.

2. There is concern that effective retention of the trees in the east of the site cannot be certain or secured, as the RPAs and Tree Protection Barrier are within private gardens of residential dwellings. The trees may be subject to future pruning or felling from residential pressure, and/or RPAs may be subject to future compaction from the installation of hardstanding, outbuildings etc.

Concern resolved with Arboricultural Officer.

1. A draft HMMP has not been submitted with this application, as required on the local validation list. Information on what condition assessment criterions are to be targeted to meet the proposed conditions of the habitats to be created or enhanced is required prior to determination, to assure HDC that the habitat enhancements are feasible and achievable within 30 years.

Resolved, with thanks. The following comments will need to be addressed prior to signing of a legal agreement.

Note that Para 5.9 states 'all arisings will be removed from site, immediately after cutting' which conflicts with Para 5.7. Please can this be removed or clarified that this is only the case during the first year as per Para 5.6. (see also Para 6.9)

Para 8.1 states that the trees need to achieve at least a poor condition within 30 years, please can this be updated to instead say 'moderate'. The Criterions targeted in Table 1 and Table 11 will also require amendment.

Watering frequency beyond the first two weeks should be specified and included within the tables.

All above resolved, with thanks.

2. Dust sheets should also be installed on the Heras fencing, to protect retained hedgerows and reptile refuge areas from dust pollution.

If minded to approve, the BNG proposals are considered 'Significant on-site BNG' and will therefore require a S106 legal agreement to secure for 30 years. Monitoring reports will need to be submitted to HDC in Years 1,2,5,10,15,20,25 and 30.

Note, the draft HMMP states monitoring reports will be submitted to the council in years 5,10, and 30. This is not acceptable.

This has been amended, with thanks.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

Scenario 3: BNG Required + Irreplaceable Habitat

NAME:	Linsey King Ecology Officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning - Specialists
DATE:	06/12/24 16/04/25 (2 nd comments) 22/05/25 (3 rd set of comments)