



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Mannings Heath Golf Club Hammerpond Road Mannings Heath West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Erection of a Golfpod Practice Facility with associated hard and soft landscaping.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/1095
RECOMMENDATION:	No objection (subject to resolving validation failure, more information required to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligation).

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The small sites metric demonstrates that the development will have an overall 53.09% net gain (+0.73 units) in area habitat. There are no concerns regarding the baseline assessment of the site, however the metric does not currently comply with national validation requirements.

Further information and amendments are requested with regards to the post-development habitats and HMMP, which should be addressed prior to discharging the deemed biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligations.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The comments below relate solely to the BNG proposed in the above application. The comments are not considered exhaustive. All other ecology matters will be reviewed by Place Services and NatureSpace, where appropriate.

As currently submitted, the small sites metric demonstrates that the development will have an overall 53.09% net gain (+0.73 units) in area habitat. As per HDC's definition, the proposal is considered significant on-site BNG and therefore, if minded to approve, a S106 legal agreement is required to secure the BNG. An upfront monitoring fee will need to be paid, and monitoring reports submitted to HDC typically in years 1,2,5,10,15,20,25 and 30.

Please note that our internal BNG software has flagged a validation failure pertaining to the metric, specifically that the metric author and completion date are missing. As these are national validation requirements, this should be resolved prior to grant of planning permission, however if not rectified when submitting to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligations, then a refusal to discharge will be recommended.

Post-development

1.0 The BNG Assessment and metric demonstrate that 2x medium DBH trees will be lost to the development, and 7x small DBH trees will be translocated. However, para 6.4.2 in the Design and Access Statement states that a group of trees (G7) will also be removed. Please can this be further clarified. Additionally, only 3x trees at baseline are mapped in the BNG Report. Please can G7 and all translocated trees and their baseline information be included in the report/map, and the location of the translocated trees clearly marked on the post-development habitat map (keyed differently to newly planted tree whips). Please note that it is strongly encouraged not to translocate the trees to an area where the roots will be compacted by a new sealed surface access track, and adjacent to existing vegetation which may act as competition for rooting space. If the translocated trees have grown within a group (e.g., G7) it is recommended to replant as a group rather than isolated trees, as some may be vulnerable to higher wind loads and mechanical stress.

1.1 It is advised that for a more natural appearance the trees should be planted in several groups rather than uniformly planted across the open space. This also assists with grassland management and reduces the impact of shading on achieving a good condition. Planting within the attenuation basin should also be avoided. As above, it is strongly encouraged not to plant trees immediately adjacent to the proposed access track or existing vegetation, to maximise rooting volume and successful establishment. Please can the landscaping layout be revisited.

Strategic significance

2.0 The site falls wholly within a highlighted priority within the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The priority is for creation and enhancing habitat on golf courses (U2.4). The BNG proposals are in alignment with how this priority can be achieved.

HMMP

3.0 A final HMMP will be required to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligations. It is advised to also consult Natural England's HMMP companion document and checklist for expected content. More detailed management prescriptions including their frequency, timeframes etc., and species compositions will be required, and a post-development habitat plan must be included. It is also advised to expand the risk register and remedial actions to refer to all targeted condition assessment criteria. If needing to significantly amend the management prescriptions or proposed species, HDC approval will be required.

3.1 Please note that as individual trees count wholly towards the metric calculation, any failures should be replaced in the following planting year on a 1:1 basis (including any failed translocated trees). Please can this be reflected in the Risk Register and Remedial Measure (PM-T02).

3.2 An appropriate seed mix that tolerates wet soils will be required for the attenuation basis, given its likelihood to hold water.

3.3 Methodology for the translocation of the trees and their ongoing management and monitoring must also be included in the HMMP.

3.4 Note that enhanced modified grassland to other neutral grassland is targeting a good condition, and therefore this also needs to be reflected in the HMMP alongside the creation of other neutral grassland targeting moderate condition. It is also therefore advised to differentiate the grassland parcels by condition, to avoid mismanagement.

3.5 The SSM automatically assigns individual trees as moderate condition, and therefore this condition must be targeted in the HMMP. Please amend accordingly.

3.6 Please note that herbicide use is not supported in the first instance, unless eradicating non-native invasive species as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This is also in accordance with priority U2.4 of the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy to reduce chemical use.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

If minded to approve:

Informative –

Scenario 1: BNG Required

NAME:	Linsey King Ecology Officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning - Specialists
DATE:	02/10/2026