COMMITTEE APPLICATIONS

POST COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION NO. / ADDRESS

DC/25/1146
Leonardslee Gardens, Brighton Road, Lower Beeding, West Sussex, RH13 6PP

Extension to the visitor entrance building to house a new ticket sales area and café; Infilling roof to the former generator block courtyard, re-roofing of the Alpine House and in-ternal/external reconfigurations and link extension; Single storey winter garden conservatory to the Stable Block; Terrace extension to the east and internal/ external reconfigurations; Change of use from redundant staff offices and staff accommodation within the stable block to guest accommodation including extension to Honey Cottage; Change of use to the partial first floor of the Red House to staff accommodation; Small WC extension, reinstated chimney stack, and roof alterations to the Engine House; Lightweight wedding pavilion to the lawn, south of Leonardslee House; Landscaping changes including to the forecourt of Leonardslee House.

RESOLVED:

At its meeting on the 12th of May 2026, the Development Management Committee Members resolved to approve the application in line with the Officer recommendation.

Since the meeting on the 12th of May 2026, the following matters have arisen:

Updated NPPF (Aug 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated on 17 August 2026, replacing the 2024 version. Whilst the new NPPF significantly revises the structure and presentation of national planning policy, the overarching objectives of the planning system and the presumption in favour of sustainable development underpinning decision-making remains.

Officers have reviewed the application against the updated NPPF and are satisfied the recommendations set out within the Officer's committee report (and as updated verbally at the meeting), on which committee Members made their 12th May resolution remain unchanged.

The following provides a summary of the implications of the revised NPPF for the application and the reasons why the recommendation continues to be supported by national planning policy.

The NPPF / Framework (August 2026) read as whole

It continues to be the case that the NPPF should be read as a whole (paragraph 7). Policy CC2 of the Framework requires development to accord with other Framework Policies

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Under the updated NPPF, for development within and outside of settlement, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies (Policy S3).

1. Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

a. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;

b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and

c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

Officers note the proposal is located outside of settlement (Policy S5 therefore applies) and the development proposals continue to accord with the decision-making policies of the updated Framework (Aug 2026), so this application should continue to be approved without delay.

Policy S5 Principle of development outside settlements sets out that

1. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

b. Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;

As set out in the May 2026 committee report, the development proposals are judged to comply with S5.1.b. and so the principle of proposals remains a settled matter as of May 2026.

On those decision-making policies, as before under the previous NPPF version, the main issues of planning consideration in decision-making relate to i) Heritage impacts, ii) National Landscape impacts, and iii) rural economic enterprise. How the revised NPPF relates to these matters is set out below.

i) Heritage

NPPF Policy HE4 (2026) seeks to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets. Any harm or loss of the significance of a heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. NPPF Policy HE5 (2026) assesses the effects of developments on heritage assets expecting assessments to identify whether proposals would have a positive effect, not effect, result in harm or cause the total loss. NPPF Policy HE6 considers proposals affecting designated heritage assets. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance (HE6.1). Development proposals which would have a

positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported (HE6.2). Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight (HE6.3)

The judgement ruled by Officers that the proposed development would result in (less than substantial) harm is unchanged. Like Paragraphs 215 and 216 of the previous NPPF (2024) where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset, the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal (NPPF Policy HE6.4).

Equally the heritage test balancing exercise undertaken by Officers in regard to NPPF paragraph 216, now HE6, is unchanged; Officers do not consider the updates to the NPPF result in a different harm / public benefit balance to arise, with the public benefits considered to continue to outweigh the harm.

ii) National Landscape

The updated NPPF (2026) includes National Landscapes within its definition of protected landscapes. Policy N4 of the NPPF addresses Protected Landscapes and broadly reflects Paragraphs 189 and 190 of the NPPF (2024). NPPF Policy N4 places substantial weight on conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the areas, differing slightly from the great weight placed on conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty set out under Paragraph 189 (NPPF, 2024). The NPPF (2026) instructs that major development within Protected Landscapes should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated the development is in the public interest. This reflects Paragraph 190 of the NPPF (2024). While NPPF 2026 changes the wording of the weight given and refers to the special qualities and features of the Protected Landscapes the policy direction is not considered substantially dissimilar to that of the NPPF (2024).

iii) Rural Economic Enterprise

NPPF Policy E2 (2026) places substantial weight on the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allows businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt. This reflects the significant weight given under NPPF Paragraph 85 (2024) to the support of economic growth and productivity. NPPF Policy E4 (2026) supports the sustainable growth of rural business development through both the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings and facilities to support rural leisure and tourism. While expressed slightly differently these elements were included within Paragraph 88 NPPF (2024) which supported sustainable economic growth, demonstrating the spirit of the policy remains. Part 2 of NPPF Policy E2 (2026) recognises proposal to meet business needs in rural areas may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances the policy establishes that:

'a. Development proposals should take opportunities, where they exist, to use previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing development; and

b. The siting and design of development should be appropriate having regard to the character of its surroundings.'

This aligns with Paragraph 89 of the NPPF (2024) which sets out the importance of development being sensitive to its surroundings and exploits opportunities to make a location

more sustainable, along with the use of previously developed land and sites that are physically well related to existing settlements.

Other matters of planning policy considerations

On other planning policy considerations on matters which were settled in the May Committee resolution to approve (such as highway matters, ecology, drainage, and residential amenities), as detailed in the May 2026 committee report, substantial harms arising from the proposed development on these matters had not been evidenced, in the context of the previous NPPF. This remains the case with the new NPPF which, for the sake of completeness, covers these matters under the new national decision-making policies, and includes:

- Meeting the challenge of climate change (CC2, CC3)
- Making Effective use of land (L2, L3)
- Achieving Well-Designed Places (DP3, DP4)
- Promoting Sustainable Transport (TR3, TR4, TR6, TR8)
- Pollution, public protection and security (P2, P3, P4, P5)
- Managing flood risk (F4, F5, F7, F8)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (N2, N3, N6)

Planning Balance and Conclusions

The new NPPF is a material planning consideration to the overall weighting and planning balance of the proposal, which are now assessed against the latest NPFF and the presumption in favour of development outside settlement.

Officers are mindful that the NPPF continues to apply the heritage test of balancing harm to the significance of a designed heritage asset with public benefit; the new NPPF is not inconsistent with that earlier decision-making undertaken in May 2026 as detailed in the Committee Papers.

This updated recommendation reflects a material change in the overall weighting of material planning considerations insofar that the new NPPF is a new material consideration that needs to be considered. Consideration of its content has been undertaken by your Officers, as demonstrated in the preceding sections of this post-committee report.

As Members accepted in their May committee resolution to delegate approval, the proposals were judged to be acceptable due to the social, environmental, and economic public benefits derived from the development balanced against the harms, including heritage harm (subject to mitigations of impacts secured in the recommended conditions and Section 106 Agreement), and it remains the case then as now that no **substantial** harms had been evidenced to arise from the development proposals. This now includes in the context of policy S3 of the revised NPPF, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development outside settlement that applies under S5.1.b.

<u>Rescindment of Water Neutrality</u>

On 12th October 2026 it was confirmed that the Southern Water licence to reduce extraction at Hardham was formally agreed by the Environment Agency on 9th October. Given this, the matter of water neutrality has been resolved and it is no longer a planning consideration that is material for planning decision-making.

Notwithstanding this, those water use efficiencies secured via the conditions of the May Committee resolution to approve reflect commitments made by the applicant during the planning application's determination (for example 110 litres per person per day for residential accommodation and a water efficiency strategy submitted for approval for the commercial elements of the proposed development) and these continue to be secured on the basis on the site being located in a water stress environment and as public benefit of its own merit. The reasons for imposing the conditions will be amended to reflect the changed circumstance.

Completion of legal agreement

The legal agreement is now complete. This is the basis of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to be delivered in a phased manner, as was reflected in the planning conditions in the Committee Report presented on 12th May 2026 to which Members resolved to approve, with this to be clarified on the planning permission decision notice at the request of the applicant which is acceptable to Officers, by way of imposing of the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition and Informative on the decision notice as set out below.

Biodiversity Net Gain Condition

Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission is Horsham District Council.

This permission will require the submission and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans before development is begun.

Phased development

The permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

The development cannot begin before an Overall Biodiversity Gain Plan and Phase Biodiversity Gain Plan have been submitted to and approved by the planning authority. Before every phase of development has begun a Phase Biodiversity Gain Plan must have been submitted to and approved by the planning authority.

For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plans that must be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of the consented development please see the link: Submit a biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These can be found at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214 of the Planning Practice Guidance, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain.

Irreplaceable habitat

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

The S106 legal agreement is now completed, and planning permission can be issued accordingly.

Case Officer sign	Alice Johnson	Date:	15/10/2026
Authorising Officer sign	Matthew Porter	Date:	15/10/2026