



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/1039

St Marys Church of England School, Link Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2AN

DESCRIPTION:

Installation of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/21/0904	Installation of a new path and trim trail equipment.	Application Permitted on 10.08.2021
DISC/21/0313	Approval of details reserved by condition 3 on application DC/21/0904.	Application Permitted on 31.03.2022
DC/25/0671	Installation of 3no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including installation of new metal mesh compound enclosures.	Application Permitted on 29.07.2025
DC/25/0503	Demolition of existing derelict school building and formation of new nursery and community building.	Application Permitted on 26.09.2025

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site, namely St Marys Church of England Primary School, is situated within the built-up area boundary of Pulborough with residential development surrounding the site. The school complex is accessed from the northeast side of Link Lane. The main school main building was built in the early 1970s with later extensions, and the school sports fields are situated within the eastern and southeastern part of the wider site. The school has an existing rooftop solar PV array on a building at the eastern end of the complex of buildings forming the school. Mature trees and hedges populate the school's boundaries providing intermittent screening from nearby residential development around the site.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of two rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, made up of four arrays totalling 20 kWp. Three arrays to be on flat roofs and to be shallow pitched in a southerly direction, and the fourth array located on a pitched standing seam roof facing east. The new systems comprise 66 panels and will have two 10 kWp inverters (one per system), each connected to a local distribution board. The development is in addition to the existing solar array. The solar panel arrays are mounted across the roofing in rows with a southerly or easterly aspect.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use

Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan:

Pulborough Parish have produced a neighbourhood plan which have been subject to successful Examination but cannot proceed to Referendum because of the legal requirements in relation to Water Neutrality and the Habitat Regulations. The following policies are of significant weight subject to water neutrality being demonstrated: -

Policy 1 – A Spatial Plan for the Parish

Policy 15 – Design

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use

Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection

Strategic Policy 12: Air Quality

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:**PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:****Representations:**

None received

Parish Comments:

Pulborough Parish Council: Support

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The application site comprises an established primary school. The proposal relates to the installation of solar panels to the roofing of the school, that would support and contribute to the vitality and viability of the premises, in addition to improving the site's carbon footprint. It is therefore considered that the proposed works are acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves, and enhances the townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should consider landscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

Policy 15 of the Pulborough Neighbourhood Plan states that all housing and other buildings must be well-designed, sustainable and take appropriate account of climate change. The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, will be required to reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.

The proposal would consist of three arrays to be on flat and shallow pitched roofs in a southerly direction, and the fourth array located on a pitched standing seam roof facing east. Given the established existing development and layout of the site it is considered that the proposed solar panels would be relatively inconspicuous and where they are visible they will be understood in relation to the twentieth century school buildings in the context to the character of the wider area.

The visual impact on the character and appearance of the area is considered acceptable and would also provide public benefits from maintaining the viable use of the buildings as a school with improved internal environment and would contribute to the vitality and viability of the premises.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

It is considered that the siting and layout of the solar panels and the resulting relationship with adjoining properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity. It is noted that no representations of concern were received during the application process.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net

Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

It is considered that this is a small-scale development, which will reduce grid purchased power reliance, falls below the de minimis threshold. The PV panels will be located on the school's flat and single pitch roofs, which have no biodiversity value. As such, the scheme will not impact on a priority habitat.

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and maintained thereafter in strict accordance with the Solar PV Project Management Plan reference RePP 25/8021 Version V1.0 by reenergise and dated 12.06.2026.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT

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.

Under Regulations 4, 5, 7 & 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 the statutory biodiversity gain condition required by Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which:

1. does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (a hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric);

2. is the subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;
3. is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development (In determining whether a development is undertaken solely or mainly for this purpose, no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee);
4. consists of no more than 9 dwellings, is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, and consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding ("Self-build or custom housebuilding" has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended)).

In addition, the Biodiversity Gain Plan Condition does not apply to applications for major development made before 12 February 2024, or non-major development made before 2 April 2024.

Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

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.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/26/1039

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents approved:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan	Site Boundaries and Location Plan	25-8021-03/DWG-001 REVISION A	29.06.2026
Plans	Layout & Elevations - Existing	25-8021-03/DWG-002 REVISION A	23.07.2026
Plans	Layout & Elevations - Proposed	25-8021-03/DWG-003 REVISION A	23.07.2026
Supporting Docs	Solar PV Project Management Plan by reenergise and dated	RePP 25/8021 Version V1.0	29.06.2026

