



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0030

Huddlestone Farm , Horsham Road, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AD

DESCRIPTION:

Variation of Condition 1 of previously approved application DC/22/0100 (Installation of a solar farm with associated infrastructure) Relating to the Traffic Management Plan.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/1534	Creation of an access track.	Application Permitted on 29.04.2025
DC/22/0100	Installation of a solar farm with associated infrastructure.	Application Permitted on 20.10.2022

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The site lies to the eastern side of the B2135 / Horsham Road, approximately 2km north of Steyning, 2.5km west of Small Dole and around the same distance south-west of Henfield. It lies on a sloping site in a rural area with residential and farm properties dotted around the site, including a number of grade II listed buildings.

The land is in agricultural use and considered to be Grade 3b (moderate quality agricultural land - capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.)

A number of public rights of way run through and close to the site, with FP_2602 running north-south within the application site, FP_2600 running parallel some 370m to the west, and Bridleway_3512 running along Horsebridge Common to the north with good views over much of the application site and up to the ridgeline. Further to the south and beyond the ridgeline are footpaths FP_2601, Bridleway_3511, FP_2732 and FP_2563.

Some 350m to the south of the site is an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) and one area of ancient woodland abuts the site: Huddlestone Wood to the western side. Another area of ancient woodland, Wyckham Wood, lies some 215m to the east of the site.

The site benefits from planning permission for 'Installation of a solar farm with associated infrastructure' granted 29.04.2025 under DC/24/1534.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Condition 1 of DC/24/1534 is the Plans Condition that includes 'Construction Traffic Management Plan ('CTMP') 'P-01 CTMP Jan 2022'. This sets out details of the two access routes; one route to the development via Huddlestone Farm to the south, and a separate access route serving the development from the B2135 Horsham Road adjacent to Nutwood House to the west (the 'Horsham Road access'). This application seeks to amend the CTMP to enable the use of the Horsham Road access for all vehicular movements associated with the development across the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the development. This is achieved by amending the requirements of the CTMP detailed in the Conditions of the permission. Condition 1 (the 'Plans

Condition') is to be amended. There are no changes to the physical works required or permitted, only in the use of the access approved for all construction and all operational vehicles associated with the development. The Site Plan has also been updated to reflect the new CTMP (removing reference to the road being temporary).

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Steyping Neighbourhood Plan (2022):

SNDP1 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
SNDP3: Contribution to Character

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

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 12: Air Quality
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 16: protected Landscapes
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Policy 26: Gatwick Airport Safeguarding
Strategic Policy 27: Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Advice Notes:

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:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

None Received

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WSCC Highways: No Objection

[Summary]

Given the LHA has raised no objections previously in regards to the use of the proposed vehicle access point on Horsham Road, the LHA raise no concerns over the variation of Condition 1 for the sole use of this vehicle access point for construction traffic. Supporting swept path diagrams have been submitted and are satisfactory from a highway safety point of view.

WSCC Rights of Way: No Objection

[Summary]

It is stated that during the construction phase the points at which the public rights of way cross the site access will remain open. It is also confirmed that banksmen will be positioned at the site access points to ensure the safe movement of pedestrians whenever construction vehicles are present. Therefore, the Public Rights of Way team offers no objection to the proposal.

As stated previously the PROW Team request that the Local Planning Authority consider making the following conditions of any planning consent: That the stile at the junction of Footpath 2600 and Horsham Road be removed and replaced with a 1.2m gap, unless a structure is required for livestock control in which case it should be replaced with a gate that conforms to British Standard BS 5709-2018, the minimum width of such a gate being 1.2m.

All other stiles within the red line of the boundary should be removed and replaced with a 1.2m gap, unless a structure is required for livestock control in which case it should be replaced with a gate that conforms to British Standard BS 5709-2018, the minimum width of such a gate being 1.2m.

Adequate visibility splays must be available and maintained at all times, where the internal road crosses Public Footpath 2602. The Applicant must erect signs on the service road at either side of the junction with Footpath 2602 advising drivers of all vehicles of the presence of the public right of way (PROW) and of the requirement to give way to the public using the PROW. The Applicant must ensure that the surface of the public footpath is not adversely affected by the service road and this must not present a trip hazard or other obstacle to users of the footpath. The Applicant must make good any damage or undertake any remediation as required by the PROW Team. The Applicant has not clearly identified the need for or location of any trenching across any PROW. Should any trenching be necessary for the laying of underground utilities, such as electrical cables, through a PROW, this would require the consent of the PROW Team. It is a criminal offence to disturb the surface of a PROW without such consent. Perimeter fencing of the site alongside the PROW must not encroach the width of the PROW. A minimum width of 3m is suggested to be appropriate to ensure that the use of the PROW is not negatively impacted by the development (please note that this is a minimum requirement). Any side and overhead vegetation should be regularly cut back to ensure that encroachment does not occur with summer growth.

Informative recommended.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None received

Parish Comments:

Steyping Parish Council: Objection

Objection due to long term intrusion to nearby residential property, Nutwood House.

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

Background

The farm site is currently primarily accessed via a farm track at Huddlestone Farm, off the B2135 Horsham Road, which is shared with a number of other residential properties. However, there is a secondary field access to the farmlands set immediately north to a residential property, Nutwood House, which is also access to the PROW (FP_2600). As part of the original planning permission, this secondary access point was to form the temporary construction access to the site, with the access widened to 6m, bound on the north by the PROW finger sign and on the south by an electricity pole.

The application proposed that the PROW will remain open and accessible throughout the works, with appropriate signage advising users of the construction vehicles, and the use of a Banksman to facilitate safe access and egress of vehicles.

Once operational, the site would be accessed via Huddlestone Farm for maintenance purposes, likely by way of a transit van once or twice a month only.

Justification for the amendment

This application seeks to amend the access arrangements so that the separate access is retained for the lifetime of the development, not just for the construction phase. The justification for this is given as:

- The main enterprise at Huddlestone Farm is the Dairy unit, supplying milk every day to UK supermarkets. The vehicular movements associated with this enterprise include the arrival and departure of Tankers, fresh Feed Stock deliveries, farm and dairy employees, suppliers to maintain the equipment, etc.
- Huddlestone Farm also supports a sheep herd, arable produce, and growing artisan creamery business each with their own associated deliveries, collections and employee movements.
- There are several residential properties located to the east of the Farm.
- It is also a requirement of the Distribution Network Operator to have unrestricted 24hr access to their assets in case of an emergency, but more typically for maintenance and upkeep.

Retaining the separate access for the lifetime of the development means there will be no chance of interactions with the activities at Huddlestone Farm, meaning farm operations (and solar farm operations) can continue to run without risk of impedence, despite there only being limited movements associated with the solar farm.

Additionally, retaining the separate access for the lifetime of the development means that there is no requirement for the second access from the farm to the south, which reduces the landscape impact of the development. In visual terms, the access takes the form of a typical access track made of crushed stone which would not be out of keeping in an agricultural area.

Amenity Impact

Concern has been raised by the Parish Council in relation to the amenity of the residents of Nutwood House. During consideration of the original planning application, the impact on Nutwood House was considered in detail, some of which is reconsidered below.

The Committee Report detailed the estimated deliveries during the construction period which includes an average of 7 HGV deliveries per day with some additional movement from smaller vehicles. This remains the same.

Whilst the existing access exits directly onto the B2135 / Horsham Road, this is noted to be a field access only, used in association with agricultural purposes and therefore subject to a lower volume of traffic movements than expected during construction.

However, this property (Nutwood House) already sits adjacent to the B2135 with its private amenity area running alongside the B-class road that connects the settlement of Ashurst with the wider public highway network along the A283 further to the south. The property has an existing western flank wall some 5.3m off the public highway (B2135). By contrast, the access route would be set to the north of the residential curtilage of this property, with a gap of some 33m to the north east corner of the house.

The Committee Report considered that during the time-limited construction period, the route of the temporary construction access and its position in relation to the residential property at Nutwood House, that some additional disturbance would occur, but within the context of the existing traffic movements along the B2135 / Horsham Road this would not lead to adverse loss of residential amenities on the occupants of Nutwood House, in accordance with policy 33 of the HDPF.

The revised Construction Management Plan states that all of the measures proposed during the construction phase still remain, including signage and Banksmen where relevant. The Plan states that once operational, maintenance vehicles will access the site via the new dedicated access point from Horsham Road (B2135) shown in Drawing SK01.

A maintenance vehicle, likely a transit van, will access the Site once or twice a month during the operational phase. It is thought that there may be more visitors if the site were to have operational faults/ breakdowns- but these would not be regular and if they did become regular, and it was considered that the traffic movements were regularly more than anticipated then the site would be in breach of the Construction Traffic Management Plan, and it would be a compliance concern to be addressed.

It is considered that the vehicle movements, once operational are unlikely to be any more than there would be if the access track were to be used for agricultural purposes. The amendment is therefore considered to not lead to adverse loss of residential amenities on the occupants of Nutwood House and is acceptable, subject to the re-application of the conditions from the original application. As the track will continue to be a PROW it is considered advisable that additional signage is installed once construction is complete, advising PROW users that maintenance vehicles may be present. This is covered under condition 18 where an additional sentence has been added for clarity.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

1 Plans list

2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before 20/10/2025.

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

3 **Temporary Permission:** The use of the land hereby permitted for generating electricity shall be discontinued on or before 40 years from the first operational use of the solar photovoltaic panels, in accordance with a scheme of works to be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority at least 3 months before the expiry of this permission. The scheme of works shall include:

- Method statement for decommissioning and dismantling all equipment on site;
- Details of any items to be retained on site;
- Method statement for restoring the land to agriculture;
- Timescales for decommissioning removal and reinstatement of the land;
- Method Statement for the appropriate disposal / recycling of redundant equipment / structures;
- Provision for the review of the scheme as necessary.

The scheme of works shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and the land restored to its former use within 3 months of the written approval of the scheme of works.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority would not normally grant permission for such a use of land in this location, but it is considered reasonable to allow the development for a limited period in accordance with Policies 25, 30 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition:** All works shall be executed in full accordance with the construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) approved under DISC/25/0101 (02.05.2025)

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

5 **Regulatory Condition:** All works shall be executed in full accordance with the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected and Priority species approved under DISC/25/0101 (02.05.2025)

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

6 **Regulatory Condition:** All works shall be executed in full accordance with the Skylark Mitigation Strategy approved under DISC/25/0101 (02.05.2025)

The Farmland Bird Mitigation Strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be retained for a minimum period of 10 years.

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as

amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 7 **Regulatory Condition** : All works shall be executed in full accordance with the landscape and ecological management plan approved under DISC/22/0200 (25.09.2025). The landscape and ecological management plan shall be carried out as approved and any subsequent variations shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: As these matters are fundamental to safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species), and in accordance with Para 174 and 180 of the NPPF (2021).

- 8 **Regulatory Condition**: All works shall be executed in full accordance with the scheme for the provision and management of a minimum 5 metre wide buffer zone alongside the watercourse/wetland approved under DISC/25/0101 (02.05.2025). Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. Any subsequent variations shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in which case the development shall be carried out in accordance with the amended scheme. The buffer zone scheme shall be free from built development including lighting, formal landscaping, solar panels and associated infrastructure.

Reason: As these matters are fundamental to safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species), and in accordance with Para 174 and 180 of the NPPF (2021).

- 9 **Pre-Occupation / Use Condition**: No development shall commence until such time as the vehicular access serving the development has been constructed in accordance with the details shown on the drawing titled Proposed Site Access Arrangement 2105-069 - SK01 - Rev A.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 10 **Pre-Occupation / Use Condition**: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be first brought into use until details of the proposed fire safety and firefighting provisions for the solar farm, including fire appliance access to app properties and containers on site, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved fire fighting measures shall be installed and ready for use prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: In accordance with fire and safety regulations in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 11 **Pre-Occupation / Use Condition**: All works shall be executed in full accordance with the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) approved under DISC/25/0101 (02.05.2025).

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 12 **Pre-Occupation / Use Condition**: Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, the stile at the junction of Footpath 2600 and Horsham Road is to be removed and replaced with a 1.2m gap, unless a structure is required for livestock control in which case it should be replaced with a gate that conforms to British Standard BS 5709-2018, the minimum width of such a gate

being 1.2m. . All other stiles within the red line of the boundary should be removed and replaced with a 1.2m gap, unless a structure is required for livestock control in which case it should be replaced with a gate that conforms to British Standard BS 5709-2018, the minimum width of such a gate being 1.2m. The PROW Team are available to advise the applicant on a suitable structure, if required

Reason: To retain the right of access for users of the Public Right of Way, in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 13 **Regulatory Condition:** All avoidance and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Assessment Report V3 including Appendix 5 (Avian Ecology Limited, January 2022) and the Landscape and Ecology Enhancement Plan (Landscape Visual Ref. No. 1270/10a, January 2022) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination. This may include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To conserve and enhance protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 14 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials, external colours and other details to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved drawings associated with the application.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 15 **Regulatory Condition:** All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme, and directed to maintain dark corridors for nocturnal species. Any other lighting required for security reasons should be infra-red to prevent impact on sensitive nocturnal wildlife. All lighting shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: As these matters are fundamental to safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

- 16 **Regulatory Condition:** No works for the implementation of the development hereby approved shall take place outside of 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or public Holidays

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 17 **Regulatory Condition:** All works shall be executed in full accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment [P01 AIA - JANUARY 2022 by Barton Hyett, 14th Jan 2022].

Reason: To ensure the successful and satisfactory protection of important trees, shrubs and hedges on the site in accordance with Policies 30 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 18 **Regulatory Condition:** In relation to the Public Rights Of Way 2602 and 2600, the following shall apply:
- The PROW shall be kept clear and unobstructed at all times throughout the construction and operational phases of the development hereby permitted, and a useable width of 2 metres shall be available at all times for lawful footpath users
 - Adequate visibility splays must be available and maintained at all times, where the internal road crosses Public Footpath 2602
 - Signs must be erected on the service road at either side of the junction with Footpath 2602 advising drivers of all vehicles of the presence of the public right of way (PROW) and of the requirement to give way to the public using the PROW. **These should be retained after construction for operational vehicles.**
 - The surface of the public footpath must not be adversely affected by the service road and this must not present a trip hazard or other obstacle to users of the footpath. The Applicant must make good any damage or undertake any remediation as required by the PROW Team
 - Should any trenching be necessary for the laying of underground utilities, such as electrical cables, through a PROW, this would require the consent of the PROW Team. It is a criminal offence to disturb the surface of a PROW without such consent
 - Perimeter fencing of the site alongside the PROW must not encroach the width of the PROW. A minimum width of 3m is suggested to be appropriate to ensure that the use of the PROW is not negatively impacted by the development (please note that this is a minimum requirement). Any side and overhead vegetation should be regularly cut back to ensure that encroachment does not occur with summer growth.

Reason: To retain the right of access for users of the Public Right of Way, in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 19 **Regulatory Condition:** The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) ('Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment - Adur Valley Solar Farm', dated 25/04/2022, by Neo Environmental Limited) and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:
- The solar panels will have a stow height of at least 2.1m AOD.

These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to use. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

To ensure the safety of the development and to allow flood flows in accordance with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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/26/0030

(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
Section plan	site sections	BY-01-P15	16.06.2022
Location plan		SP-01 REV 02	21.01.2022
Elevation & Floor plan	Auxiliary transformer	AV10.0	21.01.2022

