

PLANNING STATEMENT

Discharge of Planning Conditions 3, 4 and 5

Site Address	Birchfield Nursery, London Road, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9AA
Application Reference	DC/25/1828
Proposal	Discharge of Pre-Commencement Conditions 3, 4 and 5
Local Planning Authority	Horsham District Council
Prepared By	Jack Dunckley
Date	May 2026

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant in support of an application to discharge Conditions 3, 4 and 5 attached to the planning permission granted by Horsham District Council for the development at Birchfield Nursery, London Road, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9AA.

This statement should be read alongside the technical documentation submitted in support of the application, which collectively demonstrate full compliance with each condition. The three conditions addressed in this statement are:

- Condition 3 — Drainage Strategy (Pre-Commencement): requiring details of foul and surface water disposal to be submitted and approved prior to any commencement of development.
- Condition 4 — Schedule of Materials, Finishes and Colours (Pre-Commencement, Slab Level): requiring a detailed schedule of external materials, finishes and colours for walls, windows and roof prior to development proceeding above ground floor slab level.
- Condition 5 — Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (Pre-Commencement, Slab Level): requiring a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for Protected and Priority species prior to development proceeding above ground floor slab level.

Each condition has been addressed through dedicated technical reports and supporting documents prepared by qualified specialists. This statement draws together and contextualises that material within the relevant planning policy framework.

2. Site and Planning Context

2.1 Site Description

Birchfield Nursery is an established commercial site located on London Road (A281), Henfield, West Sussex. The site has operated as a nursery and garden centre for over 20 years and benefits from excellent vehicular access directly from the A281. The site is characterised by existing commercial buildings, hardstanding areas, and horticultural infrastructure.

The site lies within the administrative area of Horsham District Council and falls within proximity to the Henfield settlement boundary. The surrounding area is semi-rural in character, with residential properties in the vicinity and open countryside beyond.

2.2 Planning History

The site benefits from an existing grant of planning permission, to which the conditions subject to this application are attached. Previous consents on the site include an approved Class B8 storage use and a permanent coffee shop, demonstrating an established pattern of commercial development. The current application seeks to discharge conditions prior to, or in the early stages of, the permitted development.

2.3 Policy Framework

The following planning policy documents are relevant to the assessment of the submitted information:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) — in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the requirement to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015) — Policies 31 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity), 33 (Development Principles), 38 (Sustainable Drainage) and other relevant policies.
- Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021) — Policies 10 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure), 12 (Design Quality) and other relevant policies.
- West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) drainage guidance and standards.

3. Condition 3 — Drainage Strategy

Condition 3: Pre-Commencement Condition

No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: ...to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

3.1 Approach and Methodology

A Drainage Strategy has been prepared by [Name of Drainage Engineer / Consultant], a suitably qualified drainage engineer, and is submitted alongside this Planning Statement. The strategy has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of HDPF Policy 38, the

NPPF, and relevant technical guidance including the CIRIA SuDS Manual and West Sussex LLFA standards.

3.2 Foul Water Drainage

The site does not benefit from a connection to the public mains sewer network, which is not available in this location. Foul water from the proposed development will therefore be directed to an onsite septic tank, which represents the most appropriate and practical means of foul water disposal given the site's rural setting and the absence of mains sewerage infrastructure in the immediate vicinity.

The septic tank will be designed, sized and installed in accordance with Building Regulations Part H, British Standard BS EN 12566, and the relevant guidance issued by the Environment Agency (Septic Tanks and Sewage Treatment Systems: Permits and Exemptions). The tank will be appropriately sized to accommodate the expected foul water flows generated by the permitted development, calculated in accordance with standard occupancy and usage rates.

The installation will be registered with the Environment Agency as required under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. The septic tank will be maintained by a suitably qualified contractor and emptied at regular intervals to ensure it operates effectively and does not give rise to any risk of pollution to controlled waters or surrounding land. Maintenance records will be retained on site and made available to the Local Planning Authority and the Environment Agency on request.

3.3 Surface Water Drainage and Grey Water Recycling

All surface rainwater and water discharged from the building — including roof water, hardstanding runoff and any other surface water — will be directed to the existing onsite well. This approach makes use of existing natural infrastructure on the site and is considered an appropriate and sustainable means of surface water disposal in this rural location.

The collected water will not be wasted. All grey water harvested into the onsite well will be reused on site for irrigation purposes and to supply the garden centre with its day-to-day water requirements. This represents a highly sustainable and resource-efficient approach to water management, significantly reducing the site's reliance on mains water supply and directly supporting the horticultural operations of the garden centre.

This closed-loop approach to water management — collecting surface and roof water, storing it in the existing well, and redistributing it across the site for productive use — is entirely consistent with the principles of sustainable development set out in the NPPF and HDPF Policy 38. It goes beyond the minimum requirements of the condition by actively contributing to water efficiency and the long-term sustainability of the site's operations.

The existing well has been assessed and is considered to have adequate capacity to receive and store the surface water flows generated by the development. Water levels within the well will naturally replenish through rainfall and will be managed to ensure a reliable supply for irrigation throughout the growing season. Any overflow from the well during periods of exceptionally high rainfall will infiltrate naturally into the surrounding ground, consistent with the SuDS hierarchy's preference for infiltration as the primary means of surface water management where ground conditions allow.

By directing all surface water to the onsite well for productive reuse, the development avoids any increase in surface water runoff to adjacent land or watercourses, ensuring that flood risk is not increased as a result of the development. This arrangement is fully compliant with HDPF Policy 38 and supports the Council's wider objectives in relation to climate change adaptation and water resource management.

3.4 Flood Risk

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, indicating that it is at the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. There is no identified flood risk on the site. Surface water flood risk has similarly been assessed and, given the sustainable drainage arrangements proposed — with all surface and roof water directed to the existing onsite well for reuse and natural infiltration — there is no risk of surface water flooding arising from the development. The proposed drainage strategy ensures that the development does not increase flood risk to the site itself or to any third parties.

3.5 Policy Compliance

The submitted Drainage Strategy demonstrates full compliance with HDPF Policy 38 (Sustainable Drainage), which requires development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and demonstrate that flood risk is not increased. The strategy is also consistent with the NPPF's requirement to give priority to the use of SuDS where appropriate. The development will be carried out in full accordance with the approved drainage scheme.

4. Condition 4 — Schedule of Materials, Finishes and Colours

Condition 4: Pre-Commencement (Slab Level) Condition

No development above ground floor slab level of any part of the development hereby permitted shall take place until a schedule of materials and finishes and colours to be used for external walls, windows and roof of the approved building has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. Reason: ...in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF (2015) and Policy 12 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

4.1 Background

A detailed Schedule of Materials, Finishes and Colours has been prepared and is submitted alongside this Planning Statement in discharge of Condition 4. The schedule addresses all external elements of the approved building, including the walls, windows, doors and roof, and has been prepared with reference to the character of the site, its surroundings and the requirements of the relevant planning policies.

The proposed building is designed to complement the recently approved permanent coffee shop on the site, drawing on a palette of natural, rural materials consistent with the character of the site and the wider Henfield landscape.

4.2 External Walls

The external walls are proposed in natural timber cladding, finished in a warm, natural tone that is sympathetic to the rural and semi-rural character of the site. The timber cladding will be supplied pre-treated and maintained to a high standard throughout the life of the development. The use of natural timber is considered to be appropriate to the setting and reflects the horticultural character of the nursery site.

Where required for structural or fire safety purposes, sections of the external wall will be constructed in blockwork with a rendered finish, colour-matched to the timber cladding to provide a cohesive external appearance.

4.3 Roof

The roof will be finished with Eternit fibre cement roof slates in a dark grey / blue-grey tone consistent with the palette used on the approved coffee shop. Eternit slates are a high-quality, durable material with a natural appearance that integrates well within the rural landscape. The slate profile and colour have been selected to ensure the building reads as a contextually appropriate structure within its setting.

4.4 Windows and Doors

Windows and doors are proposed in uPVC with a woodgrain foil finish in a warm honey / light oak tone, colour-matched to the external timber cladding. The use of uPVC provides long-term durability and low maintenance requirements while the foil finish replicates the appearance of natural timber, ensuring a unified external aesthetic. Door hardware and ironmongery will be in a brushed stainless steel or dark bronze finish.

4.5 Soffits, Fascias and Rainwater Goods

Soffits and fascias are proposed in white uPVC (RAL 9010 Pure White), providing a clean and crisp eaves detail that complements the natural tones of the cladding and slate roof. Rainwater goods will be in uPVC in either white (RAL 9010) or black (RAL 9005), consistent with traditional rural detailing.

4.6 Policy Compliance

The submitted Schedule of Materials, Finishes and Colours demonstrates compliance with HDPF Policy 33 (Development Principles), which requires development to be of appropriate quality and to reflect the character of its setting. The proposed palette is also consistent with Policy 12 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021), which promotes high-quality design that respects local character and distinctiveness. The materials have been specifically chosen to produce a building of visual quality that sits comfortably within its rural context.

5. Condition 5 — Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Condition 5: Pre-Commencement (Slab Level) Condition

No development above ground floor slab level of any part of the development hereby permitted shall take place until a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for Protected and Priority species has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Strategy shall address: (a) purpose and conservation objectives; (b) detailed designs; (c) locations by maps and plans; (d) persons responsible; and (e) aftercare and long-term maintenance. Reason: ...in accordance with Policy 31 of the HDPF (2015), s40 of the NERC Act 2006, and Policy 10 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

5.1 Background

A Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (BES) has been prepared by [Name of Ecologist], a suitably qualified ecologist with relevant experience in Protected and Priority species assessment. The BES is submitted alongside this Planning Statement and constitutes the formal response to Condition 5. The strategy has been prepared in accordance with the condition requirements, Policy 31 of the HDPF, Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and Policy 10 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan 2021.

5.2 Purpose and Conservation Objectives (Condition 5a)

The primary purpose of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy is to ensure that the development results in a net gain for biodiversity and provides measurable benefit to Protected and Priority species and habitats that are known or likely to be present in or near the site.

The conservation objectives of the Strategy are:

- To provide enhanced habitat for bat species (including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and potentially other species) through the installation of bat roost features.
- To support common swift (an IUCN Red List and UK Priority species) through the installation of integrated swift bricks within the fabric of the new building.
- To provide nesting opportunities for house sparrow, starling and other cavity-nesting bird species through the installation of appropriate nest boxes.
- To enhance connectivity for hedgehogs, a Priority species under the NERC Act 2006, through the provision of hedgehog highway gaps in boundary treatments.
- To improve habitat quality through native planting that supports invertebrates, pollinators and other wildlife associated with the site.

5.3 Detailed Designs (Condition 5b)

The measures proposed within the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy include the following, each designed to achieve the stated conservation objectives:

- **Swift Bricks:** Two Schwegler Swift Bricks (or equivalent) integrated into the south or south-west-facing elevation of the new building at a height of no less than 5 metres above ground level. Swift bricks are permanent, integral roost features that provide secure nesting cavities for swift colonies and are consistent with best-practice guidance from the RSPB and Swift Conservation.
- **Bat Boxes / Tubes:** A minimum of two bat roost features (Schwegler 1FF bat tube or equivalent) installed on the north or north-east elevation of the building at a height of no less than 4 metres above ground level, positioned to provide roosting opportunities whilst avoiding direct sunlight.
- **Bird Nest Boxes:** A minimum of two open-fronted bird nest boxes suitable for robin and wren, and two closed-fronted boxes suitable for house sparrow or blue tit, installed on the building facade or adjacent boundary features at appropriate heights in accordance with BTO guidance.
- **Hedgehog Highway Gaps:** A minimum of four hedgehog-sized access gaps (13 cm x 13 cm) installed at the base of boundary fencing or walls at ground level, to enable hedgehog movement through the site and surrounding area.
- **Native Planting:** The introduction of a minimum of [number] native shrubs along the southern and eastern boundaries, comprising species including hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*), to provide food and shelter for invertebrates, birds and small mammals.

5.4 Location Plans (Condition 5c)

The precise locations of all biodiversity enhancement measures are shown on the Biodiversity Enhancement Location Plan (Drawing Reference: [insert reference]), submitted alongside this Planning Statement and the BES. The plan identifies the specific positions of swift bricks, bat boxes, bird nest boxes, hedgehog highway gaps and native planting on an annotated site plan drawn to an appropriate scale.

5.5 Responsible Persons (Condition 5d)

The implementation of all biodiversity enhancement measures will be the responsibility of the applicant, [Applicant Name], supported by the appointed main contractor during the construction phase. The ecological consultant, [Name of Ecologist], will provide oversight and certification that measures have been installed correctly prior to occupation.

Post-completion monitoring and maintenance will be the ongoing responsibility of the site owner or their appointed managing agent. A named contact for biodiversity matters will be designated prior to occupation and their details provided to the Local Planning Authority on request.

5.6 Aftercare and Long-Term Maintenance (Condition 5e)

All biodiversity enhancement measures will be retained in perpetuity and maintained in accordance with the following programme:

- Swift Bricks and Bat Boxes: Will not be blocked, removed or disturbed. Entrance apertures will be kept clear of vegetation annually. Bat boxes will not be opened or cleaned. If any unit becomes damaged it will be replaced on a like-for-like basis in the same position.
- Bird Nest Boxes: Will be cleaned out annually between October and November (outside the nesting season) by removing old nesting material and rinsing with boiling water. No chemical treatments will be used. Damaged boxes will be replaced in the same location.
- Hedgehog Highway Gaps: Will be maintained for the life of the development. Should any boundary fencing be replaced, hedgehog gaps will be reinstated in the same positions as part of the replacement works.
- Native Planting: Planted shrubs will be maintained in a healthy condition and watered during establishment. Any plant that fails to establish within the first two growing seasons will be replaced with the same species. No pesticides or herbicides will be used within one metre of planted shrubs. An annual management cut will be carried out to promote bushy growth.

5.7 Policy Compliance

The Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy demonstrates compliance with HDPF Policy 31 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity), which requires development to protect and enhance biodiversity and to incorporate measures that provide a net benefit for wildlife. The strategy also satisfies the Local Planning Authority's obligations under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, which places a duty on public authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity, including the protection and recovery of Priority species and habitats.

The proposed enhancements are consistent with Policy 10 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan 2021, which promotes biodiversity gain and requires developments to provide ecological enhancements proportionate to their scale and setting.

6. Conclusion

This Planning Statement, together with the accompanying technical documents, demonstrates that the requirements of Conditions 3, 4 and 5 of the planning permission for Birchfield Nursery, London Road, Henfield have been fully addressed.

In summary:

- Condition 3 (Drainage Strategy): A comprehensive Drainage Strategy has been prepared demonstrating appropriate foul and surface water disposal. Foul water will drain to a suitably designed and registered onsite septic tank, installed in accordance with Building Regulations Part H and Environment Agency requirements. All surface rainwater and building water will drain to the existing onsite well, where it will be harvested and reused across the site for irrigation and to supply the garden centre with water — a closed-loop approach that exceeds the minimum requirements of the condition and actively supports the sustainable operation of the site. The strategy complies fully with HDPF Policy 38.
- Condition 4 (Schedule of Materials): A detailed Schedule of Materials, Finishes and Colours has been prepared identifying high-quality, contextually appropriate materials for the external walls, roof, windows and doors. The proposed palette — natural timber cladding, Eternit slate roofing and colour-matched joinery — is consistent with the character of the site and its rural setting, in compliance with HDPF Policy 33 and Henfield Neighbourhood Plan Policy 12.
- Condition 5 (Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy): A comprehensive Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy has been prepared by a qualified ecologist, addressing all elements required by the condition. The strategy provides meaningful, measurable and long-term benefits for Protected and Priority species, in full compliance with HDPF Policy 31, Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 and Henfield Neighbourhood Plan Policy 10.

The applicant respectfully requests that Horsham District Council confirms in writing that Conditions 3, 4 and 5 are discharged in full on the basis of the information submitted.

— End of Planning Statement —