Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/0313
Hop Oast Service Station , Worthing Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0AR

DESCRIPTION:

Installation of a new EV Charging Hub, associated infrastructure and all other associated works.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/18/0823	Demolition of existing petrol filling station and exhumation of existing below ground fuel storage tanks. Redevelopment to include new double skin below ground fuel storage tanks, new single storey sales building, car re-fuelling forecourt with steel framed canopy over and separate HGV r-fuelling forecourt with steel framed canopy over. Reinstatement of above ground LPG storage tank.	Application Permitted on 19.10.2018
DISC/19/0110	Approval of details reserved by conditions 4, 5 and 6 on DC/18/0823	Application Permitted on 09.08.2019
DISC/19/0136	Approval of details reserved by condition 3 on DC/18/0823	Application Permitted on 18.06.2019
DC/19/1535	Advertisement consent for the installation of 1x internally illuminated fascia sign, x1 internally illuminated badge sign to side elevation, x1 internally illuminated canopy signage to both general and HGV forecourt.	Application Permitted on 09.10.2019

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site forms part of the wider Shell Hop Oast Service Station, located immediately to the east of the A24 roundabout junction with Worthing Road (B2237), approximately 1km south of Horsham town and north of Southwater village. The site lies outside the Built-Up Area Boundary and is therefore designated as countryside under the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).

The red line boundary covers an irregular parcel of approximately 0.08ha to the east of the existing service station forecourt. Prior to clearance, the site comprised dense bramble and blackthorn scrub interspersed with immature and semi-mature trees, providing a vegetated buffer between the service station and the A24. This vegetation has since been largely removed, with the ground now consisting of disturbed soil and early regenerating scrub. The remaining coppiced hazel and bramble thickets are located along the eastern and southern boundaries, adjoining a drainage ditch and the highway verge.

The surrounding context is semi-urban. To the west lies the existing petrol filling station and forecourt with canopy structures and car parking. To the north are the access road serving the service station and the WSCC depot. To the south, the site fronts the A24 dual carriageway, while to the east it is bounded by the B2237 Worthing Road. Despite its functional roadside context, the wider area retains a predominantly verdant and treed character, with mature roadside vegetation forming part of the setting of the Hop Oast roundabout.

There are no listed buildings within the vicinity, and the site does not lie within a Conservation Area. However, it is visible in short-range views from the A24 and the B2237, where vegetation loss has noticeably exposed the service station to public view.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks full planning permission for the installation of a new Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Hub, including associated infrastructure and works.

The proposal involves the formation of six EV charging bays with associated charging units, control cabinets, bollards, kerbing, and surfacing. The works include realignment of the access and internal forecourt to accommodate the chargers and ancillary electrical equipment. A small area of hardstanding would be introduced, with surface materials designed to match the existing service station forecourt.

The scheme incorporates a landscaping and planting strategy (Squires Young Landscape Plan Ref. SY25-412-LPP-25-01B, Rev D, dated 09.03.2026), which proposes:

- planting of four semi-mature trees (Acer campestre and Carpinus betulus),
- creation of a native species-rich hedgerow along the southern boundary, and
- retention and regeneration of existing coppiced hazel and bramble scrub to re-establish a naturalised buffer.

Floodlighting and column lighting are shown on the submitted plans to illuminate the EV bays. The proposal does not include alterations to the existing shop or service station building. The development would be accessed from the existing service station entrance, with no new vehicular access onto the public highway. The works are intended to enhance the site's commercial offer by providing modern EV charging facilities while maintaining a visually contained layout through new planting and ecological mitigation measures.

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 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
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 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 – Parking

Neighbourhood Plan:
The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021.
SNP 16 – Design
SNP 18 – A Treed Landscape

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish Design Statement:

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:

HDC Arboricultural Officer: Comment
Concerns regarding the accuracy and completeness of the application in relation to trees and hedges on the site. Although the applicant has indicated that there are no trees or hedges present, this is misleading, as the area previously contained a significant number of mature and shrubby trees. These trees would have posed a constraint to development and their recent removal is highly visible from surrounding roads, particularly to the south and west. This removal has caused a noticeable loss of amenity and significant harm to the landscape character of the area.

Furthermore, the submitted documentation does not provide sufficient detail to assess the impact on any remaining vegetation or trees. Given the extent of pre-emptive clearance, recommended that the application be supported by robust landscaping proposals to help mitigate the loss.

HDC Landscape Architect: Holding Objection/ More Information
The principle of expanding the service station to include an EV charging hub is considered acceptable given the site's immediate context. However, concerns have been raised regarding the location of the proposals and their potential impact on the landscape character and visual amenity, particularly when viewed from the A24/B2237. To address these concerns, further information is required on vegetation clearance and root protection areas (RPAs) to ensure the retention of mature trees and the understorey vegetation buffer, which are vital to the area's verdant character and help mitigate visual impacts. The current layout appears to encroach into this buffer, and without sufficient detail, the impact on existing vegetation remains unclear. A tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) are therefore recommended, along with clear plans showing vegetation clearance. Additionally, a vegetated buffer should be retained near the southern boundary to mitigate runoff effects, and boundary treatments, including fencing and planting, should be shown in plan. These measures are necessary to comply with policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the aims outlined in the Design and Access Statement.

Re-Consultation Received (16.10.2025): Holding Objection/Modification
It is regrettable that mature trees were removed from the site prior to the completion of the previously requested tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), as these trees were considered important to the area's verdant character and essential for mitigating the visual impact of the proposed development. Their loss has negatively affected the local landscape, and the comments from Horsham District Council's Arboriculturalist regarding the loss of amenity are supported. A robust landscape strategy is now necessary to compensate for this loss, and the provision of only two replacement trees is deemed insufficient. Additional tree planting should be included within a coordinated landscape plan that accounts for existing and proposed services. A vegetated buffer should also be retained to mitigate polluted runoff into the adjacent ditch, which could further harm remaining vegetation. The previously removed section titled "WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS AND VEGETATION" from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal should be reinstated to guide boundary treatments and reduce construction related disturbance. Furthermore, the proposals should include details on boundary treatments, tree pits and root barriers, soft landscaping specifications (including mulch application), and weed control procedures that avoid chemical use due to ecological sensitivity. Alternative weed management methods are recommended to protect the site's ecological features.

Re-consultation Received (05.05.2026): No Objection
The updated red line boundary, now including the four proposed trees and the southern hedgerow, is supported. While it is still recommended that additional trees be incorporated within the hedgerow in line with earlier advice, no further substantive landscape concerns are raised. Although some

previously requested detailed landscape information remains outstanding, these are considered minor matters and do not warrant an objection. Overall, the Landscape Officer raises no objection, subject to the resolution of these minor outstanding details.

HDC Ecology Officer: Objection
The application fails to meet both national and local biodiversity validation requirements and should be refused unless the missing information is provided. Specifically, the biodiversity metric in both original Excel and PDF formats is absent, and the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment lacks key components and requires further site surveys. Unauthorised vegetation clearance has already occurred without notifying Horsham District Council, complicating the baseline habitat assessment. The watercourse module must be completed due to the presence of a seasonal ditch, and discrepancies exist between habitat maps in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and BNG Report. Missing or unclear condition assessments, particularly for hedgerows, woodland, and mature trees, must be addressed. The post-development habitat descriptions also conflict with the site plan, which shows landscaped areas not reflected in the BNG Report. Additional details, including boundary treatments, tree pit specifications, mulch application, and non-chemical weed control methods, are required to ensure ecological integrity and compliance with planning guidance.

Re-Consultation Received (24.06.2025): Holding Objection/Modification
Following discussions with the Agent, a separate approach has been agreed to compensate for vegetation clearance outside of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement. The amended BNG proposal shows a significant net loss of -78.24% in area habitat and -100% in hedgerow habitat, with the Applicant intending to purchase habitat bank units to meet the 10% BNG target. However, concerns remain regarding the omission of the watercourse module, lack of delay between habitat clearance and creation, and missing condition assessments for baseline habitats. It has been confirmed that some of the cleared vegetation and mature roadside trees were outside the red line boundary, and compensatory planting of five trees—three off-site and two on-site—has been accepted by the Arboricultural Officer. Nonetheless, it is recommended that these trees be included within the red line boundary and that updated comments be sought from the Landscape Officer. The cleared scrub area outside the boundary will be allowed to regrow, with management encouraged to establish a mixed scrub habitat. The BNG metric must be updated to reflect appropriate time delays and include the ditch within the riparian zone. Discrepancies between habitat maps have been addressed, but condition assessments for hedgerow and ditch remain outstanding. An updated landscape plan has been provided, though herbicide use should be restricted and hand-pulling methods adopted. While the proposal currently does not meet HDC's definition of significant on-site BNG, any future changes may trigger the need for a legal agreement. If approved, a pre-commencement condition requiring a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is recommended to ensure delivery and maintenance of biodiversity enhancements in line with planning policy.

Re-Consultation Received (18.11.2025): Holding Objection/Modification
The comments raise outstanding objections and identify matters that remain unresolved in relation to the BNG submission. Although a new biodiversity metric has been submitted and off-site tabs completed, no bespoke off-site habitat enhancements have been provided, and the entries are described as indicative only. Crucially, the absence of the watercourse module has not been justified, meaning the baseline assessment is considered incorrect and the holding objection remains. Further amendments are still required, including updating landscaping plans to align with the metric, correcting time delays between habitat clearance and creation, and providing completed condition assessment sheets for the hedgerow and ditch to evidence baseline conditions. There is also an inconsistency between the landscape plans and the metric, with one compensatory tree missing from the red line boundary, despite being counted in the metric, and no additional trees proposed on site, which is considered disappointing; securing compensatory tree planting through a legal agreement is therefore requested if permission is granted. Outstanding issues also include the failure to account for clearance–creation delays in line with the metric user guide, unresolved discrepancies relating to the ditch (which is likely within the riparian zone), missing condition assessment sheets for the hedgerow and ditch, and continued inconsistencies between updated landscape plans and the BNG assessment. Until these matters are addressed satisfactorily, the BNG submission is not considered compliant.

Re-consultation Received (07.04.2026): No Objection

The previously identified ecological and BNG issues have now been satisfactorily addressed. Amendments to the BNG metric and supporting information have resulted in a reduced net loss of area habitat and hedgerow habitat, with the applicant committing to the purchase of habitat bank units to meet the 10% BNG requirement in line with the biodiversity gain hierarchy. Clarifications and revised submissions have resolved concerns relating to compensatory tree planting, validation requirements, clearance-to-creation time delays, the watercourse module, UKHab baseline mapping, condition assessment sheets, and inconsistencies between the BNG assessment and landscape plans. Further justification has been provided where required, missing information has been submitted, and outstanding discrepancies have been corrected. Overall, the ecology matters are now considered resolved, subject to the recommended conditions, and the proposal is acceptable from a BNG perspective.

Place Services Ecology Consultant: No Objection
The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Collington Winter, February 2025) has been reviewed and provides sufficient ecological information to support determination of the application. It confirms that the service station buildings will not be affected and that no trees on site have bat roost potential, so no further bat surveys are required. The presence of reptiles and common amphibians is acknowledged, and the Precautionary Method Statement in Section 4.1.9 is supported and should be secured by condition. While comments on Biodiversity Net Gain are provided separately by Horsham District Council, the report offers clarity on the likely ecological impacts and appropriate mitigation measures, enabling the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to meet its statutory biodiversity duties under s40 of the NERC Act 2006. Mitigation measures, including a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy to reduce impacts on foraging and commuting bats, should be secured by condition and implemented in full, with technical specifications submitted prior to occupation. Additionally, reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected and Priority species, in line with Paragraphs 187d and 193d of the NPPF (December 2024), should be detailed in a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and secured by condition to ensure net gains for biodiversity.

WSCC Highways: No Objection
The LHA concludes that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would it cause severe cumulative effects on the operation of the highway network. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with paragraphs 114–117 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in December 2024, and there are no transport-related grounds to object to the application.

WSCC Fire and Rescue: Comment
The nearest fire hydrant is located 190 metres away, which exceeds the 90-metre maximum distance required for commercial premises under Approved Document-B (AD-B) Volume 2: B5 section 16. If an alternative water supply for firefighting is proposed, it must comply with these standards and be agreed with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The addition of the EV Charging Hub represents a significant change to the existing commercial site, increasing fire risk. Without a compliant water supply for firefighting, there could be implications for safety, property protection, and insurance premiums.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None Received

Parish Comments:

Southwater Parish Council: No Objection

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 seeks full planning permission for the installation of a new Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Hub and associated infrastructure within the existing curtilage of the Shell Hop Oast Service Station, which lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) and is therefore designated as countryside for planning purposes under Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015).

Policies within the HDPF provide a balanced approach to development in countryside locations. Policy 25 and Policy 26 generally restrict new development but allow proposals that are appropriate to a rural setting and support the rural economy, provided they do not cause a significant urbanising effect. In this case, the service station is an established roadside commercial use, and the EV Charging Hub is considered a functional enhancement rather than a new standalone development, aligning with these policies.

The site's existing commercial character, proximity to the A24 strategic road network, and use as a service area mean that the proposed development is well located to serve the needs of passing motorists and fleet users without introducing an incompatible or isolated use. The development would utilise existing access and whilst extending beyond the existing commercial extent of the premises, would be well located and associated with the existing facility.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2021) also provides relevant guidance, with Policy SNP16 (Design) seeking high-quality design that integrates with its setting, and Policy SNP18 (A Treed Landscape) requiring that any loss of trees be appropriately mitigated through replacement planting. The proposal has been amended to include a revised landscape plan to address these local policy objectives and to compensate for previous vegetation loss.

In this context, the proposed EV Charging Hub is considered to be acceptable in principle, as it represents a modest and sustainable enhancement to an existing commercial roadside facility that aligns with the aims of both local and national planning policy to promote low-emission transport infrastructure.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) emphasize the importance of high-quality design that is sympathetic to the character and distinctiveness of its site and surroundings. Proposals must protect, conserve, and enhance the landscape character while contributing to a strong sense of place through appropriate scale, massing, and appearance.

The proposed EV Charging Hub would be located in close proximity to the existing service station forecourt and would comprise six charging bays, low-profile charging units, control cabinets, and associated bollards and surfacing. The layout and design of the infrastructure are consistent with the established commercial character of the wider service area. The scale and appearance of the equipment would not appear unduly prominent when viewed alongside the existing forecourt canopies

and lighting columns, and the materials proposed would complement those already in use across the site.

The submitted plans include column lighting and floodlighting to illuminate the charging bays. However, given the site's exposed position and the ecological sensitivity of the surrounding vegetation, a Wildlife-Friendly Lighting Strategy is required by condition to ensure that any lighting installed minimises glare, light spill and upward illumination. This will ensure that any new lighting respects the visual amenity of the area and prevents unnecessary disturbance to foraging and commuting wildlife.

Overall, the design of the proposed EV Hub is considered appropriate to its functional roadside context. Subject to conditions controlling lighting and landscaping, the development would not detract from the character or visual appearance of the wider area, in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and Policy SNP16 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

Trees and Landscaping:

The site occupies a prominent and highly visible location adjoining the A24/B2237 Hop Oast roundabout, where the established belt of roadside vegetation and tree cover makes a strong contribution to the verdant character of the area and helps screen the existing service station from public view. It is therefore regrettable that substantial vegetation clearance took place prior to submission of this application, resulting in the removal of several mature and shrubby trees that previously formed part of this screening. The loss has caused a noticeable degree of visual and landscape harm.

The Council's Arboricultural Officer, in reviewing the original submission, noted that the application form incorrectly stated that no trees or hedges were present within the site, which was misleading given the extent of clearance undertaken. The Officer advised that this had resulted in a loss of amenity and recommended that any future permission should be supported by a robust landscaping scheme to compensate for that harm. Similarly, the Council's Landscape Architect issued a holding objection, citing insufficient information on vegetation removal, lack of replacement planting, and absence of a vegetated buffer to protect the adjacent ditch from polluted runoff. Further clarification on planting specifications, mulch and weed control, and boundary treatments was also requested.

The landscape proposals have been updated to include compensatory tree planting, hedgerow creation and areas of natural regeneration, which will provide localised ecological enhancement. The Landscape Planting Plan (Ref: SY25-412-LPP-25-01D) shows four new trees, native hedgerow planting, and retained/regenerating scrub areas to strengthen habitat connectivity and site containment. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy 31 of the HDPF.

While the loss of existing vegetation prior to submission is regrettable and has resulted in short-term landscape harm, the revised landscape strategy provides a clear and structured mitigation response. These measures will, over time, restore the vegetated edge and reinforce the verdant character of the site when viewed from the A24 and B2237. The Landscape Officer now raises no objection to the scheme. Accordingly, it is considered that the revised landscaping strategy now provides is proportionate. Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal would preserve and enhance the landscape character of the area, in accordance with Policies 25, 31 and 33 of the HDPF and Policy SNP18 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that development should be designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development.

The application site forms part of the existing Shell Hop Oast Service Station, located immediately adjacent to the A24 dual carriageway and the B2237 Worthing Road. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial and roadside in character. The nearest residential properties are located to the west of the A24, at a separation distance of approximately 90 metres from the development site and are visually and acoustically separated by the highway and existing vegetation.

The proposal involves the installation of six EV charging bays and associated electrical cabinets, with new lighting columns shown on the submitted plans to illuminate the forecourt area. Given the commercial use of the site and its existing lighting, the additional illumination associated with the EV bays is not expected to materially alter the established lighting environment or give rise to unacceptable glare or light spill toward nearby dwellings. Nonetheless, to ensure that lighting remains appropriate and to prevent excessive light trespass or ecological disturbance, a Wildlife-Friendly Lighting Strategy is secured by condition. This requires full technical specifications and layout details demonstrating compliance with ILP Guidance Note 08/23 and restricting lighting intensity and direction.

The operation of the EV charging hub is not anticipated to generate significant noise or activity beyond that already associated with the service station. The chargers themselves are electrically operated and emit minimal sound when in use. Vehicle movements associated with charging would take place within the existing forecourt area and during the same operational hours as the main service station. The development would therefore not result in an intensification or change of use that would materially affect nearby residents.

Furthermore, the landscaping scheme includes replacement trees and a native hedge along the southern boundary, which will provide additional visual screening and soften the appearance of the site from public viewpoints. This will help mitigate any residual visual impact arising from the earlier vegetation clearance.

Taking into account the site's separation from residential receptors, its existing commercial character, and the conditions imposed to control lighting and landscaping, it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties. The proposal therefore complies with Policy 33 of the HDPF and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users. The application site benefits from an existing access with minor alterations to the existing driveway indicated on the submitted plans.

The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Shell Hop Oast Service Station, which is served by an established access directly from the B2237 Worthing Road, approximately 100 metres east of the A24 roundabout. The access arrangement, internal circulation, and general layout of the service station will remain unchanged as part of this proposal.

No new or altered vehicular access is proposed onto the public highway. The development would therefore not alter existing visibility splays, turning arrangements, or access geometry. The internal layout retains sufficient space for vehicles to manoeuvre safely and to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

The West Sussex County Council Highways Authority was consulted on the application and raised no objection, confirming that the proposed EV hub would not have a material impact on the safety or capacity of the local highway network. The Highway Authority noted that the level of trip generation associated with the chargers would be minimal and consistent with the established use of the site as a service area.

The proposed parking arrangement retains adequate provision for existing fuel customers and staff, while introducing additional charging facilities to meet growing demand for electric vehicle infrastructure. The design of the charging bays accords with current accessibility standards and will operate safely within the confines of the forecourt.

In summary, the development is considered acceptable in highways and parking terms, in accordance with Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Ecology:

Policy 31 of the HDPF states that proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) prepared by Collington Winter Environmental (June 2025) was submitted in support of the application. The PEA confirms that, prior to clearance, the site supported a mosaic of scrub, tall ruderal vegetation and scattered trees providing potential habitat for nesting birds, reptiles, and amphibians. However, most vegetation within the development footprint has since been cleared, substantially reducing the site's ecological value. The remaining boundary vegetation, including coppiced hazel and regenerating scrub, now provides limited but important habitat continuity with the adjacent verge and drainage ditch.

The PEA identifies a low risk of presence for common reptiles and amphibians, and potential for occasional nesting birds in retained vegetation. It recommends that vegetation clearance and any groundworks follow a Precautionary Method Statement (PMS), with timing restrictions and ecological supervision to avoid harm to protected species. These requirements are secured by condition, ensuring compliance with national wildlife legislation and Policy 31 of the HDPF.

Place Services Ecology also reviewed the submission and noted that additional measures would be necessary to mitigate residual effects of lighting on foraging and commuting bats, given the site's proximity to retained vegetation and the adjacent green corridor. A Wildlife-Friendly Lighting Strategy is therefore required by condition to ensure that external lighting is designed and installed in accordance with ILP Guidance Note 08/23 and BS 42020:2013, using warm-white (<2700K) luminaires and directional fittings to minimise light spill.

Together, these conditions ensure that ecological mitigation measures are implemented during construction and operation, protecting mobile species and preventing disturbance to local wildlife.

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 Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The application has been supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment prepared by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd (Ref: CW20-2574-002, Rev 6, dated March 2026). This confirms that, following amendments and clarification, the biodiversity baseline, habitat condition assessments and post-development proposals have now been robustly established.

The submitted metric demonstrates that the development would result in an on-site biodiversity net loss of approximately -64.53% for area habitats and -3.50% for hedgerow units, primarily due to the clearance of existing scrub habitats prior to determination. As such, the proposal does not achieve the required 10% BNG on-site and therefore relies on the purchase of off-site biodiversity units to meet the statutory requirement.

The applicant has confirmed a commitment to securing off-site habitat units in accordance with the biodiversity gain hierarchy, and the Ecology Officer is satisfied that this approach is acceptable in

principle. The latest consultation response (April 2026) confirms that all previous concerns have now been satisfactorily addressed. Overall, the proposal is now acceptable in ecological terms.

Water Neutrality:

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the site necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 193 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The proposed development includes the following measures to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions:

- 6 electric vehicle charging points

Conclusions:

The proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Hub represents a sustainable enhancement to an existing roadside commercial site that will contribute to the transition toward low-carbon transport in accordance with national and local policy objectives. While the pre-emptive removal of vegetation prior to submission has resulted in some visual and ecological harm, the revised landscape and ecological mitigation measures secured through conditions will ensure that the site's green character and biodiversity value are restored over time.

The proposal would not result in any unacceptable harm to residential amenity or highway safety, and subject to the recommended conditions controlling landscaping, lighting, and biodiversity management, the development is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the HDPF, and the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable and is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

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 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: Notwithstanding any lighting details shown on the approved plans, no external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed until a Wildlife-Friendly Lighting Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Strategy shall include full technical specifications, layout plans showing light spill isolines, lux levels, and measures to avoid light spill onto retained vegetation and habitats in accordance with ILP Guidance Note 08/23. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to first use and thereafter retained.

Reason: To protect residential and ecological amenity in accordance with Policies 31 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and paragraph 187(d) of the NPPF (2024).

4 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: No development shall commence, including ground clearance, or bringing equipment, machinery or materials onto the site, until the following preliminaries have been completed in the sequence set out below:

(a) All trees on the site shown for retention on approved drawing number SY25-412-LPP-25-01D, as well as those off-site whose root protection areas ingress into the site, shall be fully protected throughout all construction works by tree protective fencing affixed to the ground in full accordance with section 6 of BS 5837 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations' (2012).
(b) Once installed, the fencing shall be maintained during the course of the develop-ment works and until all machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site.
(c) Areas so fenced off shall be treated as zones of prohibited access, and shall not be used for the storage of materials, equipment or machinery in any circumstances. No mixing of cement, concrete, or use of other materials or substances shall take place within any tree protective zone, or close enough to such a zone that seepage or displacement of those materials and substances could cause them to enter a zone.

Any trees or hedges on the site which die or become damaged during the construction process shall be replaced with trees or hedging plants of a type, size and in positions agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure the successful and satisfactory protec-tion of important trees and hedgerows on the site in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: The approved landscaping scheme as shown on Landscape Planting Plan (Ref: SY25-412-LPP-25-01D Revision D) shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first use of any part of the development.

Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 30 years after completion of the development. Any proposed or retained planting which dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy SNP18.1 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

6 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the Proposed Site Plan reference 10019007 03 2025 C and EV Ancillary Details reference 10019007 05 2025.

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).

7 **Regulatory Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report reference CW20-2574 Rev 3 by Collington Winter and dated June 2025, including the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected species in Section 4.1.9 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Collington Winter, June 2025).

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).

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.

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 a Biodiversity Gain Plan before development is begun.

For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plan 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.

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/25/0313
(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
Details plan	Landscaping Planting Plan	SY25-412-LPP-25-01D Revision D	09.03.2026
Location plan	Site Location Plan	10019007 00 2025 A	09.03.2026

Details plan	EV Ancillary Details	10019007 05 2025 05	28.02.2025
Site plan	Existing Site Plan	10019007 01 2025 B	25.03.2026
Elevation plan	Existing Site Elevations	10019007 02 2025	28.02.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Site Elevations	10019007 04 2025	28.02.2025
Site plan	Proposed Site Plan	10019007 03 2025 C	09.03.2026
Layout plan	Tracking Plan	10019007 06 2025 A	28.02.2025
Supporting Statement	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report by Collington Winter Environmental dated June 2025	CW20-2574 Rev 3	19.06.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 07.05.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 07.05.2026