PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO:	Planning Committee
BY:	Head of Development and Building Control
DATE:	16 December 2025
DEVELOPMENT:	Outline Application for the erection of 2No. detached dwellings and garages with all matters reserved except access.
SITE:	Potters Field Mill Lane Partridge Green West Sussex RH13 8JU
WARD:	Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead
APPLICATION:	DC/24/1887
APPLICANT:	**Name:** Mr John Elliott **Address:** Tyburn House Ely Grange Frant East Sussex TN3 9DZ

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: The application is taken back to committee to remove the water neutrality conditions and requirements for a S106, following the withdrawal of Natural England Position Statement.

RECOMMENDATION: To approve outline planning permission subject to appropriate conditions

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The application was considered at Planning Committee on 16th September 2025, where it was resolved to approve planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement. Since the resolution was made, Natural England have withdrawn their Water Neutrality Position Statement, and water neutrality is no longer a requirement. In addition, the Applicant has subsequently confirmed that BNG will be achieved through purchasing units from a habitat bank. On this basis, a s106 is no longer required to secure the offsite mitigation measures.

1.2 This Report should be read together with the previous Committee Report contained at Appendix A.

2. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

2.1 The application was determined at Planning Committee on 16th September 2025, the application was approved in accordance with Officer recommendation.

Water Neutrality

2.2 A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and

Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

2.3 On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

2.4 To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

2.5 Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

2.6 Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

2.7 It is considered that the water consumption at the site can be controlled by condition limiting water to 110 litres per person per day. As such, a s106 Legal Agreement is no longer required to secure water neutrality.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

2.8 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 may not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

2.9 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.

2.10 The Applicant has stated that they will be purchasing biodiversity units from a third-party habitat bank. Details of these will be required post-decision under the statutory BNG condition, with the BNG informative placed on the permission advising that the details are to

be submitted following approval. On this basis, a s106 Legal Agreement to secure BNG is no longer required.

Conclusion

2.11 Subject to the revision of the conditions to take account of the changes to water neutrality, the proposed development remains acceptable. As concluded within the previous Committee Report (attached at Appendix A), it is considered that the harm afforded by the conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of new dwellings in this sustainable location. The application is recommended for approval accordingly, subject to the conditions as set out below.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to appropriate conditions as detailed below.

1 A List of the Approved Plans

2 **Standard Time Condition:**

a. Approval of the details of the layout of the development, the scale of each building, the appearance of each building and the landscaping of the development (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.

b. Plans and particulars of the reserved matters referred to in condition (a) above, relating to the layout of the development, the scale of each building, the appearance of each building, and the landscaping of the development, shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority and shall be carried out as approved.

c. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

d. The development hereby permitted shall begin either before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail and to comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: The development hereby approved shall not commence until the following construction details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the following measures:

i. Details of site management contact details and responsibilities;
ii. A plan detailing the site logistics arrangements on a phase-by-phase basis (as applicable), including:
    a. location of site compound,
    b. location for the loading, unloading and storage of plant and materials (including any stripped topsoil),
    c. site offices (including location, height, size and appearance),
    d. location of site access points for construction vehicles,
    e. location of on-site parking,
    f. locations and details for the provision of wheel washing facilities and dust suppression facilities
iii. The arrangements for public consultation and liaison prior to and during the demolition and construction works - newsletters, fliers etc, to include site management contact details for residents;
iv. Details of any floodlighting, including location, height, type and direction of light sources, hours of operation and intensity of illumination;

The construction shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the details and measures approved.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental in order to consider the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby occupiers during construction and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: A Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for the biodiversity enhancements listed in the Ecological Assessment (Greenspace Ecological Solutions, November 2024), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following:
a. detailed designs or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements; and
b. locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings.

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and Policy 31 of the Horsham Development Framework.

6 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the necessary in-building physical infrastructure and external site-wide infrastructure to enable superfast broadband speeds of 30 megabits per second through full fibre broadband connection has been provided to the premises.

Reason: To ensure a sustainable development that meets the needs of future occupiers in accordance with Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the parking, turning and access facilities necessary to serve that dwelling have been implemented in accordance with the approved details as shown on plan [(11)101, REV B] and shall be thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking, turning and access facilities are available to serve the development in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

8 **Regulatory Condition**: All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Assessment (Greenspace Ecological Solutions, November 2024). This includes the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse in Section 6.4.11 and the Precautionary Method Statement for mobile protected species in Section 6.4.2 of the Ecological Assessment (Greenspace Ecological Solutions, November 2024). This avoids impacts on European Protected Species and protected species.

This will 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 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 (as amended).

9 **Regulatory Condition**: If the outline application hereby approved does not commence within one year from the date of the planning consent, the approved ecological mitigation measures secured through condition shall be reviewed and, where necessary, amended and updated.

The review shall be informed by further ecological surveys commissioned to:

i. establish if there have been any changes in the presence and/or abundance of protected species and
ii. identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise from any changes.

Where the survey results indicate that changes have occurred that will result in ecological impacts not previously addressed in the approved scheme, the original approved ecological measures will be revised and new or amended measures, and a timetable for their implementation, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the erection of 2No. detached dwellings and garages.

Works will then be carried out in accordance with the proposed new approved ecological measures and timetable.

Reason: To 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 (as amended).

10 **Regulatory Condition**: No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Council's Organisational Licence (WML-OR136, or a 'Further Licence') and with the proposals detailed on plan "Potters Field: Impact plan for great crested newt District Licensing (Version 1)" dated 30th April 2025.

Reason: In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the organisational licence (WML-OR136, or a 'Further Licence'), section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

11 **Regulatory Condition**: The dwellings hereby permitted shall meet the optional requirement of building regulation G2 to limit the water usage of each dwelling to no more than 110 litres per person per day. The subsequently installed water limiting measures shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To limit water use in order to improve the sustainability of the development and to ensure the development is water neutral to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SACSPA and Ramsar sites in accordance with Policies 31 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

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.

Background Papers: DC/24/1887
DC/24/1888