Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/1105
Nut Knowle Cottages, Brighton Road, Woodmancote, West Sussex, BN5 9SS

DESCRIPTION:
Erection of a 55sqm 8.8kWp ground-mounted solar array PV system within the garden.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
None relevant

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
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 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use

Woodmancote Parish Neighbourhood Plan (WPNP) 2016 - 2031:
Policy 3 – Design

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 2.9 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing

development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

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

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

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:
Representations:
1 letters for Support have been received from 1 addresses, supporting the application

Parish Comments:

Parish Council: Support
At the meeting of Woodmancote Parish Council held on 9th September 2025, Members voted to SUPPORT the application.

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

The proposal is for Erection of a 55sqm 8.8kWp ground-mounted solar array PV system within the garden at Nut Knowle Cottages, Brighton Road, Woodmancote. Neighbouring properties are well spaced from the site. Though there are a fair amount of dwellings located nearby, the area is judged to be outside the built up area boundary and therefore in the countryside in policy contexts.

Principle of Development:

Section 14, paragraph 167 of the NPPF (December 2024) states “Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating

improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.

Policy 26 of the HDPF requires development in the countryside be of a scale that is appropriate to its countryside character and location and not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside. It also needs to be essential to its countryside location and to meet one of the following criteria:

- Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
- Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or
- Enable the sustainable development of rural areas

Policy 36 of the HDPF relates to energy use and stipulates that schemes for renewable energy schemes will be permitted where these do not have a significant adverse effect on landscape and townscape character, biodiversity, heritage or cultural assets or amenity value. It is considered that the existing policy basis would provide a general presumption in favour of development comprising of photovoltaic panels. Policy 36 of the HDPF notably draws no distinction between the nature of energy generation; being either for agricultural, domestic, or commercial purposes.

The installation of solar panels will reduce reliance on the National Grid, reducing costs of the Owner, and would help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, it is considered there is not an associated use / intensification owing to siting of solar panels and would allow for quiet usage.

The use of renewable energy resources is favoured within national and local planning policy, where it considers that increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to secure a reliable energy supply and also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is therefore considered that the principle of the development is acceptable, subject to all other material considerations.

Design and Appearance:

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy 3 of the WPNP also concerns the design language of the building. This policy aims to ensure the scale and appearance of developments are in-keeping to the surrounding buildings, plot sizes and aesthetic of the area.

The proposal sees the introduction of 4 rows of 5 ground mounted solar panels. The array will approximately be 9.5m in depth, 5.75m in width with a height of 0.87m on a bark chipping bed. The proposal is positioned to the south of the existing garage. The proposal is considered appropriately sited and it is not thought there would be any harm to the character of the existing area.

Residential Amenity:

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

Given the low profile of the array, there is not considered to be any impact on the neighbouring amenity.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

Water neutrality is not applicable to the proposal.

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:

- Installation of 8.8kW solar panel system → Reduction of 7.9ton of CO_2 annually (according to planning statement)

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

Conclusions:

It is considered the proposal meets the policies above and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

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

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

3 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

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).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The solar panels hereby permitted shall be retained in accordance with the approved details. In the event of the solar panels ceasing to be used, the panels shall be removed from the framework and the framework be removed, as soon as is reasonably practicable and be no later than six months after the cessation of the panels.

Reason: In the absence of demonstrable need, there is no justification for the retention of the panels and to ensure, in the light of changing circumstances the removal of any redundant equipment in the interests of visual amenity

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/25/1105

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		NONE	04.07.2025
Photos	Solar View	NONE	04.07.2025
Elevation plan		01 REV 1	08.08.2025
Block plan		NONE	31.07.2025
Supporting Statement		NONE	31.07.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Jacques Burrowes Date: 17.09.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 01.10.2025