



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land at Hillybarn Farm The Mount Ifield West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of barn and erection of 4no new dwellinghouses.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/0337
RECOMMENDATION:	Holding objection / More information
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The submitted metric currently demonstrates that the development will have an overall 10.01% net gain (+1.37 units) in area habitat. However a holding objection is recommended due to the absence of condition assessment sheets for baseline habitats, and the identified habitat degradation on-site which has not been accounted for. These must be addressed prior to grant of planning permission. Further information is requested pertaining to the post-development habitats and development scheme layout. Amendments are advised for the final HMMP which should be addressed prior to discharging the biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligations.	
MAIN COMMENTS: The comments below relate solely to the BNG proposed in the above application. The comments are not considered exhaustive. All other ecology matters will be reviewed by Place Services and NatureSpace, where appropriate. As currently submitted, the biodiversity metric demonstrates that the development will have an overall 10.01% net gain (+1.37 units) in area habitat. As per HDC's definition, the proposal is considered significant on-site BNG and therefore, if minded to approve, a S106 legal agreement is required to secure the BNG. An upfront monitoring fee will need to be paid, and monitoring reports submitted to HDC typically in years 1,2,5,10,15,20,25 and 30. <u>Baseline</u> 1.0 It does not appear that condition assessment sheets for the on-site habitats has been submitted to evidence the baseline BNG assessment. Please can these be provided, alongside a botany list for the grassland habitats. 1.1 It is noted that a few sizeable trees (appearing to be a medium DBH) have been removed (between 2021-2024) (Google Maps – Street View) from the tree line on both	

sides of the fence line and within the field itself. Therefore, in line with degradation rules, further assessment is required with regards to these trees at baseline.

Post-development

2.0 Clarification is requested with regards to whether the indicated accesses are going to be using the existing gates, and whether any widening is required. There does not appear to be a gate along the middle of the western boundary, however, note the above point 1.1.

2.1 In line with the HDC Arboricultural Officers concerns, the relationship between the proposed hardstanding and tree RPAs is not understood due to absence of a Tree Constraints/Protection Plan. As such, the retention of these trees and in their current condition cannot be certain.

Strategic significance

3.0 Much of the site is covered by a priority within the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy to create new woodland (W2.1). As such woodland creation in the eastern location of the site is encouraged and subsequently would be eligible for the strategic significance uplift (high) within the metric. However, in the absence of this measure, strategic significance uplift cannot be claimed and therefore all post-development habitat proposals are considered to have a low strategic significance. Please note that as an LNRS has been published, all baseline habitats are low by default. Please amend the entries within the metric prior to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligations.

3.1 The LNRS also highlights the on-site traditional orchard as a priority for enhancement (W1.4) and therefore the loss of this habitat is disappointing and regrettable, and efforts should be made to retain and enhance this habitat.

HMMP

4.0 A final HMMP will be required to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition and S106 obligations. For expected content, please consult Natural England's HMMP template, companion document and checklist.

4.1 There are inconsistencies within the HMMP that do not relate to this development scheme, e.g., Section 2.2. Please can these be amended.

4.2 Please note that the timing of individual tree planting under the 'Timing' heading and Table 3.1 within Table 3 do not align. It is recommended that trees are planted between November and March, outside of frost conditions.

4.3 Pruning of trees should be undertaken in late winter (Jan/Feb) if possible to encourage overwinter fruits that benefit local wildlife.

4.4 Please detail ground preparation and weeding prescriptions for other neutral grassland, noting that the primary use of herbicide is not supported, unless eradicating invasive non-native species as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

4.5 Please note that the first cut of the year may need to be earlier to ensure a short sward for yellow rattle germination.

4.6 Please include tree species for traditional orchard.

4.7 Nutrient loads are a risk for traditional orchard grassland, particularly due to falling fruits, and therefore further cuts may be required to control undesirable species.

4.8 Please reiterate for traditional orchard tree planting that stakes should be in the ground immediately prior to planting.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

If minded to approve:

Informative –

Scenario 1: BNG Required

NAME:	Linsey King Ecology Officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning - Specialists
DATE:	23/09/2026