



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst
DESCRIPTION:	Expansion of the existing school including the construction of 3 linked single-storey buildings, a sports hall, playground, parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated development, following demolition of redundant buildings.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/0660
RECOMMENDATION:	Holding Objection / Modification
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The metric calculation tool submitted currently demonstrates that the development will have a +20.38% net gain (+0.38 units) in area habitats and a +289.27% net gain (+0.48 units) in hedgerows. However, a holding objection is recommended on the grounds of the omission of the watercourse module in the metric. Further comments are made relating to the post-development interventions and the draft HMMP content.	
MAIN COMMENTS: The comments below pertain primarily to the Biodiversity Net Gain proposal as submitted in the above application. However, it should be noted that these comments are not exhaustive. All other ecology matters will be reviewed by Place Services and NatureSpace, where necessary. The metric calculation tool submitted currently demonstrates that the development will have a +20.38% net gain (+0.38 units) in area habitats and a +289.27% net gain (+0.48 units) in hedgerows. In accordance with HDCs significant on-site criteria, the proposed on-site BNG is considered significant and therefore a legal agreement to secure the delivery will be required. Monitoring reports will need to be submitted to HDC typically in years 1,2,5,10,15,20,25 and 30, and an upfront monitoring fee will need to be paid. However, please note that the comments below may alter the final BNG calculation figures, and the trading rules are still yet to be met. This will either entail bespoke off-site habitat enhancement or purchase of habitat bank units to meet the trading rules. Please note that the woodland immediately to the south of the site is highlighted under a priority of the draft West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy for woodland enhancement. <u>Baseline</u> 1.0 It is noted that a ditch runs along the northern and western boundary of the site, with several culverts where access roads cross into the site. This can be seen as mapped	

in the Baseline Habitat Map within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (see Figure 4, The Ecology Co-op 2025). However, no watercourse module has been completed as part of the BNG Assessment. Having visited the site in June 2026, it was evident that the ditch does hold water due to saturated soil and areas of pooled water during a heatwave, and presence of water-loving plants such as sedge and rush species, and therefore it is also considered likely that it holds water for >4 months of the year particularly in the winter. As such, this section of ditch as previously mapped should be included within the baseline assessment, as the site falls within the 5m riparian zone. The ditch network does extend to the north-east of the site, however this was dry during the site visit and there were no signs or indicative plant species to suggest this ditch held water.

1.1



The

woodland mapped within the BNG Design Stage Report (Map 3, ECOSA 2026) indicates it is moderate condition; however, both the condition assessment and metric state it is poor condition. Please can the correct condition be clarified and consistency across documents ensured when discharging the deemed biodiversity gain condition.

Post-development

2.0 Criterion A for other neutral grassland must be achieved to reach a moderate condition. Please amend in the HMMP under Table PM-T01 (despite it being targeted further on in the HMMP) or downgrade the proposed condition to poor (see point 2.2 below).

2.1 The creation of modified grassland is listed within the post-development condition assessments and HMMP, however is not mapped within the BNG Design Stage report or metric. It is advised that areas that will be subject to high disturbance should be classified as modified grassland due to continuous damage making it unlikely to meet the condition criteria.

2.2 It is noted in the Landscape Design Strategy (Lizard, 2026) that ornamental planting is planned in the south of the site surrounding the play areas. It is strongly advised to incorporate native species to the edges of this area, to prevent any non-native ornamental species spreading or setting seed in the immediately adjacent priority woodland habitat as designated in Natural England's Priority Habitat inventory.

Draft HMMP

3.0 A full and finalised HMMP will be required as an obligation within the legal agreement, and to support the Biodiversity Gain Plan which is required to discharge the deemed biodiversity gain condition. It is advised to review the Natural England HMMP template, checklist, and companion document for expected content. More information pertaining to the management prescriptions will also be necessary.

3.1 Please can the relevant maps (i.e., baseline and post-development) be inserted in the HMMP.

3.2 The draft HMMP refers to spot treatment. Herbicide use should be a last resort, unless eradicating invasive non-native species as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Please can words to this effect be added.

3.3 The number of non-targeted condition criteria for hedgerow (5) exceeds the total number allowed to achieve a moderate condition (4 max.). Please amend.

3.4 Mixed scrub is proposed to be created as per the metric and BNG Design Stage Report (ECOSA, 2026) however is missing from the HMMP. Please can a section on mixed scrub be added.

3.5 Please can removal of the previously identified invasive species on-site (see 3.10 of the PEA) be detailed.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

If minded to approve:

Informative –

Scenario 1: BNG Required

NAME:	Linsey King Ecology Officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Planning - Specialists
DATE:	23/06/2026