

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/0345	Case Officer:	Andrew Watt
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Erection of a mixed use commercial building for a flexible commercial use of Class E(g) ((i) Offices to carry out any operational of administrative functions, (ii) Research and development of products or processes and (iii) Industrial processes) and B8 Storage or distribution.		
Site:	Holmsted Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5JF, ,		
Validation Date	26 Feb 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	21 Mar 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:	Yes	Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	21 May 2025
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	23 May 2025
Target Date:	23 Apr 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Watt

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	23 May 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/0345

Holmsted Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5JF, Erection of a mixed use commercial building for a flexible commercial use of Class E(g) ((i) Offices to carry out any operational of administrative functions, (ii) Research and development of products or processes and (iii) Industrial processes) and B8 Storage or distribution. Mr Hayward

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Consultant Ecologist

Summary

We have reviewed the Ecological Appraisal (Libby Morris Ecologist, June 2024) and Enhancement Strategy (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

In addition, we have reviewed the submitted Statutory Biodiversity Metric (January 2025), Biodiversity Impact Calculation Report (including Condition Assessments and Baseline Habitat map) (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025), Enhancement Strategy (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement (February 2025), relating to mandatory biodiversity net gains.

We note from the Ecological Appraisal (Libby Morris Ecologist, June 2024) that there are no buildings or trees on site with potential roost features for bats. Therefore we agree that no further surveys for bats are required.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application. However, please note we have no comments on Great Crested Newt as we have been instructed to leave comments on this European Protected Species to the NatureSpace Partnership.

This provides certainty for the LPA of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

The mitigation and enhancement measures identified in the Ecological Appraisal (Libby Morris Ecologist, June 2024) and Enhancement Strategy (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025) should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. This is necessary to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species particularly those recorded in the locality.

We support the recommendation that a Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy is implemented for this application (Ecological Appraisal (Libby Morris Ecologist, June 2024) and Enhancement Strategy (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025)) to avoid impacts from light disturbance. This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full. Therefore, technical specification should be submitted prior to occupation, which demonstrates measures to avoid lighting impacts to foraging / commuting bats, which are likely to be present within the local area. This should summarise the following measures recommended by Guidance Note:08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) will be implemented:

- o Do not provide excessive lighting. Light levels should be as low as possible as required to fulfil the lighting need.

- o All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- o Warm White lights should be used at <2700k. This is necessary as lighting which emits an ultraviolet component or that has a blue spectral content has a high attraction effect on insects. This may lead in a reduction in prey availability for some light sensitive bat species.
- o Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow.
- o Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- o Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

Biodiversity Net Gain

With regard to mandatory biodiversity net gains, it is highlighted that we support the submitted Statutory Biodiversity Metric (January 2025), Biodiversity Impact Calculation Report (including Condition Assessments and Baseline Habitat map) (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025), Enhancement Strategy (Libby Morris Ecologist, January 2025) and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement (February 2025). Biodiversity net gain is a statutory requirement set out under Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and we are satisfied that submitted information provides sufficient information at application stage. As a result, a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement, which also includes the following:

- a) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and postintervention biodiversity values.
- b) Pre and post development habitat plans.
- c) Legal agreement(s)
- d) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- e) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

In addition, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be secured for all significant onsite enhancements. However, we note that the post-intervention values have been provided and that no significant on-site enhancements are proposed in the proposals. As a result, we are satisfied that HMMP is not likely to be required by legal obligation or a condition of any consent for a period of up to 30 years.

We also support the proposed reasonable biodiversity enhancements for protected, Priority and threatened species, which have been recommended to secure net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 187d and 193d of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures should be outlined within a separate Biodiversity Enhancement Layout and should be secured by a condition of any consent.

This will enable LPA to demonstrate its compliance with its statutory duties including its biodiversity duty under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

Impacts will be minimised such that the proposal is acceptable, subject to the conditions below based on BS42020:2013. We recommend that submission for approval and implementation of the details below should be a condition of any planning consent."

The suggested conditions can be found in the full comments that are available on the planning file.

MSDC Drainage Engineer

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at Very low Risk of Surface water flooding.

The Flood Risk and Drainage team have no objection on Flood Risk and Drainage grounds, subject to the following condition.

Surface and Foul Water Drainage.

The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage and means of disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The building shall be occupied until all the approved drainage works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details. The details shall include a timetable for its implementation and a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime. Maintenance and management during the lifetime of the development should be in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is satisfactorily drained and to accord with Policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031 and Policy ...'z'... of the Neighbourhood Plan.

MSDC Street Naming and Numbering Officer

Please can you ensure that the street naming and numbering informative is added to any decision notice granting approval in respect of the planning applications listed below as these applications will require address allocation if approved.

Informative: Info29

The proposed development will require formal address allocation. You are advised to contact the Council's Street Naming and Numbering Officer before work starts on site. Details of fees and advice for developers can be found at www.midsussex.gov.uk/streetnaming or by phone on 01444 477175.

WSCC Drainage Strategy Team

Due to size, scale and nature of the development the LLFA have no objection or further comments to make.

WSCC Highways

Summary and Context

The proposals will be accessed from the B2114 (Holmsted Hill) which is located to the west of Cuckfield village, the road serves a number of industrial and commercial outlets. The road is subject to a 60-mph speed limit in this location. The proposed development is for a proposed storage building of 277.29sqm under a B8 use class. The highway aspects of the proposals are supported by way of a Transport Assessment (TA).

Access and Visibility

The site does have an existing vehicular access onto Holmsted Hill, no modifications are proposed to the existing access arrangements. The access is considered to be of sufficient geometry to accommodate the anticipated level of vehicular activity. Sightlines along Holmsted Hill from the existing point are considered acceptable.

A review of the access onto Holmsted Hill indicates that, there have been no recorded accidents within the last 3 years and that there is no evidence to suggest that the access and local highway network are operating unsafely.

Capacity

Via the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS) the TA has demonstrated that the proposed use would generate up to 1 two-way trips in any one hour, with a maximum of 15 two-way trips in the standard weekday peak periods (08:00am-09:00am and 17:00pm-18:00pm). The LHA would not raise a capacity concern with the anticipated amount of additional vehicular movements onto the local network.

Parking and Layout

The proposed parking of 4 spaces is considered acceptable. The LHA are not aware of that the previous use resulted in excess parking onto Hornshill Lane; it is considered unlikely that there would be an

increase in on-street parking as a result of this proposal. Cycle parking will be provided in accordance with the LHA's parameters.

Servicing and refuse collection will take place from the farm access adjacent to the building, as per the existing arrangement for the site. There appears to be sufficient space for larger vehicle types to enter the site, turn and exit onto the public highway in a forward gear.

Sustainability

The submitted TA does look at sustainable transport options within the vicinity. There are two bus stops to the south of the site with connections to Crawley. Realistically given the type of use, the majority of visits would be via the car. However as previously stated the proposal is not anticipated to result in a material increase in traffic movements over the permitted and historic uses.

Conclusion

The LHA does not consider that the proposal would have 'severe' impact on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (para 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Any approval of planning consent would be subject to conditions:

NatureSpace Partnership - West Sussex Newt Officer

It is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to have an impact on great crested newts and/or their habitats. However, as the development is within the red Impact Risk Zone, as modelled by district licence mapping, I recommend that the following informative should be attached to planning consent:

"The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning permission for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stage of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a licence."

The following recommendations are also provided to further reduce the likelihood of impacts on this species:

- o Any trenches left overnight should be covered or provided with ramps to prevent GCN from becoming trapped.
- o Any building materials such as bricks, stone etc. should be stored on pallets to discourage GCN from using them as shelter.
- o Any demolition materials should be stored in skips or similar containers rather than in piles on ground.

If the applicant wishes to completely avoid any risks relating to great crested newts, they have the option to enquire for their Council's District Licence, which provides full legal cover for any impacts to great crested newts and therefore removes the risk of having to stop works if great crested newts are found on site. More details on the District Licensing Scheme operated by the council can be found at www.naturespaceuk.com.

If at any point during construction works any great crested newts are identified, then the following instructions must be strictly adhered to:

- o Stop all works immediately and leave the area
- o Inform an ecologist immediately who will provide further guidance / instructions
- o Do not try to handle or rescue a great crested newt
- o Do not resume construction works until advised it is safe to do so by an ecologist

It should be noted that if an individual great crested newt is found at any point during the works, a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or District Licence (DL) may be required to permit works that would potentially cause disturbance and otherwise commit an offence under the relevant legislation.

Southern Water

Southern Water has determined the Flow rate for the above site will remain the same/similar as capacity is not an issue and no Southern Water assets will be affected. Therefore, Southern Water has no objections to this proposal.

TOWN / PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No comments received.

INTRODUCTION

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a mixed use commercial building for a flexible commercial use of Class E(g) ((i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions, (ii) Research and development of products or processes and (iii) Industrial processes) and B8 Storage or distribution.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

00/01293/FUL - Erection of a double garage - Permission - 21.07.2000
00/01705/FUL - Construction of an additional farm access track - Permission - 09.11.2000
02/00963/FUL - Rebuild demolished cow shed for ancillary office (B1 Use) - Permission - 13.06.2002
02/01240/FUL - Replacement cow shed - Permission - 09.07.2002
03/00601/FUL - Grain store and machinery storage. - Permission - 22.05.2003
03/00623/AGRDET - Replace existing barn - Planning Permission is Not Required - 08.04.2003
05/00503/FUL - Demolish steel frame barn and erect offices and bed sit accommodation. - Permission - 29.12.2005
07/00893/AGRDET - Extension to existing hardstanding to cover the site of a former slurry lagoon to the south. - Approval Details - Agric. Determination - 31.05.2007
08/01213/FUL - Creation of reedbeds and ponds to be used for fishing and duck shooting associated with improvements to the surface water and cattle slurry management arrangements at Holmsted Farm. See Supporting Statement for full description. - Permission - 09.02.2009
11/00046/FUL - Demolition of Corn Bins and erection of new Corn Store - Permission - 02.03.2011
12/00777/FUL - Retention of compound for dung and compost. - Permission - 04.05.2012
DM/15/3408 - Change of use of part of agricultural barn for B2 and B8 use. Namely agricultural machinery repairs, sales and distribution together with associated parking and display area. - Permission - 12.10.2015
DM/20/1529 - Change of use of agricultural building to a car body repair workshop (Use Class B2). - Permission - 21.08.2020
DM/20/2018 - Change of use of agricultural building to 4 x commercial units; 1 x fitness studio (Use Class D2), 1 x car polishing workshop (Use Class B1) (retrospective) and 2 x flexible commercial use (Use Class B1/B8/D2). Including siting of associated external toilet block and provision of car parking with alterations to door, windows and external staircases. - Permission - 30.09.2020
DM/20/3900 - Change of Use of part of an Agricultural Building to a Flexible Commercial Use (Cross Fit gym). - Prior Approval is Granted - 11.12.2020
DM/21/1306 - Change of use from a storage cabin associated with the lake to a one bedroom holiday let, with associated parking (Revised plans received 07.05.2021. Supporting Statement received 17.05.2021. Revised description received 17.05.2021) (Further drainage information received 02.06.2021) - Permission - 08.07.2021
DM/22/0201 - Siting of ten bell tents, one stretch tent together with associated car parking - Permission - 31.03.2022
DM/22/0443 - Change of use from Agricultural Grain Store to storage use (Class B8) (amended 27.04.2022). - Permission - 23.05.2022
DM/22/1952 - Erection of single storey, oak framed lodge building to be used as holiday let with new

access track and parking. - Permission - 18.08.2022

DM/24/0420 - To retain the use of the property known as The Garage Flat as a residential dwelling. - Permission - 23.07.2024

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The 0.26ha site area forms part of a mixed-use commercial and farm estate, which is accessed via an extended driveway onto Staplefield Road. The site is located on an area of hardstanding with open storage uses within an old clamp built from sleepers. Diagonally opposite to the north-west is a large agricultural/industrial building and to the north is a large converted timber barn, used for commercial purposes. The eastern and southern boundaries are marked by a steep bank which rises to an access track with sauna and camping facilities to the south, and the main car park to the estate to the east.

The site is located within the countryside and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is also designated as a Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone (Red).

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a mixed use commercial building for a flexible commercial use of Class E(g) ((i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions, (ii) Research and development of products or processes and (iii) Industrial processes) and B8 Storage or distribution.

The existing open storage uses and old clamp will be removed and replaced with a new building, which will be sited alongside the raised bank on the southern boundary, and 4 car parking spaces opposite, along the northern boundary, backing onto a hedgerow.

The proposed building will measure approximately 24m in length by 12m in width to a maximum height of 7.5m. Materials will be Kingspan boxed profile cladding (juniper green) and Big six profile (Grey fibre cement roof).

The building will provide for a flexible commercial use as per the description of the development.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point, the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan (Mar 2018)

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted at Full Council on 28 March 2018.

Relevant policies:

Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development

Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Policy DP21: Transport

Policy DP26: Character and Design

Policy DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution

Policy DP38: Biodiversity
Policy DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29 June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (Feb 2017)

Mid Sussex District Council formally 'made' the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan part of the Local Development Plan for the majority of the Parish of Ansty and Staplefield as of 2 February 2017. The policies contained therein carry full weight as part of the Development Plan for planning decisions within the relevant parts of Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street.

Relevant policies:

Policy AS3: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Other Legislation

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021-2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the Stage 1 hearings were concluded on 31 October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPS1: Climate Change
DPS2: Sustainable Design and Construction
DPS4: Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage
DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
DPN6: Pollution
DPN7: Noise Impacts
DPN8: Light Impacts and Dark Skies
DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DPC6: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
DPB1: Character and Design
DPT4: Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
DPE1: Sustainable Economic Development

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Nov 2020)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4 November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Relevant design principles include:

Principle DG37: Deliver high quality buildings that minimise their environmental impact

Principle DG38: Design buildings with architectural integrity and a sense of place

Principle DG39: Deliver appropriately scaled buildings

Principle DG42: Consider the location and design of services and external pipes

Principle DG44: Design of commercial buildings

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives to sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). The three objectives are economic, social and environmental.

Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states *'these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.'*

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that for both plan-making and decision-taking, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states:

'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.'

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states:

'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'

With specific reference to decision-taking, paragraph 48 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In addition, paragraphs 56 and 57 (planning conditions), 85 (building a strong, competitive economy), 88 and 89 (supporting a prosperous rural economy), 96 (achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings), 109 (promoting sustainable transport), 115, 116, 117 and 118 (highways matters), 131 and 135 (design), 163 (planning for climate change), 166, 167 and 168 (sustainability), 181, 182 (flood risk), 187 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment), 189 (National Parks and National Landscapes), 193 (biodiversity and ancient woodland), 198 (noise and light pollution) are also considered to be relevant to this application.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029 (2024)

This Plan has been prepared by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (including representatives from 15 local authorities, including Mid Sussex District Council) and sets out the long-term objectives for conserving this nationally important landscape.

High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development (Sep 2017)

High Weald National Landscape Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High Weald (Jul 2024)

This provides guidance on lighting proposals affecting the protected landscape and as a supporting document to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, it is a material consideration in planning matters.

West Sussex County Council: Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Aug 2019)

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle
- Design and Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on the AONB;
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Highways
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Sustainability
- Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Ashdown Forest
- Planning Balance and Conclusion

Principle

As noted above, planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In terms of policy designations, the starting point for this assessment is that the application site falls outside any built-up area, as defined by the District Plan. As such the site is located within the defined Countryside.

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- *it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- *it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

In respect of the latter criterion, Policy DP1 of the Mid Sussex District Plan is relevant, and states (in part):

'The total number of additional jobs required within the district over the plan period is estimated to be an average of 543 jobs per year. This will be achieved by:

o Encouraging high quality development of land and premises to meet the needs of 21st century businesses;
o Supporting existing businesses, and allowing them room to expand;
o Encouraging inward investment, especially the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge, creative or high technology industries; and
o Seeking the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support business growth - in particular high speed broadband connections.

Provision for new employment land and premises will be made by:

o Allocating 25 hectares of land as a high quality business park at Burgess Hill to the east of Cuckfield Road;
o Allocating further sites within the Site Allocations DPD;
o Incorporating employment provision within large scale housing development as part of a mixed use development where it is appropriate; and
o Allowing new small-scale economic development, in the countryside, including tourism (in accordance with Development in the Countryside policies).

Effective use of employment land and premises will be made by:

o Protecting allocated and existing employment land and premises (including tourism) unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of its use or continued use for employment or it can be demonstrated that the loss of employment provision is outweighed by the benefits or relative need for the proposed alternative use;
o Permitting appropriate intensification, conversion, redevelopment and/ or extension for employment uses providing it is in accordance with other policies in the Plan;
o Giving priority to the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings for business or tourism use and to the diversification of activities on existing farm units (in accordance with Development in the Countryside policies).'

The planning history from other applications advises that Holmsted Farm was primarily a dairy farm until circa. 2010 when the viability of the farm was affected by milk prices. Following this, the farm has focused on arable production and has diversified some of the redundant farm buildings into business use, and consolidated the arable farm enterprise to the west to ensure it became more efficient and so buildings could be used effectively. This provided the opportunity to diversify some of the farmland and buildings to support the continued viability of the farm. These uses include a gym, car workshop, offices, storage and light industrial (use classes E, B2 and B8), together with a site office. According to the signage at the entrance, there are 22 different uses/buildings at Holmsted Farm, with only 4 unlet.

The principle of changing the use from open storage on an existing area of hardstanding is therefore supported in terms of the above policy. The use of the building, whilst flexible, is in keeping with these surrounding businesses, and the scale, at 277 sq m, is appropriate. The proposal will increase the number of employees from 1 part-time employee (0.5 full-time equivalent) to 3 full-time employees. This will support the local economy and farming enterprise on the site, and has the potential to create more jobs in future, given its flexible use.

Although it is noted that sustainable transport options in the vicinity are limited (2 bus stops to the south of the site with connections with Crawley), the Highway Authority state that, realistically, the majority of visits will be via car given the use. However, given the small scale of the proposal, it is not anticipated to result in a material increase in traffic movements over the permitted and historic uses. In addition, the NPPF recognises in paragraph 110 that '*opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.*'

Accordingly, the principle of this development, including the flexible use, is considered acceptable in this location in accordance with Policies DP1 and DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the NPPF.

Design and visual impact on the character and appearance of the area

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Chapter 6 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD relates to high quality and sustainable building design and Design Principle DG44 seeks to ensure that employment buildings respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the District in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing.

The proposed building is considered to be of an appropriate scale and design in relation to the surrounding area, and would not be out of keeping, given the plethora of other agricultural or industrial structures within Holmsted Farm.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.

Impact on the High Weald AONB

The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The legal framework for AONBs (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW Act requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended Section 85 of the CRoW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to *'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area when discharging their functions in AONBs'*. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

Policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular:

- *the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
 - *the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
 - *character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB;*
- and
- *the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.*

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.'

Policy AS3 of the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan states:

'Development proposals within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the neighbourhood plan area (as shown on the Proposals Map) must demonstrate how they address the requirements of the NPPF, policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 or the District Plan once it is adopted;

conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB area; and demonstrate how they meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan; and for major development, proposals must include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.'*

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

The High Weald National Landscape Planning Technical Advice Note: Dark Skies in the High Weald (Jul 2024) provides guidance on lighting proposals affecting the protected landscape.

Given that the site is located within a group of buildings, and enclosed by a steep bank on two sides, and car parking beyond, it is therefore viewed in context with existing built forms. It is not isolated in the landscape and the materials are of an appropriate colour to its AONB context, so overall it is not considered that the proposal would detract from the visual quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and therefore the above policies and guidance would be met.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29)'*

Policy DP29 states:

'The environment, including nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life will be protected from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by only permitting development where:

Noise pollution:

- o It is designed, located and controlled to minimise the impact of noise on health and quality of life, neighbouring properties and the surrounding area;*
- o If it is likely to generate significant levels of noise it incorporates appropriate noise attenuation measures;*

Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.

In appropriate circumstances, the applicant will be required to provide:

- o an assessment of the impact of noise generated by a proposed development; or*
- o an assessment of the effect of noise by an existing noise source upon a proposed development;*

Light pollution:

- o The impact on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation areas of artificial lighting proposals (including floodlighting) is minimised, in terms of intensity and number of fittings;*
- o The applicant can demonstrate good design including fittings to restrict emissions from proposed lighting schemes.'*

Design Principle DG48 of the Mid Sussex Design Guide states:

'Noise disturbance and air/light pollution can be reduced through careful design including the following measures:

- Orientating or organising buildings so that the principal habitable rooms and sitting-out areas face away from the source of the pollution;*
- Incorporating design features such as recessed balconies and acoustic lobbies;*
- Constructing barriers such as garages or walls between the source of the pollution and dwellings;*
- Using landscape features (including trees and earth mounding) to absorb noise/air pollution and deflect light; and*
- Avoiding parking where it will create noise and headlight nuisance from vehicle movements.'*

The application site is located within a complex of commercial uses and enclosed by a raised bank to the south and east. The nearest residential dwelling, Holmsted Farm House, is sited approximately 60m to the north-east, and 2 and 3 Holmsted Farm Bungalows and Hollyhus, Holmsted Farm, are located slightly further away, all beyond the main car park.

As such, it is not considered that the proposed building, whereby activities will be contained within, will have any significantly harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents in terms of noise. Light pollution can be controlled by condition, as set out in the Ecology section of this report.

Accordingly, the scheme would comply with Policies DP26 and DP29 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Highways

Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'... Decisions on development proposals will take account of whether:

- The scheme is sustainably located to minimise the need for travel noting there might be circumstances where development needs to be located in the countryside, such as rural economic uses (see policy DP14: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy);*
- Appropriate opportunities to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternative means of transport to the private car, such as the provision of, and access to, safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport, including suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking, have been fully explored and taken up;*
- The scheme is designed to adoptable standards, or other standards as agreed by the Local Planning Authority, including road widths and size of garages;*
- The scheme provides adequate car parking for the proposed development taking into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development and the availability and opportunities for public transport; and with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan where applicable;*
- Development which generates significant amounts of movement is supported by a Transport Assessment/ Statement and a Travel Plan that is effective and demonstrably deliverable including setting out how schemes will be funded;*
- The scheme provides appropriate mitigation to support new development on the local and strategic road network, including the transport network outside of the district, secured where necessary through appropriate legal agreements;*
- The scheme avoids severe additional traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively, taking account of any proposed mitigation;*
- The scheme protects the safety of road users and pedestrians; and*
- The scheme does not harm the special qualities of the South Downs National Park or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through its transport impacts.*

Where practical and viable, developments should be located and designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

Neighbourhood Plans can set local standards for car parking provision provided that it is based upon evidence that provides clear and compelling justification for doing so.'

The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the application, in terms of the access, capacity, parking and layout, servicing and refuse collection, subject to securing the car parking spaces by condition. This would ensure compliance with Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Proposals for development will need to follow a sequential risk-based approach, ensure development is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The District Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) should be used to identify areas at present and future flood risk from a range of sources including fluvial (rivers and streams), surface water (pluvial), groundwater, infrastructure and reservoirs.

Particular attention will be paid to those areas of the District that have experienced flooding in the past and proposals for development should seek to reduce the risk of flooding by achieving a reduction from existing run-off rates.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be implemented in all new developments of 10 dwellings or more, or equivalent non-residential or mixed development unless demonstrated to be inappropriate, to avoid any increase in flood risk and protect surface and ground water quality. Arrangements for the long term maintenance and management of SuDS should also be identified.

For the redevelopment of brownfield sites, any surface water draining to the foul sewer must be disconnected and managed through SuDS following the remediation of any previously contaminated land.

SuDS should be sensitively designed and located to promote improved biodiversity, an enhanced landscape and good quality spaces that improve public amenities in the area, where possible.

The preferred hierarchy of managing surface water drainage from any development is:

- 1. Infiltration Measures*
- 2. Attenuation and discharge to watercourses; and if these cannot be met,*
- 3. Discharge to surface water only sewers.*

Land that is considered to be required for current and future flood management will be safeguarded from development and proposals will have regard to relevant flood risk plans and strategies.'

The Council's Drainage Engineer has raised no objection the development, recommending that drainage is controlled by condition, and hence the proposal would comply with Policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Sustainability

Policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'All development proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate and feasible according to the type and size of development and location, incorporate the following measures:

- Minimise energy use through the design and layout of the scheme including through the use of natural lighting and ventilation;*
- Explore opportunities for efficient energy supply through the use of communal heating networks where viable and feasible;*
- Use renewable sources of energy;*
- Maximise efficient use of resources, including minimising waste and maximising recycling/re-use of materials through both construction and occupation;*
- Limit water use to 110 litres/person/day in accordance with Policy DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment;*
- Demonstrate how the risks associated with future climate change have been planned for as part of the layout of the scheme and design of its buildings to ensure its longer term resilience.'*

Principle DG37 of the Council's Design Guide SPD deals with 'sustainable buildings' and states:

'The Council welcomes innovative and inventive designs that respond to the sustainability agenda by minimising the use of resources and energy both through building construction and after completion.'

It lists a number of issues that designers should consider, including, amongst others, the incorporation of renewable energy technologies.

Paragraph 164 of the NPPF seeks to ensure new development helps *'to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.'* In determining planning applications, paragraph 166 expects new development to *'take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.'*

The proposal sets out the following in the Sustainability Statement:

- The Proposal will be built to standards suitable for commercial use and will accord with Building Control standards.
- The Proposal will comply with Building Regulations Part G 2010 for water conservation. The dwelling [sic] will be fitted with fixtures and fittings that achieve a target of 105 litres per person per day.

The submitted Sustainability Statement is therefore considered acceptable in meeting the terms of the above policies and guidance. It should be noted that in respect of Policy DP39 of the District Plan, the wording of this policy is supportive of improving the sustainability of developments, but there are no

prescriptive standards for developments to achieve in respect of carbon emission reductions. Similarly, the wording of principle DG37 of the Council's Design Guide seeks applicants to demonstrate and consider sustainable matters as part of their design approach, including the use of renewable technologies, but it does not require their use.

Having regard for all the above, and given the context of the application, it is considered that the application complies with Policies DP26 and DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Design Guide SPD and the NPPF.

Ecology

Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) lists species of animal (other than birds) which are provided special protection under the Act. Under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild plants are protected from being uprooted without the consent of the landowner. In addition to the protection afforded by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), certain species are also covered by European legislation. These species are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, 7c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- *Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and*
- *Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and*
- *Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and*
- *Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and*
- *Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas.*

Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution.

Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such interests. Geological conservation interests include Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.'

Chapter 15 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. In particular, paragraph 193 states:

'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*

- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.'*

The Council's Ecological consultant has considered the proposal in relation to the Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain information and raises no objection to the scheme, subject to the imposition of conditions controlling lighting and biodiversity enhancement. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Chapter 15 of the NPPF (including paragraph 193) and the legislation outlined above.

The site is located within a designated Great Crested Newt - Impact Risk Zone (Red). Accordingly the West Sussex Newt Officer has made comments (reproduced at the start of this report), recommending that this matter can be dealt with by way of an informative on any permission. This would advise the applicant of their duty in respect of Great Crested Newts and accordingly there would be no conflict with the above legislation, policy and guidance.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application is deemed to have been granted subject to the biodiversity net gain condition for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

The biodiversity net gain condition is set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 7A, Part 2, 13(2). It states:

'The condition is that the development may not be begun unless—

- (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority (see paragraph 14), and*
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan (see paragraph 15).'

Ashdown Forest

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the competent authority - in this case, Mid Sussex District Council - has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site of focus is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The potential effects of development on Ashdown Forest were assessed during the Habitats Regulations Assessment process for the Mid Sussex District Plan. This process identified likely significant effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA from recreational disturbance and on the Ashdown Forest SAC from atmospheric pollution.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report has been undertaken for the proposed development.

Recreational disturbance

Increased recreational activity arising from new residential development and related population growth is likely to disturb the protected near-ground and ground nesting birds on Ashdown Forest.

In accordance with advice from Natural England, the HRA for the Mid Sussex District Plan, and as detailed in the District Plan Policy DP17, mitigation measures are necessary to counteract the effects of a potential increase in recreational pressure and are required for developments resulting in a net increase in dwellings within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation approach has been developed. This mitigation approach has been agreed with Natural England.

This planning application does not result in a net increase in dwellings within the 7km zone of influence and so **mitigation is not required**.

Atmospheric pollution

Increased traffic emissions as a consequence of new development may result in additional atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest. The main pollutant effects of interest are acid deposition and eutrophication by nitrogen deposition. High levels of nitrogen may detrimentally affect the composition of an ecosystem and lead to loss of species.

The potential effects of the proposed development are incorporated into the overall results of the transport model prepared for the Site Allocations DPD, which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal.

Conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report

The screening assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the proposed development.

No mitigation is required in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

A full HRA (that is, the appropriate assessment stage that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European site) of the proposed development is not required.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the Development Plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the NPPF. The Development Plan in this instance consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan.

For the reasons set out within the assessment section, it is considered that the application complies with Mid Sussex District Plan Policies DP1, DP12, DP16, DP17, DP21, DP26, DP29, DP38, DP39 and DP41 and Policy AS3 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal will result in additional employment opportunities, whilst allowing an existing business to expand in a sensitive manner. The design is appropriate to the High Weald AONB and biodiversity net gain will be a further benefit to the scheme. There will be no significantly adverse impact to neighbouring amenity in terms of noise pollution. Drainage and sustainability can be controlled by condition. There will be no likely significant effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC.

For these reasons, the proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Watt

