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Haywards Heath
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Our ref: 13785
Date: 16 February 2026

By email only: Planning Department, planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk

Thank you for requesting advice on this application from Place Services' ecological advice service. This service provides advice to planning officers to inform Mid Sussex District Council planning decisions with regard to potential ecological impacts from development.

Application: DM/26/0131
Location: Land South And West Of Upper Imberhorne School Imberhorne Lane East Grinstead West Sussex
Proposal: Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Planning Permission (Ref. DM/23/2699) relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 550no. new residential units.

Thank you for consulting Place Services on the above Reserved Matters application.

Summary

We have reviewed the submitted documents relating to ecology provided for this application. This includes:

- Landscape Management Plan GLS_080_127_1802 (Green Landscape Studio Ltd., December 2025) and associated drawings
- Landscape Specification GLS_080_127_1801 (Green Landscape Studio Ltd., December 2025) and associated drawings
- Illustrative Landscape Masterplan BL-LP-10 Rev B (Stantec, October 2023)
- Planting plans_RevB Sheet 1-17 GLS_080_127_1501-17 Green Landscape Studio Ltd., January 2025)
- Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., December 2025)
- BNG Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., December 2025) (contains Habitat Conditions Sheets, Baseline Habitats Map and Post-development Habitat Map)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric (December 2025)

- Street Lighting Layout sheets 1 to 6 EVO20033126-LD-001 Rev A (Enerveo, December 2025)

We have also reviewed the decision notice for DM/23/2699 and note that the following conditions require submission of the specified documents:

Conditions relating to the full planning permission only:

- Condition 6: No development above base course level (in the case of highway infrastructure) or ground floor slab level (in the case of a building) to commence until full details of the hard and soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to the LPA.

Conditions relating to the outline planning permission only:

- Condition 18: Prior to commencement of any relevant phase, approval of the details of the siting, design, appearance and landscaping of the site ("reserved matters") to be obtained from the LPA.

Conditions relating to both the full and outline planning permission:

- Condition 31: No development to take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been approved by the LPA.
- Condition 40: Prior to commencement, a Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy
- Condition 41: No development above base course level (in the case of highway infrastructure) or ground floor slab level (in the case of a building) shall commence within a phase, until a lighting design scheme for biodiversity has been approved by the LPA.
- Condition 42: After one year from planning consent, further ecological surveys and updating of ecological measures
- Biodiversity Net Gain (1): Approval of a biodiversity gain plan.

As a result, we have the following comments relating to the submitted information, relating to the previous decision notice:

Biodiversity Net Gain

As this application was submitted before 12th February 2024, it is agreed that this application is technically exempt from the Biodiversity Gain Condition.

However, the decision notice has stated that the application is subject to the Biodiversity Gain Condition. In addition, the s.106 agreement approved by the LPA and developer for the original application has included a requirement for management and monitoring for a period of 30 years from the completion of development.

Therefore, it is recommended that requirements set out in the legal agreement are followed and that this application should demonstrate a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain for biodiversity units, regardless of the application technically being exempt.

The applicant has submitted the following documents relating to biodiversity net gains:

- BNG Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., December 2025) (contains Habitat Conditions Sheets, Baseline Habitats Map and Post-development Habitat Map)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric (December 2025)

This demonstrates a total net change of habitat units of 8.12 (11.35%) and a total net change of hedgerow units of 17.64 (281.92%). However, the calculations also show a trading loss due to the loss of -5.83 units of Lowland mixed deciduous woodland. As a result, the calculations are not compliant with Rule 1 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool. The BNG Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., December 2025) acknowledges that trading rules are not fully met but argues that this should not be required because mandatory biodiversity net gains do not technically apply.

We note this issue was not identified as part of the original application, as the woodland habitat was classified as ‘mixed scrub’ in the previous ecological assessment. Any habitat classified as ‘Lowland mixed deciduous woodland’ should technically meet the Priority habitat definition under s.41 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended). As a result, to allow the LPA to demonstrate its biodiversity duty under the NERC Act 2006 (as amended), we recommend that the trading rules must be addressed within Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool via on-site or off-site enhancements.

As a result, the applicant will still need to submit a formal application to discharge the Biodiversity Gain Condition as it has been included in the decision notice, which should be separate to the reserved matters applications. As a result, a Biodiversity Gain Plan should be submitted prior to commencement, which also includes the following:

- a) A Overall and Phased Biodiversity Gain Plan form (Using the Government’s template: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan-phased-development-templates>)
- b) The completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development and post-intervention biodiversity values for the phase of development and overall development.
- c) Pre and post development habitat plans for the phase of development and overall development.
- d) Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan for significant on-site enhancements
- e) Biodiversity Gain Site Register reference numbers (if using off-site units).
- f) Proof of purchase (if buying statutory biodiversity credits at a last resort).

As the development is proposed to be a phased development, it is indicated that there is an alternative approach for meeting statutory BNG requirements. This includes the submission of the following documents, instead of a Biodiversity Gain Plan form:

- an Overall Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted to and approved by the planning authority before any development can begin; and

- a Phase Biodiversity Gain Plan for each phase must be submitted to and approved by the planning authority before the development of that phase can begin.

The purpose of the Overall Biodiversity Gain Plan is to confirm that there is a clear upfront framework for how the biodiversity gain objective of at least a 10% gain is expected to be met across the entire development. Each Phase Biodiversity Gain Plan will subsequently set out a phase's contribution to biodiversity net gain and confirm progress towards the overall biodiversity gain objective for the development once clear proposals for each phase have been developed. Therefore, the final development phase will be expected to demonstrate how the 10% biodiversity net gains will be delivered across the overall scheme.

In addition, a [Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan \(HMMP\)](#) should be secured for all [significant on-site enhancements](#). Based on the current submitted calculations, it is recommended that the following is classified as significant on-site enhancements:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland - 0.07928ha
- Other neutral grassland - 4.08603ha
- Modified grassland - 3.45397ha
- Mixed scrub - 2.14902ha
- Urban tree - 2.9437ha
- Reedbeds - 0.06476ha
- Species-rich native hedgerow - 2.154km

These enhancements should be managed and monitored in line with the requirements set out in the s.106 agreement.

We note that a Landscape Management Plan GLS_080_127_1802 (Green Landscape Studio Ltd., December 2025) and a Landscape Specification GLS_080_127_1801 (Green Landscape Studio Ltd., December 2025) has been submitted for this application. However, these documents are not sufficient for the purpose of BNG. This is because they do not relate to significant on-site enhancements or set out management measures to clearly achieve the proposed condition values. In addition, a risk register has not been included, an annual works plan capable of being delivered over a 30-year period or a monitoring strategy in line with the s.106 agreement requirements.

As a result, we do not recommend that the LPA adopts the conclusions of the Landscape Management Plan or Landscape Specification and suggest that a HMMP should be agreed as part of the discharge of the 'Biodiversity Gain Plan' for the long-term management and monitoring measures of significant on-site enhancements.

Landscaping scheme:

We broadly support the planting schedules included in the Planting plans_RevB Sheet 1-17 GLS_080_127_1501-17 Green Landscape Studio Ltd., January 2025). However, we note that the woodland creation (lowland mixed deciduous woodland), in line with the Statutory Biodiversity

Metric – Calculation Tool, is not being appropriately implemented. This is because the area of woodland creation is referenced as being created via a simple 5 species native scrub mix, which will not achieve the intended habitat type in line with the post development habitat plan.

In addition, it is not clear how 'Reedbed' Priority habitat will be created in line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool proposals.

As a result, it is recommended that the planting schedules will need to be updated to be more closely aligned with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Calculation Tool. Alternatively, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide needs to be updated to be more realistic and deliverable, which may require further off-site enhancements being secured to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain.

Ecology assessments:

We also note that the Ecological Impact Assessment (Ecosupport Ltd., December 2025) has been submitted in support in Condition 42. We understand this includes the results of an update walkover in November 2025, following ecological surveys in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, an updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Partnership) in 2021 and further ecological surveys in 2024. Therefore, we would support this document in the discharge of Condition 42.

We note that the CEMP: Biodiversity to support Condition 31 and the Farmland Bird Compensation Strategy to support Condition 40 has yet to be submitted. Therefore, we look forward to reviewing them when they become available, either at reserved matters or a separate discharge of condition application.

Lighting:

We note that Street Lighting Layout sheets 1 to 6 EVO20033126-LD-001 Rev A (Enerveo, December 2025) have been submitted to partly address the requirements of Condition 41 - lighting design scheme for biodiversity. As a result, it is indicated that that further information should be supplied to determine the impacts upon roosting, foraging and commuting bats. This should include the following in line with GN08 Bats and Artificial Lighting (ILP & BCT 2025):

- Contour Plan with 0.2, 0.5, 1, 5, and 10 lux clearly shown, with a separate table showing minimum and maximum illuminance/lux values. This should use a horizontal calculation plane representing levels of illuminance at ground level and should clearly be using Constant Light Output (CLO) luminaires calculated to a 'Day 1' output.
- An interpretation of lighting and contour plans by a suitably qualified ecologist, which clearly sets out ecological sensitive lighting areas and how the scheme has been designed to avoid potential impacts.

As a result, we recommend that further information is submitted before the discharge of condition 41.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Yours sincerely,

Hamish Jackson ACIEEM BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecological Consultant
Place Services at Essex County Council



Place Services provide ecological advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.