Date: 12th August 2011
Our ref: 28060
Your ref: BE/81/10

Phoenix House
33 North Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2PH

Mrs S Leeson
Planning Services
Arun District Council

By email only, no hard copy to follow

Dear Mrs Leeson

Proposal: Seasonal polytunnels for soft fruit production (EIA application).
Location: Land south of Groves Farm, Bersted, PO20 2DX.

Thank you for your letter dated 15th July 2011 consulting Natural England on the above planning application. We have the following comments to make:

Landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA)
Natural England welcomes the submission of the LVIA as part of this EIA application. We have considered the landscape and visual impacts of this proposal and concluded that this application does not meet our criteria for involvement with casework. We would stress that this should not necessarily be taken to indicate that the effects on landscape and visual amenity are appropriate, but are a matter for the Local Planning Authority to consider.

As the LVIA indicates that the site is discernable in long distance views from the South Downs National Park we would advise the Council to seek the opinion of the National Park Authority on this proposal.

Protected species

Bats
Natural England is satisfied that the survey information provided by the applicants suggests that no bats will be affected by the proposals. Consequently, we have no comments to make in relation to these species at present.

Breeding birds and widespread reptiles
The information supplied in support of the application highlights the impacts resulting from this proposal upon the above species. Detailed advice on survey effort and mitigation requirements for these species can be found within our protected species standing advice available from http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/spatialplanning/standingadvice/default.aspx. In accordance with our standing advice, we recommend that you consult the standing advice to establish whether sufficient survey effort has been undertaken to fully assess the impacts of this proposal along with the appropriateness of any necessary mitigation measures proposed in respect of these species.

Biodiversity enhancements
This application may provide opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes. The Council should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant, if it is minded to grant permission for this application. This is in accordance with Paragraph 14 of PPS9. Additionally, we would draw your attention to Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) which states that 'Every *public*

authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. Section 40(3) of the same Act also states that '*conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat*'.

