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Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Albery House, Springfield Road
Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2GB
Email: Planning@horsham.gov.uk

26th November 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Objection to Planning Application DC/25/1700 – Change of use of land for the stationing of 4no. gypsy and traveller static caravans for residential purposes and 5no. associated dayrooms at The Slips, West End Lane, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9RG

I write to formally object to the above planning application. Before addressing the technical and policy reasons for refusal, I must express disbelief that this application is even being seriously considered.

This is a proposal to establish what is, in effect, a commercial gypsy traveller site – intended to be rented out to unknown future tenants – on a narrow strip of land that directly adjoins existing residential properties in a quiet rural lane. My garden shares a boundary with this site. This is not a remote piece of land tucked away from the community; it sits immediately next to people's homes.

The applicant has not identified who will live on this site. No personal circumstances have been disclosed. No specific needs have been demonstrated. This is a speculative rental development dressed up as meeting traveller accommodation needs. The applicant appears to be treating the planning system's provisions for gypsy and traveller sites as a vehicle for commercial gain, exploiting policies designed to help families with genuine accommodation needs.

This application is a resubmission following application DC/25/0519, which proposed 5 pitches on the same site. Despite the reduction to 4 pitches, this site remains fundamentally unsuitable for a gypsy traveller development of any size.

1. Direct Impact on Neighbouring Residential Amenity

I have first-hand experience of the harm this development would cause. As a neighbour whose property directly adjoins the proposed site, I have already suffered significant and ongoing harm to my amenity from the current unauthorised campsite use. This includes:

- **Noise disturbance:** Dogs barking at all hours of the day and night, loud music continuing into the early hours, and frequent arguments – some of which have required police intervention.

- **Smoke pollution:** Smoke regularly emanates from the site, particularly during summer months. This has made it impossible to sleep with windows open and has significantly reduced our enjoyment of our garden.
- **General disturbance:** The cumulative effect of these issues has materially diminished the peaceful enjoyment of our home.

Given the stewardship of the land to date, I have no doubt that if the land use is formalised and intensified with a permanent gypsy traveller site, the loss of amenity suffered by neighbouring residents will also intensify. Policy 23 of the Horsham District Planning Framework explicitly requires that "development will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties." The current situation already fails this test; any permanent development on this site would make it significantly worse.

2. A Fundamentally Unsuitable Site

This site is simply not suitable for a gypsy traveller development. The Council's own technical consultees have confirmed that the application fails to meet basic requirements:

- **Fire safety:** Environmental Health (10 November 2025) confirms the proposed caravans are too close to the boundary, failing to meet minimum fire safety separation requirements.
- **Protected trees:** The Arboricultural Officer (19 November 2025) confirms the site is too narrow (only 35m wide) and that development would place protected TPO oak trees under "significant future pressure for lopping/felling." Two exceptional oaks with veteran tree potential would face "significant negative impact" on their long-term retention.
- **Drainage and sewage:** Environmental Health has raised unresolved concerns about sewage treatment capacity and whether the ditch can absorb treated effluent.
- **Light pollution:** Potential nuisance from lighting to neighbouring properties has been identified.

These are not minor issues that can be resolved through conditions or modest amendments. They demonstrate that this narrow field, bounded by protected trees and immediately adjacent to residential properties, is simply the wrong location for this type of development.

3. Speculative Commercial Development with No Identified Need

Paragraph 24 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires Local Planning Authorities to consider:

- The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants
- Other personal circumstances of the applicant

These considerations cannot be applied because the applicant has disclosed nothing about who will actually occupy this site. This is not an application from a traveller family seeking a home – it is a speculative commercial venture by a developer seeking to profit from rental income.

The change of applicant from [REDACTED] (DC/25/0519) to [REDACTED] (DC/25/1700), while the agent (Promethean Planning Ltd) remains the same, confirms the commercial nature of this enterprise. Since winning a planning appeal for another gypsy traveller site a few hundred metres away on Stonepit Lane (DC/24/0367), the

applicant appears to be under the impression that a generalised and theoretical unmet need for gypsy traveller pitches in the wider district gives them carte blanche to develop as many rural sites in Henfield as they can acquire.

The planning system's provisions for gypsy and traveller accommodation exist to help families with genuine housing needs – not to enable property speculation. I trust that the planning process is sufficiently robust to prevent this type of strategic abuse of the system.

4. Disproportionate Concentration in Henfield

The applicant's planning statement cites a need for 128 pitches across the Horsham District for 2023-2040. Henfield accounts for approximately 3.8% of the district population. A fair and proportionate contribution would therefore be approximately 4-5 pitches.

However, Henfield has already contributed at least 13 pitches during recent years (DC/17/1374: 3 pitches; DC/21/1796: 5 pitches; DC/21/0573: 2 pitches; DC/24/0367: 3 pitches). Additional pitches are being sought through DC/24/0506 (4 pitches) and this application (4 pitches). If approved, Henfield would be providing approximately 21 pitches – over four times its fair share.

This proposed over-concentration within the West End Lane / Stonepit Lane area is in direct conflict with Policy C from the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, which requires a balanced distribution across the district.

5. Overdevelopment and Harm to Rural Character

The proposal seeks to turn a narrow rural field into a dense residential compound with access roads, hardstanding, static caravans, dayrooms, parking for multiple vehicles, and space for touring caravans. The application proposes 5 dayrooms for only 4 caravans – a mismatch that suggests either poor planning or anticipation of future expansion.

With 8 cars and 4 additional touring caravans anticipated, this would resemble a small housing estate rather than a rural site. It is not in keeping with the local area and not in harmony with the rural environment. Policy 26 of the HDPF seeks to protect the rural character of the countryside against significant intensification of use – this proposal clearly conflicts with that policy.

6. Inadequate Screening and Misleading Information

The applicant claims the site is "well screened on all boundaries." This is misleading. As a neighbour, I can confirm that the site is clearly visible from adjoining properties. The mature trees provide no screening at eye level.

Furthermore, the site plan continues to include the deliberately misleading label "Animal Training Centre" for the neighbouring field. There is no animal training centre on this land – the stable block shown has since burnt down. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the importance of transparency and accuracy in planning applications.

7. Conflict with Planning Policy

The proposed development conflicts with key planning policies:

Policy 23 of the HDPF

Policy 23 requires that gypsy and traveller development will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. This application fails that test. The site directly adjoins residential properties, the applicant has demonstrated poor stewardship of the land to date, and the Council's own consultees have identified fire safety, drainage, and light pollution concerns affecting neighbours.

Policy 26 of the HDPF

Policy 26 seeks to protect the rural character of the countryside against inappropriate development and significant intensification of use. Converting this agricultural field into a residential compound clearly conflicts with this policy.

Paragraph 24 of the PPTS

Paragraph 24 requires consideration of the personal circumstances of the applicant and their need for accommodation. Since no occupants have been identified and no personal circumstances disclosed, these policy provisions cannot support this speculative application.

Paragraph 25 of the PPTS

Paragraph 25 requires LPAs to strictly limit new traveller site developments in open countryside outside areas allocated in the development plan. This site is not allocated – it is a speculative application on unallocated countryside land.

Paragraph 27 of the PPTS

Paragraph 27 concerns temporary permissions where there is a lack of 5-year site supply – it does not create a presumption in favour of permanent development, nor does it override policies protecting the countryside and neighbouring amenity. This application seeks permanent permission, not temporary relief for a family in hardship.

Conclusion

The fundamental question is simple: should a speculative commercial rental development, with no identified occupants and no demonstrated personal need, be permitted immediately adjacent to existing residential properties in a quiet rural lane?

The answer must be no. This site is unsuitable for a gypsy traveller development. It is too narrow, too close to protected trees, too close to existing homes, and too far from what can reasonably be justified by any genuine local need – given that Henfield has already contributed four times its fair share of pitches.

The proposed development is in clear conflict with Policies 23 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, and with national planning guidance requiring fair distribution, landscape sensitivity, and the protection of local amenity. It seeks to exploit provisions meant for families with genuine accommodation needs to secure permanent residential development for commercial gain.

As a neighbouring resident who has already suffered significant harm to my amenity from the unauthorised use of this land, I respectfully request that this application be refused.

