

Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Date: 10 October 2025
Our ref: 09943

For the attention of: Sam Whitehouse

Application ref:

DC/25/1327

Location:

Land East Of Mousdell Close Rectory Lane Ashington RH20
3GS

Proposal/Description:

Erection of 74 dwellings with associated access, parking and
landscaping.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full planning application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

Summary

Not supportive on landscape grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
No landscape objection subject to attached recommendations and / or conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Further information required prior to determination	<input type="checkbox"/>
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	<input type="checkbox"/>

This review is based on a desktop study with a site visit of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents, and a site visit carried out on the 19/09/2025. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

Site Context:

The site comprises a broadly square shaped parcel of grassland situated south of Rectory Lane. Residential development is located to the east and west. The northern boundary is marked by mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees.

To the south, the site is bordered by mature vegetation including oak trees and a drainage ditch.

The eastern and western boundaries are largely defined by the rear gardens of homes along Penn Gardens (to the west) and Rectory Lane (to the east).

Planning Policy Context:

Horsham District Planning Framework

The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) (HDPF) Proposals Maps identifies the site as being located outside the defined built-up area boundary and therefore designated as countryside.

- Policy 26: Countryside Protection
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 Regulation 19

As of October 2025, the Horsham District Local Plan (Regulation 19) is 'submitted' and is regarded as relevant. The site is draft allocated within this plan as ASN1: Land east of Mousdell Close and is covered by Strategic Policy HA5: Ashington Housing Allocations which sets that the site will be allocated for at least 75 homes and states:

2. To ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SPA / Ramsar site any application will be supported by a HRA and a wintering bird survey.
3. In addition to meeting national and Local Plan requirements, development will be supported where proposals demonstrate:
 - a. There is connectivity from the site to key local amenities and services and that these are enhanced through improvements to local pedestrian and cycling networks.

Further Policies include:

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character. This policy aims to conserve and enhance Horsham's diverse landscape character. It requires developments to respond positively to local character assessments and integrate with the surrounding natural environment. Updates include alignment with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and neighbourhood plans.

Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection

Focused on safeguarding the countryside from inappropriate development, this policy now references key landscape evidence documents. It also incorporates the High Weald AONB Management Plan to guide proposals near designated landscapes.

Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes

This policy protects nationally designated areas such as the South Downs National Park and National Landscapes. While unchanged from earlier drafts, it reinforces the need for sensitive design and mitigation to preserve landscape quality.

Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

This policy promotes the enhancement of green infrastructure and biodiversity. It now requires a 12% biodiversity net gain and encourages developments to contribute to multifunctional landscapes that support ecology, recreation, and climate resilience.

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

This policy includes requirements for tree-lined streets and inclusive design, supporting the integration of landscape features into urban environments and enhancing visual and ecological value.

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) 2019-2031

The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021 and the following policies are considered relevant:

- Policy ASH5: Landscaping and Countryside Access
- Policy ASH10: Chanctonbury Nursery – Located to the east of the site.
- Policy ASH11: Land West Of Ashington School – Located to the south and east of the site.

Review of the proposal/submitted information:

Landscape Visual Appraisal (LVA)

The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology. Overall, the LVA has been conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute (LI).

We agree with the conclusions of the assessment which states that "*There would be an overall Minor adverse effect on rural character within the local area, with a Moderate adverse effect at the Site level*" for landscape character and "*minor adverse*" for the visual impact which is limited to Rectory Lane for public views. Consideration for Residential Amenity for those at Penn Gardens has been assessed from the access road. We would have welcomed the inclusion of private views to be assessed as part of a Residential Visual

Amenity Assessment (RVAA) to better inform appropriate layout and design approach to the western boundary.

Layout and Appearance

- We have concerns regarding the location of visitor parking along the Public Open Space on the entrance of the site and advise revising the layout to improve the gateway appearance.
- We strongly recommend the avoidance of maintenance strips such as on the western boundary. These are at high risk of anti-social behaviour and fly tipping; instead, we recommend a revised layout to incorporate the enhanced boundary into the public realm.
- The proposals do not satisfy Policy HA5 with regards to point 3.a. of which requires proposals to improve local pedestrian and cycling networks in order to enhance connectivity from the site to key local amenities and services. We strongly encourage the application to provide a holistic approach towards the development and surrounding allocations ASH10 and ASH11 and maximise potential to provide a connection with the PRoW 2407 to the east.

Hard and Soft Landscaping

Planting

- The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (Dwg. LLD3503-LAN-DWG-011) identifies a large amount of parking abutting the primary road with marginal planting. The submitted streets scenes such as Dwg. PL-50 demonstrate how the layout has limited capacity to allow for sufficient street trees in accordance with paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Strategic Policy 17 and Strategic Policy 20 of the Horsham District Local Plan and Policy ASH5 of the ANP. Street Scene A-A in particular illustrates the missed opportunity to provide street trees on the external plot roadsides.

Play

- We question the sufficiency of amenity space proposed for the two blocks on the western boundary and recommend more diverse landscape in addition to an amenity lawn.
- There appears to be no area identified for play provision on site and given the relative isolation of the development from other existing facilities in Ashington we would recommend that the scheme incorporates informal or natural features within the POS. The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan supports the integration of landscaping and links into the countryside, which aligns with the use of natural materials and informal design approaches. Furthermore, the Plan's emphasis on community well-being and open space provision reinforces the importance of accessible and diverse play environments that cater to a range of ages and abilities.
- We recommend that an informal and imaginative approach be adopted in the design of these play areas. The use of natural landforms, varied topography, water features, and

materials such as logs and boulders can help create engaging and visually appealing environments that encourage exploratory and creative play

Boundary Treatments

- We welcome the orientation of dwellings on the southern boundary to front the boundary of Rectory Road and the use of brick walls where boundaries abut the public realm. To further increase safety, we recommend the use of defensible planting on boundaries abutting the public realm in line with Secure by Design principles.
- We have some concerns regarding the security of southern boundaries to plots 16 and 33 where close board fencing is proposed onto the public realm (Dwg. PL-14).

SuDS

- We note the SuDS basin located to the south is proposed to include a reed bed. We question whether the basin is intended to be wet or dry and raise concerns regarding the invasive nature of reed beds. Clarification on depths and contouring is requested to ensure appropriateness. Basin sides should ideally be 1:4 or less, but no steeper than 1:3 to allow effective maintenance and provide a multifunctional space.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be integrated further in to the built environment and maximum value for space should be a key principle of design and layout. Thoughtfully designed SuDS can enhance the character and functionality of green open spaces, offering aesthetic appeal alongside vital environmental benefits. These can be incorporated throughout with the use of roadside rain gardens and swales. Where these features can be distributed around the site, close to the source of run off. The use of these will reduce the need for extensive basins and avoid the need for underground tanks, such as is proposed for the central public open space which restricts the amount and type of planting possible.
- To maximise their amenity value, careful attention must be given to ground contouring, planting schemes, and the design of inlets and outlets. Moving away from standardised solutions like precast concrete and galvanised handrails allows for more natural, engaging features that contribute positively to the landscape.
- SuDS also present a valuable opportunity to boost biodiversity and community engagement. By incorporating diverse vegetation - such as wildflowers, nectar-rich plants, trees, grasses of varying heights, and wetland species - attenuation areas can become vibrant ecological habitats. Avoiding fencing where possible maintains accessibility and visual openness, while gentle slopes and strategic planting help manage safety. Interpretation boards can further support public understanding, highlighting the ecological and functional value of SuDS and fostering a sense of stewardship within the community.

- Permeable paving should be used in areas with high footfall or visibility, such as pedestrian zones, shared spaces, and entrances. Permeable paving is highlighted in the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as a valuable surface-level feature that supports the SuDS approach by managing runoff close to its source. It allows rainwater to infiltrate through the surface into underlying layers, reducing surface water volumes and improving water quality. When integrated early into site design, permeable paving can serve both functional and aesthetic purposes - enhancing the visual appeal of streetscapes, courtyards, and parking areas while contributing to flood risk management and pollution control.

Summary:

Overall, we agree with the findings of the LVA and consider the principles of development acceptable. However, we have some concerns regarding the layout and provision of play space. We recommend our above concerns are addressed prior to approval. Following any approval, we recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

Recommended Conditions

1. Soft Landscaping:

No development above ground level shall take place until a scheme of soft landscaping for the site drawn to a scale of not less than 1:200, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include accurate indications of the position, species, girth, canopy spread and height of all existing trees and hedgerows on and adjacent to the site and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection during the course of development. Any retained trees removed, dying or becoming seriously damaged or diseased within five years of commencement shall be replaced within the first available planting season thereafter with planting of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent for any variation. The works shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans and in accordance with a timetable to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

2. Hard Landscaping:

No development above ground level shall take place until details of a hard landscaping scheme for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include proposed finished levels and contours showing earthworks and mounding; surfacing materials; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulations areas; hard surfacing materials; minor artefacts and structures (for example furniture, play equipment, refuse and/or other storage units, signs, lighting and similar features); proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (for example drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines, indicating lines,

manholes, supports and other technical features); retained historic landscape features and proposals for restoration where relevant. The scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of any part of the development (or within such extended period as may first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority).

3. Landscape Management Plan:

No development above ground level shall take place until a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules and periods for all soft landscape areas (other than small privately owned domestic gardens) together with a timetable for the implementation of the landscape management plan, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

4. Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Details:

Prior to the commencement of the construction of the dwellings details of SuDS shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This should include:

- i. detailed topographical plans
- ii. details and specification of the proposed inlet and outlet elements
- iii. a timetable for the implementation of the SuDS feature
- iv. a management and maintenance plan

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

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Horsham 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.