



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 13939
Date: 4 February 2026

For the attention of: Shazia Penne

Application ref: DC/25/2079
Location: Cotlands Paddock Horsham Road Cowfold West Sussex
RH13 8AH
Proposal/Description: Use of land for the stationing of 4no. static caravans for
(Gypsy and Traveller) residential purposes and associated
day rooms.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	<input type="checkbox"/>

This review is based on a desktop review of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents, without a site visit. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Cowfold and therefore in a countryside setting. Despite scattered development within the surrounding area, the area retains a strong rural unspoilt character. The site consists of modified grassland fields, scattered mature trees and woodland to the north. The eastern site boundary follows existing hedged field boundary made up of mix of native woody species. The Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) describes the condition of this hedge as unmanaged, with a dense shrub layer extending up to 3-4m in height. The landform across the site is largely level.

- 1.2. The surrounding landscape is largely open pasture defined by well-established hedgerows, treelines and substantial woodland blocks, giving the site a high degree of enclosure. A Public Rights of Way (COW-1756) runs along the eastern site boundary before turning eastwards towards the adjacent woodland block to the north-east.
- 1.3. The Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment places the site within the M1: Crabtree & Nuthurst Ridges & Ghylls character area, noted for its strong pattern of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, small to medium size irregular and regular-shaped pasture fields and confined views. The relevant key issues include “Decline in hedgerow management” and “Introduction of suburban features in localised areas, e.g. intrusive gates, fences.” Overall sensitivity to change for this character area is identified as high, with relevant key sensitivities to suburbanisation, changes in traditional land management and incremental improvements to the character of the minor roads.
- 1.4. Management guidance encourages conserving the rural, unspoilt landscape and conserving the strong pattern of woodland, shaws and hedgerows through management, planting and natural regeneration.

2.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

- 2.1. The proposal is for the use of land for the stationing of four static caravans for residential purposes and four associated day rooms.
- 2.2. Access would be provided through the existing vehicular access track from the A281, with an additional section created through the field to service the caravan plots beyond the existing mature trees on site. To avoid introducing urbanising features and remain compliant with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), the access point should keep a simple, rural appearance through the use of timber post and rail fencing and timber gate. This approach will also maintain the rural character of the road.
- 2.3. In terms of visual impact, the caravans are set back from the road behind the mature trees on the site. We note the recommendations under the approved application DC/25/0054 to strengthen the planting along Horsham Road (A281). Existing and proposed vegetation will help limit visibility of the development.
- 2.4. An Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) has been submitted showing root protection areas (RPAs) and proposed protective fencing. The PEA recommends a 10m buffer zone between the existing habitats (woodland to the north, hedgerow to the east and mature trees within the site) and the construction site. This buffer should be reflected in the protective fencing layout.
- 2.5. The AMS does not include a full assessment of the eastern boundary hedgerow within the site’s red line boundary, therefore the condition along the entire length is unknown. Potential glimpse views of the site from the PRow could be available, particularly during winter months. Additional planting to reinforce vegetation along the eastern boundary is

recommended, particularly along the section facing the end of the new access track/turning head. We also note that the tree protection plan does not include the areas around the site access point and associated working areas. The fencing will need to be extended to provide fuller protection of the RPAs. We recommend that the tree protection plan is amended prior to determination.

- 2.6. Details of surfacing materials and boundary treatments for each plot are not provided in the submitted Proposed Block Plan (2509CO_001, REV 004). To comply with Policies 23 and 33 of the HDPPF, close board fencing should be avoided. Instead, timber post and rail fencing combined with native hedgerow planting is recommended for subdividing each plot. Hard landscaping details must be provided, noting that the proposed surfacing treatment should be both permeable and sympathetic to the rural surroundings.
- 2.7. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with BNG requirements, but we note that the site area used in the assessment does not match the site's red line boundary for this application and therefore has not taken into account the loss of grassland to the new access track. The proposed habitat enhancements to the northeast are welcomed. New tree and hedgerow planting is also proposed within the site. However, the proposed arrangement requires refinement to better reflect the local landscape pattern. In particular, the alignment of the new hedgerows should be revisited, and the currently proposed isolated tree line should be replaced with hedgerow trees to ensure a more characteristic feature. Additionally, the screening hedge proposed north of the access track would be more effective, and more consistent with the local landscape character, if aligned with the existing line of oak trees.
- 2.8. To accord with Policy 25, we consider that the proposed soft landscaping scheme requires further review to ensure that the new landscape features contribute positively to the local landscape character, and integrate appropriately within the wider setting. To achieve this, we recommend the following:
- The alignment of the new hedge adjacent to the new access track should be reviewed to follow a line extending from oak tree T14 toward the eastern hedged boundary. Furthermore, the proposed tree line should be replaced with hedgerow trees and incorporated within this new hedgerow.
 - While we welcome the use of a new hedge planting to the north side of the new access track for screening and visual mitigation, we recommend reviewing its location and repositioning it to follow the line formed by the existing oak trees within the site.
 - To support the long-term conservation of the three oak trees on site and protect the integrity of their soft-ground Root Protection Areas (RPAs), it may be beneficial to formally demarcate these zones, such as with timber post-and-rail fencing, to prevent any future encroachment from new hard surfacing, car parking, children's play equipment, or other uses following completion of the development. See Figure 1 below for our preferred indicative layout, showing the proposed hedgerow planting

with hedgerow trees alignment (in blue) and the suggested demarcation fencing (in yellow), for consideration.



Figure 1

3.0. Summary

- 3.1. We have no major concerns with the principle of development and proposed nature of the proposals. We accept that there will be a degree of impact on the landscape character as a result of introducing built form within the site.
- 3.2. We do however, have concerns with the indicative soft landscape scheme as shown in the submitted plan, and we recommend this is reviewed in response to our above comments, in order for the proposals to align with Policies 23, 25 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, and to manage the residual landscape and visual effects to acceptable levels.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure strengthening planting along the A281 to reinforce screening is implemented.
- Review and realign proposed hedgerows layouts to reflect existing field patterns.
- Integrate hedgerow trees instead of a separate linear tree feature.
- Strengthening planting along the eastern boundary to mitigate views from the PRoW.
- Use rural-appropriate fencing (post-and-rail with hedging) rather than close-board fencing to subdivide each plot.
- Provide details of hard surfacing; ensure permeable and visually sympathetic materials.

- We recommend the tree protection plan is amended prior to determination. Protective fencing will need to be extended to provide full protection of the RPAs. Ensure protective fencing during construction reflects both RPA and the 10m ecological buffer.
- Review BNG calculations to include the full site area and access track losses.

4.0. Recommended Conditions

- 4.1. If minded for approval, we would recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME.

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, density, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roofs, planting preparation and establishment operations. We would recommend an alternative to plastic guards, such as the use of perimeter protective fencing where appropriate, or guards manufactured from 100% biodegradable materials.

The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, built features, fencing and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or loss due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of loss and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

- a) Drawing/s showing the extent of the LMP i.e. only showing the areas to which the LMP applies, areas of private ownership should be excluded.
- b) Written Specification detailing:
 - All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.
 - All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.
 - Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment.
 - All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.
- c) Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.
- d) Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.

The LMP could be submitted separate or be included within the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) conditioned for the guarantee of BNG delivery. If combined, the establishing management and maintenance operations should clearly be identified from the long term management and monitoring plan.

Reason - To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic.

Please 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.

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.