

Recommendations of the Planning & Services Committee meeting held on

17th February 2025

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee will consider the following planning applications:

DC/24/1676 – New Place Nurseries, Pulborough, West Sussex

Reserved Matters application pursuant to Outline Planning Consent DC/21/2321, as varied by application DC/24/1204. The Reserved Matters make up details of 160 no dwellings, associated internal access roads, parking and landscaping for areas east of the right of way. Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered.

PPC Comments: Members voted to object unanimously to this application for the following reasons:

Safety

- No mention of how the railway track, directly connected to the site, can be made safer for residents.
- Include cycleway access to the pump track and country park.

Transport

- One entrance will not be sufficient for this number of houses.
- An independent survey of traffic in the surrounding area should be undertaken.
- How will construction traffic access the site? How will resident safety be managed.
- The developer needs to confirm that all Rights of Way will be maintained, including the route to Broomer's Hill which must not become a connecting road.
- The traffic management plan needs to demonstrate how Drovers Lane, a private road, will not be used for construction or future travel use to the proposed site.

Archaeology

- As the Design and Access Statement acknowledges, this is within an Archaeological Notification Area, with potential for below-ground remains from the later prehistoric or Roman periods. Members need confirmation that a full archaeology survey will be undertaken prior to any development.

Green Infrastructure

- Hedges rather than close board fencing and brick walls – this site must be permeable for nature.
- Members agree with Andy Clout, assistant arboriculture officer at HDC, that conserving existing trees, which harbor thousands of birds during the nesting season, is not sufficient.
- Members need more information on the Country Park and the Pump Track
- Clarification is required to understand who will be responsible for maintenance of the public open spaces.

Blue Infrastructure

- The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) states that soak aways will not be used due to head deposits, this is surprising as Riverside, Oddstones and Brookfields, all have soak aways. The geology shows there are no superficial deposits and only greensand as the bedrock. There is one soak away onsite which is toward the south near Glebelands. The soak away issue needs to be addressed and should be accepted as a suitable approach or otherwise clearly evidenced as to why not.
- The FRA states 170 properties; the planning application is 160!
- The FRA states that there will be roadside swales; there are none shown on any of the layout plans.
- The FRA indicates that there is a ditch to the west of the site along the railway which joins the pond, this is the watercourse which runs through the village (behind Hardwoods Garage & under Tesco etc.) there is the possibility that the railway track drainage also discharges into the pond and this should be clarified. The pond overtopped this winter and flowed across the lane to the Allotments, this was an exceedance event affecting infrastructure, whilst it is accepted that there is no part of the development on this side, the developers are responsible it is proposed that the development provide a proposal to deliver some Natural Flood Management in this location and provide a designed exceedance pathway across the lane.
- The FRA assumes that Southern Water will adopt some elements of the surface water drainage as set out in the SSG. This is not a done deal; detailed discussions need to be had with Southern Water to ensure they will adopt and maintain elements of the Surface Water Drainage as there is no legal requirement for them to adopt and maintain.
- The FRA/drainage documents show a high-level maintenance schedule which is essentially a cut and paste from CIRIA guidance it shows little thought about how the development will actually function and whether there are any nuances which need to be understood and included within the maintenance schedule.
- The suggested approach of who will maintain the surface water features is not acceptable and too vague, there should be more detail on who will manage and maintain the features i.e. a commitment. This should also clearly identify the boundaries of the features and the extents of the maintained area, any features such as rubbish screens or other hard engineered elements of the features. This is to ensure there is no ambiguity over the features and who has responsibilities to manage and maintain. This will ensure the Surface water system will function as designed for the lifetime of the development.
- The FRA indicates that the southern swales along the boundary will discharge into an existing culvert – there should be a requirement that the developer needs to make sure the culvert is clear and flowing free without hinderance.
- There should be a phased construction plan for the SuDS and surface water management in how it will be constructed alongside the development and how these elements support the overall surface water management of the development and what mitigation will be put in place to ensure construction of the development does not materially affect the performance of the system i.e. silt loadings being washed into the SuDS. with this in mind it could be considered reasonable to ensure the developer only

hands over the system once all properties have been completed and occupied and the system checked and demonstrated that it will work as designed for the lifetime of the development.

- The FRA shows an exceeding route plan, it is extremely simplistic and does not really show whether any properties on the development would potentially be at risk. There is grave concern re; the exceedance flow route when it gets to Drovers Lane and Glebelands. The potential volume and flow of water will naturally flow along both Glebelands south, west and then flow down The Spinney. This has the potential to affect the bungalows and other properties in Glebelands. Members
- need to see measures to mitigate this risk, raingardens on the grass verges for example.
- There is a document within the drainage suite of documents with its cover sheet showing a 2021 date, but the next page shows approval in October 2024! It is a minor point but if the document has gone through a QMS approach that should not really be missed.
- The drainage channel on the site boundary opposite Drovers Lane has a history of overflowing leaving muddy sludge across the road. It was agreed that the developers be requested to include flood alleviation measures to ensure future flooding can be avoided.

Sustainability

- Members welcomed the goal of ensuring the development will be fossil fuel-free, but the developer should confirm that every home will have solar panels and heat pumps as well as whole house ventilation systems.
- Members questioned why there are no green roofs?

Design

- The wrong homes were chosen as exemplars for the Character Study, no mention is made of the 2013 Pulborough Design Statement which should be reviewed and considered prior to providing house designs, Members do not want the mistakes made in recent years to be repeated.
- The proposed streetscapes are bland and uninspiring and have no relation to Pulborough village design, these appear to be standard developer style house types.
- The Parish Council, by way of the 'Neighbourhood Plan', seeks a commitment to build affordable housing for the community. The current design does not meet this commitment.

In addition to the objection, members agreed to write to the developers MD, head of Public Relations, to highlight that the Parish Council is in the process of creating an updated supplementary planning document and asking that all parties work together to make this an exemplary development, one that the developer could use to promote in other areas.

DC/25/0092 – J Sainsbury, Stane Street, Codmore Hill, West Sussex

Erection of new plant equipment on the store roof and side elevation of the food store.

PPC Comments: No Objection

DC/25/0150 - Peacocks Paddock Stall House Lane North Heath Pulborough

Change of Use of land to a traveller's caravan site consisting of 1no. mobile home, 1no. touring caravan and 1no. utility dayroom and associated development.

PPC Comments: Members voted to object unanimously to this application for the following reasons:

Impact on Local Infrastructure:

- Potential strain on local infrastructure, such as the narrow lanes. Additionally, lack of sewage systems and drainage.
- There is a public footpath running through the site.

Environmental Impact:

- Potential environmental impact of increased human activity, including waste disposal, noise pollution and disruption to local ecosystems.
- The site is right next to the railway. The train horn noise is extremely loud.
- The site suffers with flooding issues so is likely not suitable.

Inadequate Access to Services:

- The proposed site will put an increasing burden on the already overstretched essential services such as schools, healthcare facilities and public transportation, which could negatively impact the well-being of the community.

Historical Significance:

- The site would be near a Roman road which is of historical significance. The proposed development would compromise its value and integrity.

Social Cohesion and Integration:

- Members are concerned about the potential impact on social cohesion and integration. Development of this site has strong potential for social tensions.

Precedent Setting:

- By approving this application, it could set a precedent for similar developments in the future, potentially altering the character of the area and the intended land use.

Visual Impact on the Landscape:

- The visual impact of the proposed caravans on the landscape would not be in-keeping with the area which is heavily focussed on farming.

Listed Properties:

- There are several listed properties in the area. These are of historic significance and may be affected.

Wildlife:

- The site is home to a variety of wildlife, including protected species such as bats, barn owls and nightingales.

Water neutrality:

- This site would increase the rate of water abstraction necessary in the area. This would adversely affect local water neutrality requirements.

Other additional points:

- Open, rural countryside being destroyed. (Fails to accord with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Council's Planning Framework).
- This part of the district already has several traveller sites.
- The location is unsustainable, and completely reliant on motor vehicles to access services. (The proposal represents unsustainable development, contrary to Policies 1, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and guidance within the NPPF).

- Infrastructure (Policy 3 & 10)
How is water neutrality being addressed? Plan for sewage and wastewater and the impact on existing residents.
Scale of the expansion not suitable for the scale of the current settlement.
- Design (Policy 15 & 21)
Impact on Laurel Cottage, a Grade II listed building** less than 30 metres away.
Proposed plan out of character for the local area. Smaller proposed developments on the same road declined.
Impact on the landscape.
- Impact on residents (Policy 13 & 43)
Negative impact on amenities of residents.
Policy 43 finds several traveller sites, why not expand one of these sites rather than create another?
- Transport (Policy 23 & 24)
Increase in traffic on a dangerously narrow single track lane. Increased danger to pedestrians.
Ecology (Policy 13 & 14)
Impact on protected species like the Great Crested Newt.
Impact on woodlands and hedgerows.
Impact of the additional hard standing.

Further critical points:

There has been no water quality assessment since 1937. Water quality assessment should be conducted before planning permission is granted. Water neutrality statement/calculation as per Part G of the Building Regulations is not accurate.

There is also concern over the following policies:

- Policy 26 Countryside Protection, outside the built-up area boundaries the rural character of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development.
- Policy 32 Quality of New Development, the development should complement locally distinctive characters and heritage, this application is directly opposite a historic listed building.
- Policy 33 Development Principles, development will be required to ensure a design that avoids unacceptable harm to the nearby property and land. This clearly fails as it is directly opposite an historic listed building.
- Policy 34 Cultural and Heritage Assets, development should retain and improve the setting of heritage assets including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including historic public realm features". As per the previous report from the heritage officer. Due to the closeness of the site to Laurel Cottage greater weight should be given to protecting the cottage
- There has been no traffic assessment undertaken. Vehicle movements along this very narrow country lane could increase significantly (more than 5500 per annum). These would cross two public footpaths and with no designated areas for walkers, horse riders, cyclists or vehicles. Therefore, the application fails policy 40 of Horsham Planning Policy Framework on points 4, 5 and 6 of the policy.

Additional points to consider

As of February 2024, a development of this size should have provided a biodiversity net gain (BNG) statement showing at least a 10% uplift. They have not provided a BNG statement

- The survey for great crested newts was conducted the wrong time of year. This was conducted in November and should have been between mid-March and June. There should have been a minimum of four surveys
- Ponds within 500 metres of the site should have been surveyed. This was not the case.
- Design Access Statement Incorporating the Heritage Statement (section 6.12) refers to an earlier version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Removal of grassland cannot be mitigated by planting more hedges, different habitats (ref ecology report).
- Inaccuracies in all the documents provided e.g. section 6.5 of the Design Access Statement Incorporating the Heritage Statement notes "The low profile of the caravans together with dense vegetation alongside Stall House Lane, will ensure they are not seen from areas within the public realm, preserving the rural sense of the area". This is not correct as a public right of way (footpath) runs through the site, making the caravans clearly visible.
- Not sufficiently close to a fire hydrant, should be within 175 metres, the nearest hydrant is, in fact 260 metres away.
- The other policy Peacocks Paddock fails is policy 40. The proposed development does not support Policy 40 "Sustainable Transport", points 2,5, and 6 shown below:
- Point 2, supports and improves the existing transport system (road, rail, cycle).
- Point 5, is in areas where there are, or will be a choice in the modes of transport available.
- Point 6, minimises the distance people need to travel and minimises conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.
- The route to the nearest store has no, or very narrow, footpaths which are unlit and means walking alongside the remarkably busy A29.
- The size and scale and amount of development would formalise the rural character of the countryside location and would be contrary to Policies 23, 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the emerging local plan.
- The proposal is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework (2024) paragraph 215 which states: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Therefore, the accumulative harm of this development and the proposed neighbouring site outweighs the public benefits
- The proposed development would adversely impact the user amenity and experience of the two adjacent Public Rights of Way - Stall House Lane and the footpath that runs alongside the site.
- Approval of the development would be inconsistent with other planning decisions on Stall House Lane e.g. Neighbouring traveller site (DC/24/1573) that has been refused.

Although the council does not have a 5 year housing supply, for traveller pitches, a single pitch is of little consequence in satisfying the overall demand. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Consequently, the proposal for a new dwelling and pitch on the site is unsustainable development contrary to policies 1, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).