

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Amanda Wilkes
FROM:	WSCC – Highway Authority
DATE:	28 April 2025
LOCATION:	Stonehouse Farm Handcross Road Horsham RH13 6NZ
SUBJECT:	DC/25/0403 Full Planning Application to form a comprehensive masterplan including: 1. Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed. 2. Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath. 3. Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	25 April 2025
RECOMMENDATION:	More Information Required

This is the first WSCC Highways response to the above planning application seeking full Planning Application to form a comprehensive masterplan including:

- 1.** Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g)) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed.
- 2.** Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2-no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath.
- 3.** Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3-no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping.

Site location and access.

The site is located at Stonehouse Farm, Handcross Road (B2210), Horsham. Three access points currently serve the site – two immediately adjacent to that highlighted in 1 above and also providing access to that set out in point 3, too. A separate access (the

third access) is found west of the previous two and is proposed to serve that set out in point 2 above.

Handcross Road is subject to the National Speed Limit of 60mph in proximity to the eastern access points serving that set out in points 1 and 3 above, whereas the access serving that set out in point 2 above is within a section of the road subject to a 50mph speed limit.

Sites and transport assessment for proposals.

1. Rationalisation and enhancement of existing commercial facilities (Use Classes E(g)) B2 and B8 at Stonehouse Business Park including demolition of two buildings and their replacement with new Class E(g), B2 and B8 facilities. Extension of existing building to form a new office and wardens' accommodation. Existing mobile home removed.

This part of the development is considered in Transport Technical Note Ref. S/OT/ITS19302-007ATN, dated 27 February 2025, produced by i-Transport LLP, Transport Consultants.

The Technical Note (TN) describes the site as being currently occupied by four commercial buildings, one agricultural building, an office and associated car parking. Existing access is provided via a priority-controlled junction onto the B2210 Handcross Road (found on the eastern-most part of the site's frontage to Handcross Road). The applicants intend to retain the existing uses, quantum of parking and access to the site.

A second access also provides access to the site (found on the western-most part of the site frontage to Handcross Road). However, no reference is made to this in the TN. Applicant to confirm what this access is to be used for and whether the intention is to retain it.

The TN states that it is proposed to increase the floor space of the office and one of the commercial units, with the agricultural unit being demolished, resulting in an overall net decrease in development on the site. However, the TN continues by saying that the proposals will result in a minor net increase of 59.30 sqm of development on site, which conflicts with the previous statement. Applicant to explain this, please. The proposed site layout plan is included as Appendix B and is extracted as Image 2.2, both found in the TN.

To reflect the trip generation of the existing site and the proposed increase, vehicular trip rates have been obtained from the TRICS database for office and commercial units with trip rates per 100sqm for the typical network peak of 08:00 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 18:00. The full TRICS outputs are contained within Appendix C and the resultant trip generation is shown in Table 2.2 found below (taken directly from the TN):

	Trip Rate			Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way	In	Out	Two-Way
Office						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	1.323	0.223	1.546	1	0	1
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.101	1.088	1.189	0	1	1
Commercial						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	1.463	0.488	1.951	21	7	28

Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.450	0.450	0.900	7	7	13
Total						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)				22	7	29
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)				7	8	15

The existing site generates a total two-way movement of 29 and 15 vehicles in the morning and evening peak periods respectively. Table 2.3 (again taken directly from the TN) summarises the forecast trip generation associated with the proposed development.

	Trip Rate			Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way	In	Out	Two-Way
Office						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	1.323	0.223	1.546	1	0	1
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.101	1.088	1.189	0	1	1
Commercial						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	1.463	0.488	1.951	23	8	30
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.450	0.450	0.900	7	7	14
Total						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)				24	8	31
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)				7	8	15

The proposed site will generate a total two-way movement of 31 and 15 vehicles in the morning and evening peak periods respectively.

Table 2.4 from the TN, below, summarises the net traffic impact of the proposals:

	Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	2	1	3
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0	0	0

The applicant states that the proposed development would result in a de minimis impact on trip generation compared to the extant use on site.

The TN states that there are no changes proposed to the parking, servicing or access arrangements.

Access by non-car modes would, however, remain limited, although only small increase in terms of trips results and from development of the type as largely exists at present.

2. Decommissioning of the Anaerobic Digester and re-use of the existing 2no buildings for storage and office uses (Class E (g) and B8) and the diversion of a public footpath.

A Transport Statement (TS) - Ref. i-Transport Ref: ITS19302-008A, dated 27 February 2025 - provides details and assessment of the site, both in existing and proposed form.

Site access and description of development.

The TS states that the site is currently occupied by an anaerobic digestate facility, barn and associated turning areas of hardstanding. The proposals seek to convert the digestate facility and barn into a warehousing unit and associated office respectively.

The existing access to the site is via a priority-controlled junction onto the B2210 Handcross Road. The applicant proposes to slightly modify this to make it suitable for all anticipated users of the site.

The site currently comprises an anaerobic digestate facility with an associated barn and turning and hardstanding areas. The existing site layout arrangement is included as Appendix A and extracted as Image 2.1 found in the TS.

The proposals will re-develop the existing anaerobic digester and barn to provide an office and warehouse building respectively. The proposed site layout plan is included as Appendix B and extracted as Image 2.2, also found in the TS.

The existing and proposed accommodation schedule for the site is outlined in Table 2.1 taken from the TS and found as follows:

Building	Existing (sqm)	Proposed (sqm)	Difference (sqm)
Barn (converted to Warehouse)	2,448.95	2,906.76	457.81
Anaerobic Digester (converted to Office)	790.00	2,054.92	1,264.92
Total	3,238.95	4,961.68	1,722.73

The TS states that the fundamental aspects of the proposal remain consistent with earlier consents and current configuration of the site. It further explains that the roadways within the site and concrete apron for turning are to remain at their current locations, albeit the internal access and manoeuvring space within the car park will be supplemented to improve its functionality.

With regard to car parking, a total of 44 parking spaces are to be provided within the car park, in accordance with the requirements of the proposed operator. The TS states that this will be less than the maximum parking provision as set out in the West Sussex parking standards. However, the TS adds that there is additional space within the site to accommodate any overspill parking, should it be required, as well as HGV parking within the yards associated with the commercial uses.

It is proposed to retain the existing site access, with modifications to the arrangement from the B2210, as shown on drawing ITS19302-GA-013C of which an extract is provided as Image 3.1 found in the TS.

The description of works is as follows:

The access will remain in its existing location, however, the opportunity is being taken to improve the junction where possible. This includes the following amendments to geometric parameters:

- Visibility splays of 2.4m x 110m to the east and 2.4m x 111m to the west the by the removal / cutting back of vegetation adjacent to the highway.
- 2m x 2m pedestrian to vehicle visibility splay.
- 4.0m junction kerb radii.
- Widening of the access to facilitate vehicles passing at the access.

In addition to the geometric changes, the applicant also proposes the following measures:

- Provision of passing bays on the internal access road.
- The diversion of public footpath 1708 from the road to a path adjacent to the access.

Road safety considerations.

Stage 1 Road Safety Audit - An independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA), undertaken by Grange Transport Consulting on the 22nd January 2025, accompanies the TS and reviews the road safety elements of the proposed access arrangements.

The TS states that a GG119 compliant Designer's Response has been prepared by the Design Organisation (Document Ref: ITS19302-009 GG119 RSA Response) to address comments raised in the RSA, which are summarised in Table 3.1.

Five 'problems' were identified and these are summarised in the Table 3.1. Although the applicant appears to accept all the recommendations put forward in the Safety Audit, a full Road Safety Decision Log (the Designer's response) is required by the Highway Authority to add its comments and agreed actions for the site. Applicant to provide in Microsoft WORD format, please, for editing purposes.

With regard to the visibility splays offered, these are less than those recommended in DMRB for a road with a 50mph speed limit. Applicant to provide further explanation and justification about this, please, particularly given that trips to and from the site are shown to increase if this proposal is approved.

Additionally, the left turn out by an HGV does, as the TS states, oversail the opposing traffic lane on exit. Applicant to provide comparison between existing site level of usage by HGVs and the proposed level of usage.

PRoW comments will need to be sought directly from the WSCC PRoW team.

Traffic Impact.

To reflect the trip generation of the existing and proposed uses on site, the applicant has used vehicular trip rates obtained from the TRICS database for the existing and proposed uses with trip rates per 100sqm for the typical network peak of 08:00 - 09:00 and 17:00 - 18:00.

The full TRICS outputs are contained within Appendix C and resultant trip generation is shown in Table 4.1, both in the TS. The applicant has assumed that for purposes of undertaking a robust assessment, they have it has been assumed that the existing barn

generates an insignificant amount of traffic and therefore has not been factored into the existing trip generation. In the absence of traffic data for the anaerobic digestion plant, the 'Industrial Unit' land use category has been used.

	Total Vehicle Trip Rate			Total Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way	In	Out	Two-Way
Anaerobic Digester – 790 sqm						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	0.200	0.053	0.253	2	0	2
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.074	0.053	0.127	1	0	1
Total						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)				2	0	2
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)				1	0	1

Table 4.1 – Existing trip generation

Table 4.2, also take from the TS (below) summaries the forecast trip generation associated with the proposed development:

	Total Trip Rate			Total Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way	In	Out	Two-Way
Warehouse - 2906.76 sqm						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	0.273	0.160	0.433	8	5	13
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.132	0.301	0.433	4	9	13
Office – 2054.92 sqm						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	1.323	0.223	1.546	27	5	32
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.101	1.088	1.189	2	22	24
Total						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)				35	10	45
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)				6	31	37

Table 4.2 – Proposed traffic generation

The proposed site will generate a total two-way movement of 45 and 37 vehicles in the morning and evening peak periods respectively. Table 4.3 (below) summaries the overall net traffic impact of the proposals:

	Total Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	+33	+10	+43
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	+5	+31	+36

Table 4.3 – net traffic impact

Table 4.3 shows that the proposed development will result in an increase in traffic movements compared to the extant use on site. The site is shown to generate an additional two-way movement of 43 and 36 vehicles during the morning and evening peak periods respectively. The TS also explains that the movements are tidal in nature – during both the morning and evening peak periods, with few opposing movements. Nevertheless, the modifications to the access include the provision of passing bays to improve two-way operation.

Table 4.4, below, summarises the likely HGV movements associated with the proposals:

	HGV Trip Rate			HGV Traffic Generation		
	In	Out	Two-Way	In	Out	Two-Way
Warehouse - 2906.76 sqm						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	0.068	0.059	0.127	2	2	4
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.036	0.046	0.082	1	1	2
Office – 2054.92 sqm						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)	0.000	0.004	0.004	0	0	0
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0	0
Total						
Morning Peak (08:00 – 09:00)				2	2	4
Evening Peak (17:00 – 18:00)				1	1	2

Table 4.4 – HGV trips

The TS shows that the proposed development would generate a two-way movement of four and two HGVs within the morning and evening peak periods respectively, which represents an HGV movement every 15 – 20 minutes to/from the local highway network. Due to the small incidence of HGV movements, the applicant considers that it is very unlikely that HGVs will simultaneously access and egress the site and also add that they consider that the proposed occupant of the site would be able to manage inbound and outbound movements so that vehicles do not pass one another.

However, no evidence is put forward to show what the comparison with the existing use is HGV trip-wise, nor who would be the proposed occupier of the site. This information is required.

Additionally, daily trips (for both the existing and proposed developments and for car and HGV traffic) is not provided. Applicant to provide, please.

Clearly, there is a significant difference in terms of car trips compared to the existing use, and it is not known what additional HGV trips would be compared to the previous use. Mindful of the visibility issue highlighted earlier as being below that recommended in DMRB, plus the oversailing of left-turning HGVs out of the access, the applicant is invited to respond further about why they consider that this would be acceptable, given the shortcomings of the access arrangements at the point the access meets Handcross Road.

And finally, the access provides little or no access provision for walking and cycling (although a narrow footway is found alongside the north side of Handcross Road at this location). If offices are proposed, suitability of access for such modes needs to be considered, including access to public transport.

3. Residential redevelopment of the Jacksons Farm site including the demolition of existing barns to provide 3no. dwellings with access, parking, and landscaping.

Very little information is provided about this part of the development. As far as can be determined from the documents submitted as part of the application, access to these properties appears to be via the access arrangements for 'component 1' of this development, as detailed above. As such, there is no bespoke provision for access to these properties by non-car modes nor to facilities and services in the wider community, resulting in a reliance on car-based trips only.

Applicant to provide a response to this and to show how travel by non-car modes has been considered for this part of the development.

It is recommended that a Travel Plan be provided for the site (as a whole, but covering the various component parts of the overall 'masterplan')

And finally, the TS and TN should be updated to demonstrate a vision-led approach to the development, as-per NPPF requirements.

Conclusion.

Additional information is required from the applicant. The details of this is found in the main text of this response in **bold** text and summarised below:

For component part 1 of the development:

1. The TN states that it is proposed to increase the floor space of the office and one of the commercial units, with the agricultural unit being demolished, resulting in an overall net *decrease* in development on the site. However, the TN continues by saying that the proposals will result in a minor net **increase** of 59.30 sqm of development on site, which conflicts with the previous statement. Applicant to explain this, please.

For component part 2 of the development:

1. A full Road Safety Decision Log (the Designer's response) is required by the Highway Authority to add its comments and agreed actions for the site. Applicant to provide in Microsoft WORD format, please, for editing purposes.
2. With regard to the visibility splays offered, these are less than those recommended in DMRB for a road with a 50mph speed limit. Applicant to provide further explanation and justification about this, please, particularly given that trips to and from the site are shown to increase if this proposal is approved.
3. The left turn out by an HGV does, as the TS states, oversail the opposing traffic lane on exit. Applicant to provide comparison between existing site level of usage by HGVs and the proposed level of usage.
4. Evidence is required to show what the comparison with the existing use is HGV trip-wise, and who the proposed occupier of the site is proposed to be.

5. Daily trips (for both the existing and proposed developments and for car and HGV traffic) is required for comparison purposes.
6. As there is a significant difference in terms of car trips compared to the existing use, and it is not known what additional HGV trips would be compared to the previous use and mindful of the visibility issue highlighted earlier as being below that recommended in DMRB, plus the oversailing of left-turning HGVs out of the access, the applicant is invited to explain why they consider that component 2 of the masterplan would be acceptable.
7. And finally, the access provides little or no access provision for walking and cycling (although a narrow footway is found alongside the north side of Handcross Road at this location). If offices are proposed, suitability of access for such modes needs to be considered, including access to public transport.

For component part 3 of the development:

1. Very little information is provided about this part of the development. As far as can be determined from the documents submitted as part of the application, access to these properties appears to be via the access arrangements for 'component 1' of this development, as detailed above. As such, there is no bespoke provision for access to these properties by non-car modes nor to facilities and services in the wider community, resulting in a reliance on car-based trips only. Applicant to provide a response to this and to show how travel by non-car modes has been considered for this part of the development.

For ALL component parts of the site:

1. It is recommended that a Travel Plan be provided for the site (as a whole, but covering the various component parts of the overall 'masterplan').
2. It is recommended that the TS and TN be updated to demonstrate a vision-led approach to the development, as-per NPPF requirements.

Please re-consult when the above information is available, at which point the Highway Authority will consider the proposal further.

Thank you.

Tim Townsend
West Sussex County Council – Planning Services