



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 19391
Date: 16 July 2026

For the attention of: Hannah Darley

Application ref: DC/26/0506
Location: Land at Grid Reference 510699 117812 To The South of Dukes Copse Community Bramble Lane Thakeham West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Change of Use of land to Gypsy/Traveller site comprising 2 pitches with the siting of a mobile home and dayroom per pitch.

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	☒
No landscape objection, subject to attached recommendations and/or conditions	☐
Further information required prior to determination	☐
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	☐

This review is based on a desktop study of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The site is located to the north of Thakeham and comprises a small pasture bound by existing hedgerow. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpath THA-2399 and THA-2475 are located to the east of the site and extend from the settlement of Thakeham into Priority Habitat Deciduous woodland to the north. Ancient Woodland Dukes Rough is located to the north.
- 1.2. The Red Line Boundary includes an access track approximately 800m in length from Cray's Lane, accessed close to St Mary's Church.



2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

2.1. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- Policy 23: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Policy 24: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25: District Character and the Natural Environment
- Policy 26: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Thakeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

2.2. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- Thakeham 1: Spatial Plan for the Parish
- Thakeham 6: Design
- Thakeham 8: Sub division of Agricultural Land
- Thakeham 9: Development in the Countryside
- Thakeham 10: Green Infrastructure & Valued Landscapes
- Thakeham 14: Soils

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

- 3.1. The Planning Statement states that the current baseline of the site includes existing post and rail gates, internal timber and metal fencing, areas of crushed hardcore and other hardstanding, old timber sheds, and storage containers. However, no site context photographs have been provided to illustrate the existing baseline conditions described.
- 3.2. Application DC/23/0905, for the temporary siting of a mobile home for the use as a rural worker dwelling (Retrospective), is located immediately north of the site. This was refused (26th July 2023) and dismissed at appeal; APPEAL A: APP/Z3825/C/23/3331349 and APPEAL B APP/Z3825/W/23/3327173 (decided 2nd April 2025).
- 3.3. The Proposed Site Plan (Dwg. J005516-DD-13 Rev A) identifies a proposed post and rail fence to further subdivide the plot. As noted in para 31 of the Inspector Decision (APPEAL A: APP/Z3825/C/23/3331349 and APPEAL B APP/Z3825/W/23/3327173), Policy Thakeham 8 is referenced where supporting text states *“the Policy responds to a recent increase in the subdivision of agricultural land into small plots and multiple ownership, with the enclosure and subsequent proliferation of small buildings harming the character of open countryside and where access is poor, putting pressure on verges, footpaths, tracks and rural roads.”*
- 3.4. The Inspector acknowledges the presence of small plots *“that appears to have resulted in the subdivision of agricultural land”*. The Inspector goes on to acknowledge the visibility of the appeal site from Public Rights of Way stating *“The proliferation of those structures and*

the subdivision through different forms of physical enclosure is apparent from the access drive and the PROW that is to the north and east of the appeal site. Nevertheless, the appeal site is within a predominantly open countryside setting which is separate from the built-up area of Thakeham, both physically and in visual terms.” (para 32).

- 3.5. Given the identified visual sensitivities associated with the neighbouring appeal site, it is disappointing that no assessment of the landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development has been undertaken. In the absence of such information, it is not possible to fully understand the likely impacts on landscape character, visual amenity, or the surrounding area. We therefore request that a proportionate Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) be prepared and submitted as a minimum to assess the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposal and to inform the determination of the application.
- 3.6. No details of tree protection or removals have been submitted; we defer to specialist Arboricultural consultation on these matters. We therefore defer to the Council's Arboricultural Officer for specialist advice regarding the adequacy of the submitted information and any requirements for arboricultural assessment, tree protection measures, or mitigation.
- 3.7. The site is located within Landscape Study Area TA1 of the Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (April 2014) where the overall landscape capacity of the site is considered **Low/No**. The study notes *“The visual sensitivity in this area is high due to the visual prominence of the landform, and the visibility of parts of the area from adjoining residential properties.”* and the *“Amenity value of public footpaths”* noting the sites unspoilt rural character. We consider the proposals have the potential to conflict the findings of this study.
- 3.8. The site is located within the northern edge of LCA F1 of the Pulborough, Chilton and Thakeham Farmlands where partly wooded low scarp is identified as a key characteristic; and close to the southern edge of LCA J2 Broadford Bridge to Billingshurst Farmlands where a key sensitivity identified is small scale incremental changes eroding character.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. Overall, we are not satisfied that sufficient information has been submitted to enable a robust assessment of the proposal's landscape and visual effects.
- 4.2. Given the site's location within a sensitive rural landscape, the findings of the recent appeal decisions on adjoining land, and the absence of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the site and wider countryside. The further subdivision and enclosure of land parcels is also a concern, having regard to the established pattern of change in the area.

On the basis of the information currently available, we cannot be supportive of the proposed change of use.

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.

