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Sent: 14 June 2026 20:59
To: Planning [REDACTED]
Subject: Comment on DC/26/0784 consultation expiry 16th June 2026.

Categories: Comments Received

From: [REDACTED] Annexe Little Woodhouse, New Road, Billingshurst, RH14 9DS

14th June 2026

DC/26/0784

1 Woodcot, New Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9DS

I write with reference to the above planning application for a change of use from a dwellinghouse Class C3 to a veterinary practice Class E.

I am the owner and occupier of the house and land, Annexe Little Woodhouse, which directly borders 1 Woodcot to the east.

I object to the proposed change of use for the reasons detailed below.

1.

1 Woodcot is a family home and if the application is successful an existing dwelling will be lost from the District's housing stock. Horsham Council has acknowledged the acute shortage of housing stock within the District and numerous developments in marginal locations have been approved in order to increase the supply of new homes. The applicant's assertion that only one dwelling will be lost cannot be a valid justification for approval.

No evidence of a social need for the veterinary practice is provided in the application. Even in terms of equine veterinary services, no shortage of such services in the local area has been established. There is a plentiful supply of commercial properties within the local area and no shortage of suitable existing commercial properties to locate the practice is highlighted.

The planning balance should be to retain the dwelling, in line with HDPF Policy 15, Housing Provision.

2.

Critical to HDPF Policy 10, Rural Economic Development, is the enhancement of local employment activities. The applicant provides no evidence of additional job creation. This policy also refers to development in "suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion". A semi-detached house and family home in a countryside location does not fulfill this criteria.

HDPF Policy 10, Rural Economic Development does not support this application.

3.

The applicant seeks to use the existing semi-detached house as a base for the mobile equine vet practice. The applicant outlines why the change of use is limited in impact including stating that animals will not be

kept on the premises, that clients will not visit, and that the operating hours will be restricted. However, even with these limitations, there will be a significant impact on the surrounding rural area and open countryside. For example, vehicle movements for commercial deliveries, office staff arrivals and departures, and mobile vets coming and going will represent a very substantial increase in traffic. The applicant provides no analysis of this impact.

The proposal fails to meet the criteria necessary in HDPF Policy 26, Countryside Protection

4.

Class E includes very substantial permitted development rights which were an integral part of the Government's strategy of revising existing business and commercial classes and formulating Class E.

The applicant's current intentions of a veterinary practice as outlined in the application do not preclude future use expanding to become a commercial equine facility. The applicant makes no mention of substantial additional facilities that are part of the planning unit including a menage, a large block of stables, hard standing, and a garage, storage and office complex. These have been added to the site as ancillary to the dwelling but present substantial additional infrastructure in the same planning unit which would benefit from Class E. The applicant provides no insight into the use of these facilities under Class E.

It is also possible that future use of the dwelling and ancillary facilities could move into other areas of Class E without further planning approval through the use of permitted development. Horsham Planning Department may seek to impose conditions to mitigate the potential for broad Class E use, however, the Government has cautioned against this practice as such restrictions run counter to the objectives of Class E, which allows commercial properties to adapt and diversify over time. Any conditions imposed are vulnerable to challenges in the future.

There are substantial reasonable planning consequences of the change of use of the property to Class E and these contradict a number of HDPF's planning policies including HDPF 26, Countryside Protection and HDPF 33, Development Principles.

Conclusion

The proposal conflicts with HDPF and there are no material considerations in favour of approval.