WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Kate Turner
FROM:	WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	19 May 2025
LOCATION:	Land at Marches Road, Warnham, West Sussex
SUBJECT:	DC/25/0497 Change Of Use of land for the siting of 2no. static caravans, 2no. touring caravans for human habitation to be occupied by Gypsys and Travellers, with associated parking, relocation of existing access and erection of day room. (Retrospective).
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	n/a
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice

This application has been dealt with in accordance with the Development Control Scheme protocol for small scale proposals.

I refer to your consultation in respect of the above planning application and would provide the following comments.

History
West Sussex County Council was consulted previously on Highway Matters for this location under planning application no. DC/1551/24 which sought for a similar proposal and use.

Further information was sought regarding the access, visibility splays and proposed use. It was outlined at this time that it was not clear whether the existing B8 use was to be retained alongside the Traveller site use. Similarly, the visibility splays provided, directly intersected the 2m high fencing at the point of access, which rendered the splays unusable as a driver within a vehicle at this access point has an eyeline height of approx. 0.6m and the close boarded fence offered no visibility past this point. The gated access had been set back into the site to accommodate a vehicle off the highway whilst the gate was operated, whilst this was supported by the LHA there were questions raised regarding whether this would be sufficient to accommodate a tourer caravan as this would be one of the types of vehicles making use of the access as proposed.
The application was decided by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to refuse the proposal- on grounds unrelated to highway safety.

Summary
The proposal now seeks to apply for planning permission for the stationing of 2 static caravans and 2 touring caravans on land at Marches Road, whilst removing the possibility of a full B8 storage use. The removal of the B8 storage use would be anticipated to see a reduction in potential movements generated to and from the site, although traffic generation data is unknown to the applicant at this time and therefore a robust comparison cannot be made.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has reviewed data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of the last five years. There has been a single recorded highways collision to the west of the site near the bend in Marches Road, this was not recorded as being caused by any existing highways safety concern or defect with the highway at this point. No collisions or personal injury claims have been recorded at the existing site access.

Access
Any new vehicular access onto the publicly maintained highway is subject to a license obtainable from WSCC Highways Authority. No works can be commenced on the highway prior to the license being obtained. The access is required to be surfaced with a bound material for the first 5m back into the site from the carriageway edge.

In addition to obtaining planning permission applicants must also obtain formal approval from WSCC to carry out the site access works on the public highway. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a vehicle crossover licence shall be granted because the highway license process considers wider factors than are considered by the Highway Authority at planning stage.

The proposed VCO has been demonstrated as an 8m wide crossover from the highway. The Highways Licensing Team operate on a maximum width of 6.4m for a single crossover. Although this is not a highways safety concern or a material consideration at planning, the applicant is advised that this will be the requirement when obtaining a license to carry out the highway works and that the applicant should update their plan to reflect this matter.

Gate

The gated access has been set back 5m from the edge of the highway into the site, it has also been outlined that automated gates will be included to further reduce the amount of time a vehicle waits to enter the site. The applicant is reminded that the hinge orientation of the gate should allow for opening inward of the site which permits vehicles to pull into the access clear of the highway whilst the gate is in use.

From observation of the revised access plans, it appears that whilst the gates have been set back 5m into the site, the parking spaces opposite the access have not been repositioned, therefore once the gate is opened- a vehicle appears to immediately face conflict if the spaces are in use.

It does appear however that the parking in question can be relocated within the site to a more suitable location. Space exists for the parking provision to be accommodated without causing obstruction or concern to other residents or road users, and it is not anticipated that the parking would be utilised as currently shown opposite the gate.

The applicant should demonstrate the remaining access details within a plan to be provided prior to commencement. Within the additional details and plans the applicant should demonstrate the appropriate VCO access widths, gate type/widths and details of gate automation.

Visibility

The applicant has provided a visibility splay plan from the new proposed site access point; these plans demonstrate that a wider visibility splay is achievable in the eastern direction over that achievable within the existing access point. The eastern visibility splay is the immediate direction of oncoming vehicles along Marches Road when manoeuvring the access.

The visibility splays demonstrate an overall improvement in the eastern direction, lengthening splays from 61m to 85m from a 2.4m set back distance from the highway. In the western direction, visibility splays of 138m can be achieved from the proposed site access.

The boundary fence has now been set back from the property boundary into the site, which enables the fence to be constructed behind the sightlines required along Marches Road.

Sustainability

Marches Lane is in a location remote of local shops and amenities, this does place some reliance on the use of a car for a number of the anticipated journeys. Bus services do operate on Bognor Road (A29) and Dorking Road (A24), both with services to Horsham and Dorking. Marches Road is not served with street lighting or linked pedestrian footways which may see the use of this service more undesirable for future residents.

Secure and covered cycle parking has been proposed alongside the development; however, cycling may only be desirable for more confident and competent cyclists given the nature of the roads linking Marches Road to the more built-up urban locations. The cycle parking facilities should be conditioned alongside any approval of this proposal; a suitably worded condition has been included below.

Conclusion

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning consent the following conditions and informative note would be advised:

Access (Details to be provided prior to commencement)

No development shall be commenced until such time as plans and details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing final details of the proposed access. This shall

include details such as access widths (no greater than 6.4m) and gated access width including details of automation and hinge orientation.
Reason: In the interests of road safety.

Visibility (details approved)
No part of the development shall be first occupied until visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 138 metres Westbound and 2.4m x 85 metres Eastbound have been provided at the proposed site vehicular access onto Marches Road in accordance with the approved planning drawings. Once provided the splays shall thereafter be maintained and kept free of all obstructions over a height of 0.6 metre above adjoining carriageway level or as otherwise agreed.
Reason: In the interests of road safety.

Informative
Vehicle Crossover – Minor Highway Works
The applicant is advised that in addition to obtaining planning permission that they must also obtain formal approval from the highway authority to carry out the site access works on the public highway. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a vehicle crossover licence shall be granted. Additional information about the licence application process can be found at the following web page:

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/20290/vco_guidance_notes.pdf

Online applications can be made at the link below, alternatively please call 01243 642105.

https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-network-permits-and-licences/highway-licences/west-sussex-county-council-licences/dropped-kerbs-or-vehicle-crossovers-for-driveways/

Jodie Wilkes
West Sussex County Council – Planning Services