



HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Easlands Park Farm Warninglid
DESCRIPTION:	Prior notification for the creation of a new agricultural access track
REFERENCE:	DC/26/1146
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / More information
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: The principal arboricultural consideration relates to the proposed track alignment adjacent to two areas of designated Ancient Woodland. Ancient Woodland is recognised as an irreplaceable habitat and receives a high level of protection under national planning policy. This protection extends to Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), with development resulting in loss or deterioration expected to be avoided except in wholly exceptional circumstances. Development near Ancient Woodland is generally expected to provide an appropriate buffer, with Natural England and Forestry Commission standing advice recommending a minimum 15m setback from the woodland boundary. Due to the track alignment, the recommended 15m buffer cannot be achieved. The proposal must therefore be considered in the context of national policy, site-specific circumstances, and the nature of the works proposed. At present, insufficient information has been provided to fully assess potential impacts on the adjacent Ancient Woodland. Further details on construction methodology, engineering requirements, and woodland protection measures are required.	
MAIN COMMENTS: The first area of Ancient Woodland extends northwards from Eastlands Hill and is situated to the south of the proposed track. This woodland comprises predominantly mature specimen trees, principally oak, together with an individual pine located near the woodland edge adjacent to the proposed route. Within this area, the proposed track follows the alignment of an existing trackway. The route is already surfaced and appears to comprise a predominantly rough tarmac finish with sections of additional gravel surfacing. Consequently, the proposal would be situated	

largely within an existing disturbed corridor, rather than requiring the creation of a new route adjacent to the woodland.

The second pinch point relates to the area of Ancient Woodland forming the southern side of Cooper's Hill. This woodland is identified as a PAWS (Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites) designation and comprises predominantly young oak trees, likely established following historic forestry operations and the clearance of the original woodland cover.

As with the previously referenced area of Ancient Woodland, the proposed track within this location follows an existing surfaced route. The existing track comprises a tarmac base with a gravel finish, indicating that the proposal would utilise an established hard-surfaced corridor rather than requiring the formation of a new track adjacent to the woodland.

The existing trackway is an established surfaced feature which is already present adjacent to both areas of Ancient Woodland and appears to occupy a pre-existing disturbed surface. Whilst the application description refers to the creation of a new agricultural access track, the plans appear to indicate works largely associated with an existing surfaced route. Because in both locations, the proposal follows the alignment of the existing track, it implies that the proposal appears to involve improvements or alterations to an existing trackway, rather than the creation of a new route through previously undisturbed land.

Clarification is therefore required regarding the extent of any new track construction, widening, realignment, excavation, drainage, or other engineering operations beyond the footprint of the existing track.

Notwithstanding this, given the Ancient Woodland designation, careful consideration must be given to any potential direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposal. This includes potential effects on woodland soils, tree root systems, woodland edge habitats, hydrology, and the long-term integrity of this irreplaceable habitat.

Therefore, further information is required regarding the proposed construction methodology, including details of any excavation, drainage works, edge treatments, track widening, or other alterations to the existing track. In addition, full details of the construction specification and proposed Ancient Woodland protection measures should be provided to enable a robust assessment of the potential impacts and to determine whether the proposal can be undertaken without resulting in harm to the Ancient Woodland resource.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A

NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	21/08/26