

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 May 2026 22:32:26 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0527
Categories: Comments Received

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 13/05/2026 10:32 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Unit 1 Thornhill Court Billingshurst Road Coolham Horsham West Sussex RH13 8QN
Proposal:	Variation of condition 4 of previously approved application reference DC/15/0935 (Variation of condition 3 of DC/07/1220 Change of Use of unit 1 from B1 and B8 to B1, B2 and B8 DC/07/1220) to allow for extended operating hours.
Case Officer:	Shazia Penne

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: Thornhill farm Billingshurst Road Coolham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Loss of General Amenity - Overdevelopment - Privacy Light and Noise
Comments:	Thornhill Farm Coolham West Sussex RH13 8QN 30th April 2026 Planning Department Horsham District Council 1 2 Parkside Chart Way Horsham West Sussex RH12 1RL FORMAL OBJECTION - Variation of Condition 4 of DC/04/2569 Units 3 and 4, Thornhill Court, Billingshurst Road, Coolham, RH13 8QN Dear Sir or

Madam, I am writing as a neighbouring resident to formally object to the above planning application, which seeks to vary Condition 4 of planning permission DC/04/2569 to extend the operating hours at Units 3 and 4, Thornhill Court, Billingshurst Road, Coolham. My family, , lives immediately adjacent to this commercial estate and we rely directly upon the protections that Condition 4 provides. I set out my grounds of objection below.

1. The original condition was imposed specifically to protect neighbouring residents Condition 4 of planning permission DC/04/2569, granted on 17 January 2005, restricted operating hours to Monday-Friday 08:00-18:00, Saturday 08:00-13:00, and no Sunday or Bank Holiday working. The reason for imposing this condition was stated explicitly on the decision notice: "In the interests of amenity and in accordance with policy EDC19 of the Horsham District Local Plan." The reason for granting permission at all was recorded as: "The proposal does not materially affect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers or the character and visual amenities of the locality." The condition and the permission were directly linked. The development was only considered acceptable because of Condition 4. To remove or significantly weaken it now, is to unpick the very basis on which permission was granted. As a neighbouring resident with a family, I have relied upon this protection throughout my time living here. The residential situation has not changed, what has changed is the commercial ambitions of the site's current ownership. Commercial ambition, however understandable, is not a planning justification for the permanent removal of a condition that was put in place to protect neighbouring residents.

2. Horsham district council's own officer has already acknowledged residential sensitivity The pre-application advice letter from Horsham District Council (reference PE/25/0019, dated 1 April 2025) states: "The current hours of use were proposed to protect the amenity of nearby residents, with the closest properties to the east and west of the site. While it is acknowledged that the existing noise climate is likely to be predominantly influenced by road traffic along the A272, this would fluctuate and would be expected to be quieter in evenings and on Sundays. These properties are therefore likely to be sensitive to extended operating hours during these times / days." The council's own case officer therefore acknowledged, before this application was submitted, that residents near this site are likely to be sensitive to noise during evenings and on Sundays - precisely the times being applied for. The noise assessment submitted by the applicant does not adequately address the concerns already identified by the council's own officer. We share the exact same concerns and confirm we are sensitive to noise during evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays!

3. The vacancies have not been caused by operating hours - they have been caused by management decisions The applicant

presents the vacancy of several units as evidence that the current operating hours are unfit for purpose. I have direct knowledge of the history of this site, from both current and former tenants. I would respectfully ask the council to consider a rather different account of how those vacancies came about. When Thornhill Court came under its current ownership (understood to be around 2020 or 3 2021) the site was thriving. The majority, if not all, of the units were occupied by paying tenants running active businesses. Following the change of ownership, several significant management decisions appear to have driven those tenants away: - Rental prices were increased substantially, placing them out of line with comparable industrial units in the surrounding area. - Prospective and existing tenants were presented with lengthy tenancy agreements with no break clauses, which many businesses (particularly smaller operators) found commercially unacceptable. - Maintenance of the site has declined, leaving the estate in a condition that is less attractive to prospective occupiers. The consequence of these decisions was predictable and tenants left. Some relocated to other commercial premises in the immediate vicinity. I understand that at least some former Thornhill Court tenants have moved to another industrial estate a very short distance away, where the same operating hours apply but the terms are more favourable. I raise this not to be critical of the applicant as a business, but because it is directly relevant to the planning question before the council. If the vacancies were caused primarily by management and pricing decisions, then extending operating hours will not resolve the underlying problem. However, it will permanently and irreversibly change the conditions under which neighbouring residents live.

4. Comparable local industrial estates operate within similar hours and are thriving The applicant contends that the current operating hours put Thornhill Court at a competitive disadvantage. I am aware of at least three commercial and industrial premises in the immediate local area, that operate successfully within hours broadly comparable to those currently conditioned at Thornhill Court. They appear to have no difficulty attracting or retaining tenants. Please see below operating hours for businesses on equivalent local estates. Roof Box 2 Hire (0.0 mi from RH13 8QN) Mon-Fri: 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM | Sat: Closed | Sun: Closed Leech Auto Services (0.6 mi from RH13 8QN) Mon-Fri: 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM | Sat: 7:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Sun: Closed Powerflow Exhausts (0.3 mi from RH13 8QN) Mon-Fri: 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM | Sat: Closed | Sun: Closed If those sites can sustain full or near-full occupancy without extending into evenings and Sundays, this seriously undermines the argument that extended hours are a commercial necessity at Thornhill Court. The difference (I would suggest) lies not in the hours, but in how those other sites are managed, priced and maintained.

5. The noise assessment only just passes its own threshold - there is no margin of safety To us, the noise report presented is

rather overcomplicated and provides very little clarity: - Why was the report conducted on a quiet August weekend, during summer holidays? - Due to summer holidays, many of the estate tenants would not have been working - Eg Easy Lunch (School dinner business). Therefore, we have attempted to understand and have concerns as follows: The cumulative noise rating level at the nearest receptor (Receptor R2, Thornhill Stables, approximately 53 metres from the closest commercial unit) is stated in the report as exactly 33 dB - which equals, but does not fall below, the lowest background sound level during the proposed operating period. This is a margin of precisely zero. It is the minimum possible pass under the adopted criteria. Given that Condition 4 was originally imposed specifically to protect residential amenity, and given that the background levels used in the assessment are based on a holiday-period survey, (with reduced traffic and a largely inactive food preparation unit) a result that only just 4 meets the threshold, cannot be considered adequate reassurance. A technical pass based on averaged measurements taken in August does not reflect the reality of what extended evening and Sunday hours would mean for our family's daily life. . I would also draw the council's attention to the fact that the noise report itself identifies an existing problem with the ventilation extraction fan at Unit 4B, which already exceeds the lowest background sound level at the nearest residential property by 3 dB. The report acknowledges that one of the proposed mitigations - fitting an acoustic attenuator - "might not be feasible." This is an unresolved existing issue - and the noise is noticeable during the day, when the fan is in use.

6. There is no enforceable control over future tenants or the noise they generate The noise assessment establishes "maximum permissible noise levels" for the vacant units. However, there is no planning condition in this application that would legally bind future tenants to those levels. The report acknowledges (section 8.1) that "all units may have different tenants in the future." Once extended hours are granted, the council has very limited ability to control what type of business operates and at what intensity. This concern is heightened by the Crickmay letter (Appendix D of the planning statement), which lists the types of businesses that expressed interest in the units but were deterred by the current hours. These included soft play centres, personal trainers and gym operators, a cricket academy, a pet crematorium, car restorers, car sales and a bicycle retailer. With respect, these are not the quiet B1/B2/B8 industrial uses consistent with the character of the site and the surrounding area. They are consumer-facing businesses that bring members of the public to the site, generate very different patterns of noise and vehicle movement, and depend specifically on evening and weekend trading - which is precisely why the current hours provide protection for us. If extended hours are granted and one of these businesses occupies a unit, the noise impact on neighbouring residents could be substantially greater than the noise

assessment suggests - and there would be no easy remedy once the permission is in place. I would also ask the council to consider whether some of the uses described - particularly soft play, gym operators and a cricket academy, fall within the B1, B2 or B8 use classes that are currently permitted at the site, regardless of hours.

7. Sunday trading would be an entirely new and significant intrusion. There are currently no permitted Sunday or Bank Holiday hours at all at this site. The original condition explicitly excluded Saturday afternoon, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The application now seeks to introduce trading from 10:00 to 13:00 on Sundays, with no mention or acknowledgement of the holidays. The noise assessment's own data shows that Sunday background noise levels are the lowest of the week, with the lowest recorded LA90 of just 23 dB during the full daytime period. Any commercial activity on Sundays will therefore be proportionally more noticeable than on weekdays. For families in the neighbouring properties, Sunday is the one day that has always been reliably quiet. The introduction of commercial operations (potentially including consumer facing businesses bringing regular vehicle movements and additional footfall) throughout the day on Sundays, would permanently change the character of our living environment. Making what is private feel rather public.

8. Key mitigation measures are unenforceable as currently proposed. The noise report recommends that the roller shutter door to Unit 1A+B must remain closed after 19:00 on weekdays and at restricted times on weekends to keep noise within acceptable limits. It is worth noting that during the noise survey itself, the shutter door was recorded as 5 being half-open throughout the measurement period. There is no planning condition proposed in this application that would require door closure, and no monitoring or enforcement mechanism suggested. Relying on the goodwill and cooperation of current and future tenants to voluntarily keep doors closed during evening hours, is not an adequate safeguard for neighbouring residents. Policing the site would be reliant on us as neighbours, complaining in response to any excessive noise disruption/ breach of trading hours - something we do not have the time, or the want to do.

9. Communication and management. We had no prior information from the industrial estate that a noise report, was being conducted. While perhaps this is not required, it would have been courteous. Nor did we have prior notification that a planning application was being submitted. Since researching the estate upon receiving notice of this planning application, we have discovered aerial photographs of our property have been used when advertising the rental units. This feels like a breach of our privacy and security (we are a private property). We have asked for them to be removed, which has been actioned, but this not the first time this has happened. We have also previously complained

of noise disruption on a Sunday and Bank Holiday. The above estate management practices make us very concerned about a potential trading hour extension.

Conclusion

We do not wish to obstruct legitimate business activity, but we are genuinely concerned about the long-term impact on our family's quality of life, that this change in trading hours would impose. We would have very little respite from the noise and traffic the estate creates. We live in a private, rural area and the proposed trading hours extension do not feel in keeping with this. We have lived beside this site happily, relying on the current protections that have been in place, regarding both business use and trading hours. We are a busy family, - so evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays are incredibly important to us. Presently we can privately enjoy our property during these times, with the knowledge that the estate is closed. The noise report provides no reassurance - ultimately if you extend the trading hours, with no additional policing of the site, it will be noisier. This will be very disruptive to us. All recent planning applications within the local area, that have been granted, all adhere to the trading hours that Thornhill Court currently operates under. A change in these trading hours would set a precedent for many local business, which would have a negative impact on the rural village of Coolham and its residents. This is our home and we would like to keep it an enjoyable, safe, and private place to live. For all these reasons, I ask that Horsham District Council declines this application. I am happy to discuss any aspect of this objection further.

Yours faithfully,
Thornhill Farm RH13 8QN

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk

