



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 15775
Date: 02 April 2026

For the attention of: Robert Hermitage

Application ref: DC/26/0256
Location: Kingfisher Farm West Chilton Lane Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9DR
Proposal/Description: Use of the land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 5no. gypsy pitches together with the formation of additional parking, hard standing, landscaping and utility/dayrooms ancillary to that use.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full planning 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	☐

1.0. Site Context

The application site is located in the countryside, with the built-up areas of Billingshurst around 2.5km to the west, and Barns Green around 1km to the east. The site is currently developed and the wider land parcel is subject to an ongoing enforcement case (Ref: EN/24/0346)

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework

2.1. Relevant policies include:

- Policy 23: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26: Countryside Protection



- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Barns Green and Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan

2.2. Relevant policies include:

- POLICY 1: Green Infrastructure conservation
- POLICY 2: Biodiversity conservation
- POLICY 5: Protection of green infrastructure
- AIM 5: Traveller Sites

Horsham District Council Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (December 2017)

2.3. Kingfisher Farm site is identified in the plan for 11 pitches.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information:

- 3.1. We have previously commented on the site under application reference DC/25/1029 (dated: 02/10/2026) for a similar proposal. We note the changes within application DC/26/0256 under this review are identified within the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Dwg. Y2722/2025-A10) and include the provision of grassed areas, permeable paving and reduction in hedgerows. Overall, the surface materials are welcomed.
- 3.2. The site falls within LW6 Central Low Weald of the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003). Key characteristics relevant to the site and its context include:
- Predominantly small to medium-sized pasture fields, enclosed by woodlands, shaws and Hedgerows
 - Dense cover of ancient broadleaved woodlands and conifer plantations
 - Local concentrations of horse grazed paddocks and golf course development.
- 3.3. Key issues of change include poor hedgerow and woodland management, fragmentation of hedgerows and loss of hedgerow trees and pasture or field trees, increased traffic and suburban development, in particular around Southwater and Billingshurst settlement fringes, and along main roads.
- 3.4. Landscape and visual sensitivities include:
- Unsympathetic urban development, changes in settlement pattern and addition of suburban features.
 - Changes in land management practices leading to change in field sizes, and loss of hedgerows and isolated pasture trees, loss of tranquillity.
 - Subdivision of fields and changes in boundary styles linked to increase in horse paddocks are also considered a sensitivity.
- 3.5. Although this is considered in association with horse paddocks, the subdivision of the field parcel to accommodate individual plots is considered comparable. Furthermore, historic features include small and medium-sized assarts, linear patterns associated with

droveways and irregular fields radiating out from settlements; historic mapping identifies the sites original field pattern to include two medium sized linear fields separated by a tree belt along their length.

- 3.6. The site is identified as Landscape Character Type G: Wooded Small Scale Farmlands, Landscape Character Area (LCA) G2 – Itchingfield and Barns Green Wooded Farmlands of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003). This character area largely reflects the characteristics of the application site, and key characteristics described as horse grazing and set aside fields, narrow country lanes and a strong sense of enclosure. The Character Assessment also describes the overall landscape condition in this area as ‘declining’ with a moderate overall sensitivity to change. Key sensitivities include “further small-scale incremental erosion of character such as suburban features.”
- 3.7. Policy 23 of the HDPF states that for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation “*The development will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and the amenity of neighbouring properties and is sensitively designed to mitigate any impact on its surroundings*”.
- 3.8. The application has not been accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to demonstrate that the application does not have unacceptable landscape and visual impacts, though we have made the professional judgement that given the intimate enclosed nature of the site, visual impact would be limited. However, we have concerns regarding impact on landscape character, where urbanising features of the proposals will have a negative effect on the tranquillity of the small, enclosed horse paddocks as described in both aforementioned Landscape Character Assessments.
- 3.9. Furthermore, the proposals directly influence key sensitivities within both LCAs, particularly due to the subdivision and incremental erosion of their character. The cumulative impact of the proposals alongside existing similar developments amplifies the overall effects. Additionally, the lack of meaningful landscape interventions provides minimal mitigation of the adverse negative effects.
- 3.10. These conclusions are shared with Inspector in the combined appeal (Appeal Decisions APP/Z3825/C/16/3153910, APP/Z3825/C/16/3153915, APP/Z3825/W/17/3188942, APP/Z3825/W/17/3188945) where paragraphs 76-84 discuss matters of character and appearance. Notably para 83 the inspector notes “*In conclusion, the harm to the visual amenity and the appearance of its surroundings is limited. However, the development results in harm to landscape character, harm that is increased markedly by the cumulative impact.*”
- 3.11. We agree that visual impact will be limited; albeit previous consultation at DC/24/1290 - Greenacres Farm West Chiltington Lane Billingshurst West Sussex (dated 18/10/2024)

identified some loss of hedgerow along West Chiltington Lane which we considered unacceptable noting *“received site photos indicate a section of hedgerow has been removed to facilitate a new access point. This reduces the enclosure of the site impacting both visual amenity from West Chiltington Lane and a key characteristic of the landscape.”* While outside of the site, this loss of enclosure will undoubtedly increase the visual sensitivity along West Chiltington Lane of the proposals.

- 3.12. We acknowledge the proposals include hedgerows surrounding each pitch on three sides. The introduction of these hedgerows has the potential of benefitting biodiversity and will reinstate a historic boundary on the western side.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. Generally, our previous comments in response to DC/25/1029 are applicable given the similar submission. In summary, we accept visual impact would be limited; however, we retain concerns on the incremental negative impacts on the Landscape Character.

While the proposals raise concerns regarding adverse impacts on landscape character, the countryside setting, site location, we acknowledge that the limited visual prominence of the site and the inclusion of mitigation measures such as new hedgerow planting around each pitch are step towards reducing adverse impacts overall. Additionally, the site may be considered acceptable as an extension to the northern parcel, in spatial terms.

In order to deliver adequate mitigation on the impact of LCA G2 – Itchingfield and Barns Green Wooded Farmlands, we encourage the applicant to consider restoring the lost historic tree belt, spanning the length of the wider field parcel to the west, as a means of improving landscape character and reducing the adverse effects of the proposed development.

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.