WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Jacques Burrowes
FROM:	WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	8 May 2025
LOCATION:	Monks Farm Honeywood Lane Okewood Hill Dorking Surrey RH5 5QA
SUBJECT:	DC/25/0440 Prior Notification for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to 2no. dwellinghouses.
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.

Under the current General Permitted Development Order (GPDO), it is permitted development to change use from agricultural to residential (Class C3) subject first to prior approval being granted. As part of the prior approval process, there are a number of matters to be considered. This includes matters relating to highways and transport. However, the GPDO is quite clear as to what highway matters can be considered, namely whether the proposal is likely to result in a material increase or a material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site.

This proposal seeks prior approval for the change of use from agricultural building to 2no. four-bedroom residential dwellings. The site is located off of Ruckmans Lane, a privately maintained road, as such these comments are considered advice only. The nearest publicly maintained highway is at Honeywood Lane Access Road, an un-classified road subject to National Speed Limit. No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangement.

An inspection of collision data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period the past five years reveals there have been no recorded injury accidents within the vicinity of the existing access point onto Honeywood Lane Access Road. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the existing access is operating unsafely or that the proposal would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

Generally, the change of use from agricultural to residential would generate a reduction in material use at the site. The existing use would create a certain number of movements throughout the day, whereas the movements associated with residential use would be anticipated within network peaks. Therefore, although the nature of trips would change, the frequency would likely not exceed that of current use.

The proposed dwellings would comprise four bedrooms each – no details of parking provision have been provided. The WSCC Car Parking Demand Calculator would anticipate that a total of six parking spaces would be required for development of this size and location. Details of parking can be secured via condition.

The site is rurally located and as such it is acknowledged that there will be a reliance upon the private car in this location. However, the LPA may wish to secure cycle parking provision if they feel it is appropriate to do so.

It is noted that Ruckmans Lane is classified as a Restricted Byway and as such, I have consulted the WSCC PROW team and they will provide comments directly.

In summary, the movements associated with agriculture have done so safely with no known safety highways concerns, and C3 residential uses are considered less intensive. West Sussex County Council in its role as LHA has therefore considered the proposal on that basis. In principle, the current GPDO gives limited ability to consider wider highway and transport impacts beyond those set out. The prior approval is therefore considered acceptable in highway terms.

As above, if the LPA are minded to approve the application, a condition securing details of car parking for the proposed dwellings is advised.

Nicola Elliott
West Sussex County Council – Planning Services