

Our Ref: SDNP/26/01125/ADJAUT
Contact Officer: Philippa Smyth
Tel. No.: 01730 819296

30th March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Neighbouring Authority Consultation

Applicant:

Proposal: Adjoining Authority Consultation - Horsham District Council (DC/26/0322) - Part-demolition of existing teaching buildings, MUGAs and all-weather pitch. Construction of replacement 2-storey and 3-storey teaching buildings, flood-lit all-weather pitch and hard surfaced sports courts, with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure.

Location: Steyning Grammar Upper School , Shooting Field , Steyning , West Sussex

Thank you for your correspondence received 17 March 2026, consulting us as a neighbouring authority on the above noted development proposals.

Although the application site is located outside of the National Park, the Council has a statutory duty to consider the Purposes of the National Park when making its determination.

The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage,
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

Section 245 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (S.245 duty) amends and strengthens the Section 11A (2) duty of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 upon relevant authorities, which includes the National Park Authority itself, to 'seek to further the specified purposes of Protected Landscapes'.

The National Park's comments on the development are as follows:

The application site is located adjacent to the boundary of the South Downs National Park, with the north western part of the site abutting the National Park boundary.

Duty of National Parks

Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 strengthens the Section 11A (2) duty of the

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and requires all relevant authorities including neighbouring local planning authorities to further the National Park's statutory purposes. The first purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. Development within the setting of a national park should be consistent with the section 245 duty, and Paragraph 182 of the NPPF now includes specific reference to the setting of National Parks: "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, **while any development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.**" It is therefore important to consider direct and indirect effects upon the National Park designated landscape **and its setting** as well as its special qualities.

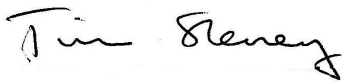
Landscape, heritage and visual effects

It is acknowledged that the site is situated within the existing school complex. The site is already a prominent feature within the setting of the National Park. Care should be taken to ensure that any new development is not materially more prominent in views from the National Park

Dark Skies

It is noted that the proposals include significant floodlighting to sports pitches which does raise some concern. Given the site's close proximity to the National Park, careful consideration should be given to the International Dark Night Skies Reserve and dark night skies, which are a special quality of the National Park, and the Authority would encourage a sensitive approach to both external and internal lighting which conforms the Institute of Lighting Professionals for lighting in environmental zones, and tries to achieve zero upwards light spill in all respects.

Yours faithfully



TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer

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