DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/0063
Land West Of Trickles Wood , Hole Street, Ashington, West Sussex, RH20 3DE

DESCRIPTION:
Creation of agricultural access track (Retrospective).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/0921	Prior notification for the creation of a new agricultural access track	Prior Approval Required and REFUSED on 31.07.2024
DC/24/1862	Prior notification for the erection of a new agricultural storage barn.	Prior Approval Not Required on 27.12.2024

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE
The application site is agricultural land approximately 6.1 hectares in size, located to the north of the main route of Hole Street. Neighbouring buildings, which include residential dwellings and stables, are situated to the north and west of the site. The village of Ashington is approximately 0.5 miles northwest of the application site, which lies outside the defined built-up area boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION
The application seeks permission for the construction of an agricultural access track along the western boundary of the site. The purpose of the track is to provide access to the northern part of the land and to serve the recently approved agricultural barn. The track will be constructed with a crushed concrete base topped with gravel, which is considered appropriate for the countryside setting. It will utilize an existing access along the southern boundary, which has been improved to ensure safe egress and entry.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan
Policy ASH5 – Landscaping and Countryside Access

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:
HDC Landscape Architect: No Objection - The proposals are considered appropriate to the countryside location and reflective of the existing vernacular, therefore no concerns are raised with the principle of development or likely effects on the character or visual amenity of the area.

WSCC Highways: No Objection - West Sussex County Council (WSCC), as the Local Highway Authority (LHA), reviewed planning application DC/25/0063, which seeks to create an agricultural access track. The site, located off Hole Street near Ashington village, was previously subject to a refused prior approval application (DC/24/0921) due to its proximity to the road. The LHA finds good visibility at the proposed access point, with no recorded injury accidents in the area in the last five years. The stable yard has sufficient space for equestrian vehicles to park and turn. The Public Right of Way (Prows) team has been consulted, and any comments will be submitted separately. The LHA concludes that the proposal will not negatively impact highway safety or the highway network, and therefore, there are no transport grounds to object to the application.

WSCC Rights of Way: Holding Objection (Received 24.02.2025) – West Sussex Public Rights of Way Team has concerns about its clarity, particularly regarding Public Footpath 3503, which runs next to an existing access track. They question whether this is a retrospective application, as the description is unclear. They also note that there is no mention of the Public Highway in the documents and that there are unresolved issues from previous works involving the previous owner. Due to these unresolved matters, they are placing a holding objection until the County Council confirms that public rights on the site are not compromised.

Re-consultation Response (received 21.03.2025): No Objection - The PROW Officer visited the site and spoke with the new owners. It was agreed that remedial works will be done on the section of footpath running from Hole St, which was disturbed during 2023 works. As a result, the person is withdrawing their objection to the planning application.

Representations:
1 representation has been received, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- The track has already been constructed without planning permission and should be subject to retrospective approval.
- The red boundary line on the application is incorrectly marked.
- Highlights an issue regarding a previous application that displays a bridge constructed onto their land, to which there is no right of access. Request that the bridge be removed.

Parish Comments:
Ashington Parish Council: No Objection

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:
The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of

the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 10 of the HDPF specifically supports rural economic development, emphasizing the importance of development that sustains farming practices and the wider rural economy. It encourages infrastructure that enables agricultural enterprises to operate effectively while respecting the character and landscape of the countryside. Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) similarly promotes sustainable development, particularly through supporting a prosperous rural economy as outlined in paragraphs 90–95.

Policy 26 of the HDPF requires that development in the countryside be essential to its location and meet a specified criteria, including supporting the needs of agriculture.

The proposed agricultural access track would facilitating and improve the movement of machinery and goods between the existing entrance and an agricultural barn, supporting the operational needs of the approved agricultural enterprise on the land. The Council has previously recognised the functional necessity of this infrastructure in earlier applications, confirming its agricultural justification.

Constructed from crushed concrete and gravel, the track uses materials typical of rural access routes, helping it blend into the agricultural landscape without causing undue visual intrusion. This practical and unobtrusive design aligns with Policy 10 objective of supporting rural enterprises while maintaining the countryside’s character.

West Sussex Highway Authority has raised no objections, confirming the track does not compromise highway safety or exacerbate traffic concerns, in accordance with the NPPF’s transport policies.

Additionally, initial concerns from the Public Rights of Way team have been satisfactorily addressed through remedial works to the adjacent footpath, ensuring the development coexists harmoniously with public access routes.

In conclusion, the retrospective agricultural access track complies with Policy 10 of the HDPF, by supporting a viable agricultural use without harming the countryside’s character or local amenity. It presents no highway safety risks and aligns with sustainable rural development principles, warranting its approval as an appropriate form of rural infrastructure.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 26, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015) collectively seek to ensure that development in the countryside protects and enhances the rural character, respects local landscape features, and delivers a high standard of design that is appropriate to its context. These policies discourage urbanising forms of development and promote proposals that integrate sensitively with their surroundings.

The agricultural access track has been designed in a manner wholly appropriate to its rural setting. Constructed with a base of crushed concrete and topped with gravel, the materials used reflect typical construction methods found in the countryside and ensure the track does not appear out of place. Its alignment along the western boundary of the field minimises visual intrusion into the wider landscape, while its modest scale allows it to blend naturally with the surrounding agricultural character.

The absence of lighting or any associated urbanising infrastructure further reinforces the rural quality of the site and ensures that the development preserves the area's intrinsic character. In line with the objectives of Policies 26, 32, and 33, the track represents a restrained and contextually appropriate intervention within the landscape.

Residential Amenity:

Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015) require that development protects the amenity of nearby residents, ensuring that proposals do not result in unacceptable levels of noise, disturbance, odour, or general activity that could harm the living environment.

Given the location and use of the track, there would be no material harm to residential amenity. The track is positioned with a sufficient separation distance from neighbouring residential properties to the west, reducing the potential for any direct impact. Its use is limited to agricultural activities associated with the management of the land and the servicing of the approved barn.

Vehicle movements along the track are expected to be infrequent and consistent with typical farming operations, avoiding any unreasonable or continuous noise or disruption. The proposal therefore complies with Policies 32 and 33 by ensuring that the amenities of nearby residents are preserved, and that the development does not introduce adverse environmental effects.

Highways Impacts:

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has raised no objections to the proposal, with acceptable visibility point onto Hole Street in both directions, aided by the linear alignment of the road and the set-back access gate which allows safe waiting off the carriageway. An inspection of collision data over the past five years shows no recorded incidents near the site, confirming that the access arrangement operates safely. The limited level of vehicular traffic associated with the proposed access / use of the land, would not give rise to any capacity issues or safety concerns.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive use of the site necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 180 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024). The application is retrospective and therefore exempt.

Other Considerations

The ownership of land is not a planning consideration, and this application would not create any access rights over third party land. The agent for the application has though advised that the submitted Location Plan reflects Land Registry details.

Conclusions:

The application is considered to accord with relevant national and local planning policies, and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT
Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/25/0063
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		NONE	16.01.2025
Site plan		NONE	16.01.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning	169/2024	16.01.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 29.04.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 03.06.2025