



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/1993

Stonepits Manor, Marringdean Road, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9HE

DESCRIPTION:

Use of the land for the siting of 3no. glamping pods for tourist accommodation.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None relevant to the site

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site forms part of the wider Stonepits Manor holding, which extends to approximately 12 hectares and comprises a mix of woodland and open pastureland. The main dwelling, Stonepits Manor, is located within the south-western part of the holding and is accessed directly from Marringdean Road.

The application site itself lies within the north-eastern parcel of the landholding. It is enclosed by woodland to the north and west, with mature hedgerows forming the eastern and southern boundaries. A portal-framed agricultural building and associated hardstanding are located to the south of the site, accessed via an informal farm track connecting to a private lane.

The private lane extends eastwards from Marringdean Road and also functions as Public Footpath BIL1927. Additional public rights of way cross the wider holding, including Footpath BIL1932 which links the site to Billingshurst village and the Sussex Diamond Way long-distance route.

In planning policy terms, the site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary of Billingshurst and is therefore within the countryside. The nearest point of the settlement boundary lies approximately 500 metres to the north-west. Ancient woodland is present to the north at Rosier Wood and Daux Wood, although this is approximately 250 metres from the application site. Parts of the surrounding woodland are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not subject to any national or local landscape designation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission is sought for the use of land for the siting of three glamping pods to provide short-stay holiday accommodation.

Each pod would comprise a timber, triangular-shaped structure with a pitched roof extending to ground level. The buildings would measure approximately 6.5 metres in width, 8.25 metres in depth, and approximately 6.5 metres in height. A raised base platform would extend to provide a 3-metre deep external terrace.

The pods would provide living/kitchen/dining accommodation, a shower room and bedroom at ground floor level, with a mezzanine bedroom above. The structures would be finished in timber cladding with aluminium roof sheeting and areas of glazing. Solar panels would be installed on one roof plane of each pod.

The pods would be supported on metal screw-in jacks, avoiding the need for permanent foundations. The development would operate on an off-grid basis with:

- Solar power generation;
- Composting toilets;
- Water supplied via storage tanks and rainwater harvesting;
- No connection to mains drainage or electricity.

Access would be taken from Marringdean Road via the existing private lane and farm track. Car parking would be provided on the existing hardstanding adjacent to the barn, with visitors accessing the pods on foot.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth

Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development

Policy 11 - Tourism and Cultural Facilities

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport

Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan (2021):

BILL 1 – Built-Up Area Boundary

BILL 11 – Tourism-Related Development and Provision of Tourist Accommodation

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1 year. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change

Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use

Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
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 25: Parking
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development
Strategic Policy 34: Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Billingshurst Design Statement:

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

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 Arboricultural officer: No Objection (06/01/2026) [Summary]

No foreseeable direct impacts on adjacent woodland blocks subject to appropriate low impact siting of associated infrastructure.

Indirect physical impacts on the woodlands from future site use associated with the proposed change are likely to be limited to recreational impacts, particularly within Rainbow Copse, due to its relative close proximity.

HDC Environmental Health: Initial Comment (22/12/2025) [Summary]

There is insufficient sewage/drainage information to determine if the proposal is acceptable, so further comments will be necessary when this has been provided. Clarity is needed about the distance between pods.

HDC Environmental Health (Water): Comment (14/11/2025) [Summary]

The submitted Planning Design and Access Statement indicates that the development will not be connected to the mains water network and that “taps and showers will be fed from water tanks that will be filled by the applicants and/or rainwater harvesting.” As all water supplied to the pods will be used for domestic purposes, this constitutes a private drinking water supply, and every water outlet provided to occupants—including taps, basins and showers—must therefore supply water that is potable. Under the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations (2016), any water used for domestic consumption, food preparation, washing, bathing, or personal hygiene must comply with the statutory standards for wholesomeness.

Under Regulation 4 (Wholesomeness), any potable water provided to occupants must not contain any micro-organism, parasite, or substance at a concentration that would represent a potential danger to human health. Furthermore, where the applicant intends to treat rainwater to make it suitable for drinking, Regulation 5 requires that only treatment products and processes conforming to the relevant BS EN standards and approved for drinking-water use may be employed.

The current application does not provide sufficient technical information to demonstrate that the proposed rainwater harvesting, and storage system can meet these legal duties. Specifically, the submission lacks detail on the system design, treatment stages, monitoring arrangements, and ongoing operational controls. These elements are essential for Environmental Health to assess the feasibility and safety of the proposed potable supply.

Accordingly, prior to commencement of development, Environmental Health will require a comprehensive Private Water Supply Management Plan.

HDC Business Development: No Objection (06/01/2026) [Summary]

Economic Development supports this application as it aligns with the Council's Visitor Economy Strategy by providing additional and diversified visitor accommodation within the District. The Strategy identifies a need to broaden the range of accommodation to attract short-break visitors from the District's large and affluent catchment, particularly given its proximity to London, with glamping identified as an appropriate offer. The proposal would strengthen the local visitor economy by enhancing accommodation choice, supporting tourism growth, and contributing to local employment and businesses.

Ecology Consultant: Comment [Summary]

We have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, September 2025) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and identification of appropriate mitigation measures. Please note that comments on mandatory biodiversity net gain are provided by Horsham District Council inhouse. We note from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, September 2025) that there are no buildings on site and the tree line on the eastern side will be retained as it straddles the site ownership boundary. We therefore agree that no further surveys for bats are required.

There will be no severance to the flight lines of foraging or commuting bats from the SAC and habitat connectivity within the site will be maintained. We also understand that no external lighting is to be installed.

We also support the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles in Section 4.8 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, September 2025). This should be secured by a condition of any consent and implemented in full.

We are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available to support determination of this application.

WSCC Highways: No Objection (02/01/2026) [Summary]

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

2 letters have been received from 2 addresses, neither objecting nor supporting the application. The letters made reference to the following matters:

- Consideration to be given to the road access junction onto Maringdean Road and the impact on highways safety
- The layby on Maringdean Road should not be used as overflow parking
- Improvements to the junction on Maringdean Road
- Supported with clear and appropriate signage

Parish Comments:

Billingshurst Parish Council: No Objection (13/01/2026)

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 7 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that sustainable employment development in Horsham District will be achieved by promotion of the District as an attractive place to stay and visit to increase the value of the tourism economy.

Policy 11 of the HDPF outlines that measures which promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities, including recreation based rural diversification, will be encouraged. Any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location and should increase the range or improve the quality of accommodation, attraction or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the District. Support will particularly be given to proposals which amongst others, are in keeping with their relationship with the urban area and countryside around them and benefit the local economy.

In addition, Policy 10 of the HDPF supports sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the District which maintain the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity. The policy requires development to contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside.

Policy 11 of the HDPF states that measures which promote tourism and enhance local cultural facilities, including recreation based rural diversification, will be encouraged. Any development should be of a scale and type appropriate to the location, and should increase the range, or improve the quality of accommodation, attraction or experiences for tourists, day visitors, business visitors, and residents in the District

In this instance the application falls outside of the existing Built-Up Area and lies within the Countryside.

Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) would be relevant and requires development outside the Built-Up Area boundaries to be essential to its countryside location in order to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside against inappropriate development. In addition, it must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;
2. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
3. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or
4. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.

Furthermore, this policy requires that development be of a scale that is appropriate to its countryside character and location and should not lead either individually or cumulatively to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside and protects and/or conserves, and/or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located. This includes the pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows and the landform of the area.

Policy BILL 11 of the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan supports tourism-related development where it is of an appropriate scale, well related to the countryside and does not harm local character.

The Horsham District Visitor Accommodation Study dated July 2016 outlines that the District is well placed to capitalise on the projected growth in domestic short break and overseas tourist markets and the increasing demand for family and friend get togethers, celebrations, and weekends away. The study concludes that there is insufficient provision of all forms of visitor accommodation in the District, with the potential in the rural parts of the District to upgrade existing facilities through the provision of high quality holiday cottages, small holiday lodges/eco lodges etc.

As indicated within both the Horsham District Hotel and Visitor Accommodation Study 2016, there is an identified need for such tourist accommodation as proposed within the District. The proposed scale and nature of the accommodation is considered to be appropriate to the character and location of the area, whilst improving the range and quality of facilities for visitors.

The site is well located in respect of it being 0.5km from the built up area boundary of Billingshurst. It benefits from direct access to the public right of way network, thus providing opportunity for the enjoyment of the countryside. With the above in mind, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, in accordance with Policies 10 and 11 of the HDPF, subject to detailed assessment of impacts.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that is of a high quality design, which is sympathetic to the character and distinctiveness of the site and surroundings. The landscape character of the area should be protected, conserved and enhanced, with proposals contributing to a sense of place through appropriate scale, massing and appearance.

The three cabins would be set within a contained field area enclosed by mature vegetation. Each cabin would be triangular in appearance and set over two levels at 6.5m in height, 6.5m in depth and 8.25m in width. Whilst the structures would not be small, their appearance comprises cladding with triangular profile would reduce the perceived bulk and integrate the structures within the rural backdrop.

Though the pods may be partially visible from nearby public footpaths, this would be against a backdrop of established woodland and hedgerows.

Overall, the development is considered to be sympathetic in design and would not result in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the countryside, in accordance with Policies 25, 26 and 33 of the HDPF.

Trees and Landscaping:

HDPF Policy 25 seeks to protect important landscape features including trees and woodland. HDPF Policy 33 requires development to respect the natural characteristics of the site and its surroundings.

In addition, paragraph 193 of the NPPF affords strong protection to ancient woodland and veteran trees, advising that development resulting in their loss or deterioration should be wholly exceptional.

The glamping pods are proposed within an open field area and are well separated from woodland edges. No tree removal, root disturbance or works within woodland areas are proposed. The use of screw-pile foundations further minimises the potential for below-ground impacts.

Given the limited scale of the proposal, the low-intensity seasonal nature of holiday accommodation, and the absence of any requirement for new access routes or services through woodland areas, the development is not considered likely to result in unacceptable harm to protected trees or woodland.

Any potential recreational impacts can be appropriately managed through site layout, visitor information and, if necessary, planning conditions restricting external lighting and informal access into woodland areas.

The proposal therefore accords with Policies 25, 31 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and is consistent with national policy objectives relating to the protection of trees and woodland.

Amenity Impact:

Policy 33 of the HDPF (2015) states that development should consider the scale, massing and orientation between buildings, respecting the amenities and sensitivities of neighbouring properties.

The site is situated within an enclosed paddock in the ownership of the applicant. The fields to the east do not belong to the applicant. The closest residential properties are Stonepits Manor, owned by the applicant (approx. 300 metres), Stonepits Lodge (approx. 300 metres), Rainbow End (300m). All are separated from the application site by boundary hedges and mature trees, and all are across paddocks / grazing fields.

Parking for the site would be situated in the existing parking area some 100m walk away from the proposed location of the cabins.

Given the scale of the holding, intervening woodland, mature hedgerows and changes in landform, there would be no direct overlooking or loss of privacy arising from the proposed development. The glamping pods would not introduce any built form in close proximity to neighbouring dwellings and would not give rise to overshadowing or overbearing impacts.

The proposal comprises three glamping pods, each providing limited accommodation capacity. The use would be transient in nature, with short-stay holiday occupancy rather than permanent residential use.

Levels of activity associated with the proposal would therefore be low and comparable to quiet informal recreational use of the countryside, which is expressly supported under Policy 26 of the HDPF. The proposal would not generate the continuous comings and goings typically associated with permanent residential development.

Importantly, the use would be restricted to the drier months of the year, as the surrounding fields become inaccessible during the winter period. This seasonal limitation further restricts the intensity of use and ensures that activity levels remain modest and appropriate to the rural context.

Vehicle access would utilise the existing private access, farm track and established hardstanding area adjacent to the existing agricultural building. No new access routes, widening works or additional areas of hard surfacing are proposed.

The parking area is located approximately 100 metres from the proposed pods, adjacent to the existing tree line. It is largely concealed by mature trees and woodland, ensuring that vehicle movements and parked cars would not be visually intrusive or give rise to disturbance to nearby occupiers.

Guests would proceed on foot from the parking area to the pods, thereby limiting vehicle movements within the site itself and reducing potential noise and disturbance.

Given the small scale of the development and its tourism-based use, lighting requirements would be minimal. Any external lighting can be controlled by condition to ensure it remains low-level, directional and avoids light spill toward neighbouring properties or woodland habitats.

Taking the above into account, it is concluded that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity through noise, disturbance, visual impact or loss of privacy.

The development is therefore considered to comply with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development provides safe and suitable access, appropriate levels of parking, and promotes sustainable modes of travel. Policy 33 of the Framework requires development not to cause unacceptable impacts on highway safety.

At the national level, paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The application has been assessed by the County Highway Authority who have confirmed that:

- The proposal would utilise the existing access point onto the private road and subsequently onto Marringdean Road;
- The holiday let use of three glamping pods is not considered to result in a material intensification of use of the existing access;
- The submitted plans demonstrate provision of three on-site parking spaces, equating to one space per pod, which is considered sufficient for the nature of the development;
- Adequate space is available within the site for vehicles to turn and exit in a forward gear;
- The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the operation of the surrounding highway network.

The LHA concludes that the development would not result in severe cumulative highway impacts and therefore raises no objection to the proposal, confirming that there are no transport grounds to resist the application.

Parking would be provided on an existing area of hardstanding located adjacent to the established tree line and agricultural building. The parking area is well screened by mature vegetation and lies approximately 100 metres from the proposed pods.

The use of existing hardstanding avoids the creation of new areas of surfacing and ensures that parking activity is visually contained within an established developed part of the site.

Given the small scale of the development, the intermittent nature of holiday occupancy, and the absence of service or delivery requirements typically associated with permanent residential use, the level of traffic generation is expected to be low.

The LHA has requested that secure and covered cycle parking be provided in order to encourage sustainable travel choices and reduce reliance on private vehicles. This can be secured by condition. The site also benefits from pedestrian connectivity via the surrounding public rights of way network, including links towards Billingshurst village and railway station, providing opportunities for non-car-based travel.

Taking into account the above it is concluded that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable highway safety impacts or severe cumulative effects on the local highway network.

The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies 33 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and with paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ecology:

Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and natural features. Policy 31 of the HDPF requires development to conserve biodiversity assets, avoid harm to protected species and

habitats, and secure ecological enhancements. In addition, it requires that proposals demonstrate that adverse impacts on biodiversity have been avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (prepared by the Ecology Co-op, September 2025) and is satisfied that the proposal can be accommodated without unacceptable ecological harm, subject to appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.

The Ecologist confirms that:

- The risk to reptiles and amphibians is considered low, provided precautionary measures are implemented;
- A precautionary approach involving vegetation management prior to installation is appropriate;
- The proposal presents opportunities for habitat enhancement, particularly through grassland improvement and biodiversity net gain measures;
- No further protected species surveys are required at this stage.

The Ecologist raises no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions securing the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures.

With the implementation of precautionary working methods and the delivery of biodiversity enhancements (addressed further under the Biodiversity Net Gain section), the proposal is not expected to result in adverse impacts on protected species, priority habitats or the ecological function of surrounding woodland.

The development is therefore considered to comply with Policies 25 and 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the ecological objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that there will be no anticipated increase in mains water consumption owing to the proposed mitigation measures from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st of October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Drainage and Flood Risk:

Policy 39 of the Horsham District Planning Framework requires development to be provided with adequate infrastructure, including appropriate arrangements for foul water disposal, and to ensure that it does not give rise to pollution or harm to the environment. Paragraphs within the National Planning Policy Framework further require that development is suitable for its location taking account of ground conditions, pollution risk and the availability of adequate services.

The proposal is intentionally designed to operate as an off-grid form of tourist accommodation, with no connection to mains water or sewerage infrastructure. Foul waste would be managed through a sealed composting toilet system, with solid material retained within the unit for controlled decomposition and removal in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. Liquid effluent is proposed to discharge to a soakaway on the site. This form of drainage is not uncommon in low-intensity camping and glamping developments and, in principle, is capable of operating without adverse environmental effects where appropriately designed and managed.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer raised initial concerns regarding the absence of detailed information, particularly in respect of the location and design of the soakaway and evidence of ground suitability. These matters relate to the technical feasibility of the system rather than the acceptability of the land use in principle. It is recognised that detailed design, installation and any permitting requirements fall under separate regulatory regimes, including Building Regulations and, where applicable, oversight by the Environment Agency.

Given the small scale of the development, its seasonal use, and the absence of mains connections, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that a suitable drainage solution can be accommodated on the site. A pre-commencement planning condition is imposed requiring the submission and approval of a detailed off-grid servicing and drainage strategy, including the specification of the composting system, the location and design of the soakaway, and evidence of ground conditions (such as percolation testing). In the event that the use of a soakaway would not be possible, alternative means of surface water drainage should be sought. This will ensure that the development is implemented in a manner that safeguards public health and prevents pollution of land or controlled waters.

Subject to this control, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters:

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The proposed development includes the following measures to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions:

- Solar energy generation;
- Off-grid operation;
- Minimal ground disturbance;
- Reversible construction
- Opportunities for biodiversity gain

The small-scale nature of the proposal and its low resource demand are consistent with the objectives of Policy 33 and the NPPF in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development.

Private Water Supply

Officers note the detailed comments from the Council Environmental Health and Licencing Team relating to the use of a private water supply, and the apparent lack of information as to whether the supply would be to a potable standards. As per the application submission, the proposal seeks to utilise a private water supply, either to be imported or by way of rainwater harvesting. Officers note that the use of a private water supply would be monitored by the Local Authority, in which the applicant would be obliged to maintain in accordance with the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016. To this end, the matter would be suitably covered by another statutory regime, thus it would not be proportionate to regulate this by way of planning condition. Paragraph 201 of the NPPF states:

201. The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities.

With this in mind, the use of a private water supply is not material to the consideration of this application. In any case, an informative is attached to ensure that the applicant is aware of the regulations and to contact the Council's Environmental Health and Licencing Team in the even that the permission is bought into use.

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) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Metric which demonstrates a 13.8 % net gain is achievable by way of onsite biodiversity gains. The proposed biodiversity net gain of 0.3 habitat units is delivered entirely on-site. In accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and associated Regulations, the biodiversity enhancements can be secured through a suitably worded planning condition requiring approval and implementation of a Biodiversity Gain Plan for a minimum period of 30 years. A legal agreement is therefore not necessary.

Planning Balance and Conclusions:

The proposal represents a form of development which, by definition, introduces built form into the countryside. This gives rise to a limited degree of harm arising from the change in the appearance of the field and the introduction of man-made structures within a rural setting. The site is, however, not subject to any landscape designation and is well contained by mature woodland and hedgerows which significantly limit wider visibility.

Against this limited harm, the proposal delivers a number of material planning benefits.

In economic terms, the development would support rural diversification and contribute to the local visitor economy, consistent with the objectives of Policies 7, 10 and 11 of the Horsham District Planning

Framework. National policy similarly supports sustainable rural tourism where it respects the character of the countryside.

In environmental terms, the proposal has been carefully designed to minimise impact. The pods are modest in scale, reversible in nature, and avoid permanent foundations. The development would not result in unacceptable harm to trees, woodland or landscape character, and no tree loss is proposed. Ecological impacts have been assessed and found to be acceptable, with the Council's Ecologist raising no objection.

In addition, the development would deliver a measurable biodiversity net gain of 0.3 habitat units (13.8%), significantly exceeding the statutory 10% requirement set out within the Environment Act 2021. This gain would be delivered entirely on-site and secured through planning condition, ensuring long-term ecological enhancement.

The proposal incorporates strong sustainability credentials, including off-grid operation, solar energy generation, composting toilets and the absence of a mains water connection. As a result, the development would not place additional demand on the public water supply and would not exacerbate water neutrality constraints within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

In amenity terms, the development is small-scale, seasonal in nature and well separated from neighbouring residential properties. Parking is confined to an existing hardstanding area approximately 100 metres from the pods and screened by existing trees, ensuring that activity levels remain low and appropriate to the countryside location.

From a highways perspective, the Local Highway Authority has confirmed that the proposal would not result in a material intensification of the existing access arrangements and would not give rise to highway safety concerns or severe cumulative impacts, in accordance with paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

With regard to foul drainage and water infrastructure, the development proposes an off-grid solution incorporating composting toilets and a managed soakaway for liquid effluent. While detailed technical design falls to separate regulatory regimes, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that an appropriate system could be accommodated within the site without giving rise to pollution or public health concerns. A pre-commencement condition requires the submission and approval of full servicing and drainage details, including evidence of ground suitability and ongoing management arrangements. This ensures that the development can operate sustainably without reliance on mains infrastructure and without harm to the environment.

Taking all matters into account, the identified harms are limited and localised, while the public benefits — including rural economic support, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable tourism provision and low environmental impact — carry significant weight.

When assessed as a whole, the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, achieving economic, social and environmental benefits without giving rise to unacceptable harm.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the application accords with the Development Plan when read as a whole and that planning permission should be granted, subject to appropriate planning conditions.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:

- a) a non-technical summary;
- b) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan; and
- c) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Plan from the completion of development.

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

The habitats and management measures specified in the approved HMMP shall be implemented and thereafter managed, monitored and maintained in accordance with the approved details for the duration specified in the HMMP. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years after the completion of development, dies, is re-moved, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Pre-Commencement (Slab Level) Condition:** Prior to the development commencement above slab floor level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout for the biodiversity enhancements listed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, September 2025) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Layout shall include the following:

- a) detailed designs or product descriptions for biodiversity enhancements; and
- b) locations, orientations and heights for biodiversity enhancements on appropriate drawings.

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance protected and Priority species & habitats and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of the NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

- 6 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to first occupation of the development, details of the biodiversity enhancement measures identified within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, September 2025) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved enhancement measures shall be implemented prior to occupation and shall thereafter be retained and maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: To secure measurable biodiversity enhancements in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to the first occupation of any part of the development hereby permitted, details of secure and covered cycle parking facilities for the occupants of, and visitors to, the development shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No Holiday cabin hereby permitted shall be occupied until the approved cycle parking facilities have been fully implemented and made available for use. The provision for cycle parking shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for the parking of cycles in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 8 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until details for the provision for the storage of refuse and recycling facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall be provided prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of recycling facilities in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 9 **Pre-occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a plan showing the provision of car parking spaces for vehicles, including the use of the existing parking area shown on Drawing 'Site Block Plan (un-numbered)' has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the parking spaces associated with it have been provided in accordance with the approved details. The area of land so provided shall thereafter be retained for the parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that adequate and satisfactory provision is made for the parking of vehicles clear of all highways in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 10 **Regulatory Condition:** All ecological mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in full accordance with the recommendations and mitigation measures contained within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Ecology Co-op, September 2025), including the precautionary method statement for reptiles, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

- 11 **Regulatory Condition:** No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.

Reason: To protect the character of the rural area and safeguard biodiversity in accordance with Policies 31 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 12 **Regulatory Condition:** The development shall be carried out using the external materials specified on the approved drawings unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 13 **Regulatory Condition:** The accommodation hereby permitted shall be occupied and managed in accordance with the following:-
i. The accommodation shall be occupied for holiday and short-term let purposes only;

- ii. The accommodation shall not be occupied as a person's sole, or main place of residence;
- iii. The accommodation shall not be occupied by any one person for a period exceeding 28 days in any calendar year;
- iv. The owners / operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners / occupiers of the accommodation on the site, and of their main home addresses, and shall make this information available to the Local Planning Authority upon request.

Reason: To maintain the availability of the site as short term holiday tourist accommodation in accordance with Policies 10, 11, 26 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Note to Applicant - Environment Agency Informative

The applicant is advised that separate approval may be required from the Environment Agency under the Environmental Permitting Regulations for any sewage or effluent discharge. The granting of planning permission does not remove the need to obtain any other consents or approvals.

Note to Applicant - Private Water Supply Requirements

The applicant is advised that as the development includes the use of a private water supply, the Council will require the submission and approval of detailed information to demonstrate compliance with the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 (or any superseding equivalent) before the development is first brought into use, and prior to development progressing above ground floor slab level.

This should include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Mitigation and Treatment Scheme

A mitigation scheme must be prepared by a suitably qualified and competent consultant demonstrating how harvested rainwater will be treated to meet the standards in Schedule 1 of the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016.

The treatment components must be compliant with Regulation 31 of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 and with the Water Regulations Approval Scheme (or any superseding equivalent).

The approved scheme will be required to be installed, operational, and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

2. Private Water Supply Management Plan (PWSMP)

A PWSMP will need to be submitted and approved, setting out the ongoing management and maintenance of the system. This should include:

- A sampling and testing regime in accordance with the Private Water Supplies Regulations, including procedures for investigation and response to any failed samples;
- Maintenance and servicing arrangements for all elements of the rainwater harvesting and treatment system, including measures for dealing with system failures and re activation after periods of non use;
- Full specification and schematic details of the water supply system, including treatment stages, storage, and means of recording consumption;
- Arrangements for keeping records of sampling, analysis, inspection, maintenance and cleaning, and for providing these records to the local authority on request;
- A named 24/7 contact responsible for responding to any issues with the private water supply.

The PWSMP must be implemented, maintained for the lifetime of the development, and reviewed annually, with updated versions submitted for approval as required.

3. Sampling and Verification Prior to Occupation

Before the development is brought into first use, the applicant must provide evidence that water taken from the tap has:

- been sampled by a person certified under the Drinking Water Inspectorate's scheme for sampling private water supplies;
- been analysed by a laboratory accredited to the ISO 17025 Drinking Water Testing Specification; and
- been demonstrated to meet the requirements of Schedule 1 (Prescribed concentrations or values) of the Private Water Supplies Regulations.

4. Risk Assessment Requirements

The use cannot take place until sufficient information has been provided to enable the Local Planning Authority to undertake a Regulation 6 Risk Assessment under the Private Water Supplies Regulations (or any superseding equivalent).

Applicants are reminded that these measures are fundamental to ensuring that no unacceptable risks arise to human health from unwholesome drinking water, in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016.

For further information / discussion, please contact the Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Team:

01403 215 641

ehl@horsham.gov.uk

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/25/1993

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed	NONE	03.12.2025
Block plan		NONE	03.12.2025
Location plan		NONE	03.12.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning, Design and Access	NONE	03.12.2025
Supporting Docs	Biodiversity Impact Calculation	NONE	03.12.2025
Supporting Docs	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	NONE	03.12.2025
Supporting Docs	BNG Metric	NONE	03.12.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Daniel Holmes Date: 24/02/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 24.02.2026