

Horsham District Council

Our Ref: SDNP/25/05089/ADJAUT
Contact Officer: Abbie Sharland
Tel. No.: 01730 819 378

5th January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Neighbouring Authority Consultation

Applicant: Horsham District Council
Proposal: Adjoining Authority Consultation - Horsham District Council (DC/25/2036) -
Regularisation of building providing holiday let, agricultural training room and office
(Retrospective)

Location: Downsview Farm , Clay Lane , Cootham , West Sussex

Thank you for your correspondence received 18 December 2025, 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 site is location abuts national park boundary. Public right of way, footpath WOG/3134/3, joins Lyons Way to the north of the site, circa 150m from the footpath. The application site also borders Dark Sky Designation Zone E1a.

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. It places a duty on relevant authorities in

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exercising or performing any functions in relation to a protected landscape to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area. The duty applies to local planning authorities and other decision makers in making decisions, as well as to other public bodies and statutory undertakers. The duty to 'seek to further' is an active duty not a passive one and, if minded to approve the application, the Council should demonstrate how the S.245 duty has been taken into account.

The first purpose of a National Park 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 189 of the NPPF 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.

The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for a holiday let, an agricultural training room, and an office at Downsview Farm. The building is divided into two parts: the western section is currently operating as a holiday let, while the eastern section is intended to accommodate the agricultural training room and office. The holiday let has been in use since April 2025, whereas the training room and office remain proposed uses.

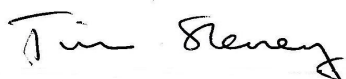
Vehicular access is provided via an existing hard surfaced track leading from Clay Lane to the established farmyard. The building sits to the north of this track, with the existing parking area located to the south. The southern elevation of the building includes five windows and a door facing toward the National Park.

The site lies adjacent to Dark Sky Designation Zone E1a, and the south facing elevation contains several glazed elements that look into this zone. E1a represents an area of intrinsic rural darkness forming a buffer around the Dark Sky Core and is therefore highly sensitive to artificial light. Any development in this location must minimise both external lighting and internal light spill to safeguard the quality of the night sky.

Although some existing lighting associated with the holiday let may already be present, the SDNPA advises that any development should adopt a sensitive lighting strategy. The South Downs National Park Dark Skies Technical Advice Note (Version 2, 2021) provides relevant guidance, and due regard should be given to National Park purposes by taking all possible measures to reduce light pollution and limit external illumination.

If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant permission, it is recommended that a suitably worded condition is imposed to ensure lighting is controlled to minimise unnecessary light spill and avoid adverse effects on local amenity, wildlife, and the National Park.

Yours faithfully



TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer

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