HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Woodlands Farm Broadwater Lane Copsale
DESCRIPTION:	Two pitch settled gypsy accommodation site. Retention of reduced hardstanding and proposed biodiversity enhancements
REFERENCE:	DC/25/1195
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The supporting Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement Relating to: Woodlands Farm, Broadwater Lane, Copsale, West Sussex RH13 6QW is a fair assessment of the development proposal with regards to direct and indirect impacts on the remining trees within the Ancient Woodland (AW), and those at the site entrance.

MAIN COMMENTS:

Further to the comments submitted by the Council's Assistant Arboricultural Officer dated 20/08/25, I agree with their statements concerning how the previous works, over that time period, will foreseeably have had a significant detrimental impact on the woodland's soil and seed bank. While the proposal represents a clear improvement on the existing situation, it does not fully mitigate the impacts arising from the historic works nor does it yet achieve best practice in relation to ancient woodland protection. The amendments to the red site boundary line, the increased size of the AW buffer zone, and the provision of additional fencing between the main areas of activity on the site are acknowledged as positive measures. However, notwithstanding these improvements, part of the area designated for residential use continues to encroach into the AW buffer.

Current Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) concerning ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees (Advice for making planning decisions) advises that, for ancient woodlands, proposals should include a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area). This requirement has not been fully demonstrated in the current submission. Nevertheless, it is noted that, as a result of the historic vegetation clearance works at the site, there are relatively few trees remaining within the AW that would be of a size where their root protection areas, as defined under BS 5837, would extend into the area affected by the proposed changes.

The PPG further recommends that, where possible, buffer zones should contribute to wider ecological networks and form part of the green infrastructure of the area. While the proposed buffer offers some improvement over the existing arrangement, further

enhancement would be required for it to function fully in this capacity. In this regard, buffer zones should comprise semi-natural habitats such as woodland, scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland, and the proposal should include the creation or establishment of habitat using local and appropriate native species throughout the buffer zone. If the scheme is deemed acceptable in terms of other planning considerations the AW buffer habitat enhancement could be secured by way of a landscaping condition.	
NAME:	Andy Bush Arboricultural officer (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	03/02/26