

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Sam Whitehouse
FROM:	Stephen Gee WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	16 March 2026
LOCATION:	Thakeham Mushrooms Chesswood Nurseries Storrington Road Pulborough RH20 3DY
SUBJECT:	DC/26/0266 Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide 150 dwellings, including affordable housing, land for the community land trust, works to public right of way and associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	Officer familiar with the site
RECOMMENDATION:	Objection / More Information / Modification

The application is for the demolition of the existing buildings and provision of 150 dwellings at Thakeham Mushrooms, Thakeham.

Background

The site was subject to a planning application ref DC/24/0021 for upto 247 dwellings and flexible non residential floorspace, Highways objections were raised against the application and the subsequent appeal ref APP/Z3825/W/24/3350094 was dismissed by the planning inspectorate.

The inspector concluded:

"....the proposal would not be sustainably located to minimise the reliance of such a high number of future residents on private vehicles and would not robustly secure appropriate realistic or attractive alternative travel choices to mitigate against the serious resultant harm, contrary to the aforementioned HDPF settlement strategy policies and Policy 40 of the HDPF."

And

"The proposed facilities within the scheme, improvements to various PROWs, bus service improvements and associated travel plan measures could not overcome the locational disadvantages of the site or materially reduce the reliance on private vehicles..."

It is noted that an appeal where the highway authority did not raise an objection was allowed for 28 dwellings at Land South of Furze Common ref: APP/Z3825/W/25/3365902

however due to the difference in scale of the proposals it is not considered that the inspectors comments are applicable to this application.

Pre application

Pre application advice has been provided on the Highways Capacity and Safety elements detailed within the Ardent produced TA.

No formal pre application advice has been provided on the sustainable transport elements produced by Arup.

Access

The application proposes the same vehicular access arrangements considered as part of the previous application A priority junction with right hand turn ghost lane is again proposed and an emergency access further south. A stage 1 Road Safety Audit was undertaken on the proposals and as such is considered acceptable.

Trip Generation

TRICS has been utilised to establish the potential trip generation of the site with person trip rates based on a 150 unit scheme of 141 two way trips in the AM peak and 124 in the PM peak. These trips are then allocated a mode based on census journey to work data, which details 85.8% of trips are anticipated to be undertaken as a car driver. This would generate 121 AM peak vehicle movements and 106PM peak movements with a daily total of 982 vehicle movements.

Junction Modelling

Updated modelling has been provided for the same junctions as assessed by the previous application, Given the reduction in vehicle trips from the site then no highways capacity concerns are raised subject to a proportional contribution to improvements at the Buck Barn and Washington Junctions (these junctions have been modelled with the local plan improvements included). Utilising the same approach as the previous application would result in a contribution of £41,472 calculated via 48 (number of trips through the two junctions in the AM peak) x £864 (Sustainable transport TAD value)

Highways Safety

Updated consideration of the local network has been provided and does not indicate any significant differences from the information provided as part of the previous application.

Internal Layout

Vehicle tracking has been provided for a fire tender and refuse vehicle.

The refuse tracking shows a conflict with the visitor parking space opposite unit 48 and requires the space to be moved further north.

Tracking should be provided for the turning movements associated with accessing the shared drive serving units 1,2 and 3.

A visibility splay passes through the front garden of number 73 and as such this property may require a restrictive covenant to prevent any planting over 0.6m within the splay (or the design could be amended)

Parking

A total of 360 Parking spaces are to be provided (parking plan 360 – App form 359) consisting of 288 allocated spaces, 76 garage spaces (counting as 38 spaces in WSCC calculations), 30 visitor spaces and 4 unallocated spaces. The WSCC parking demand calculator indicates provision of 321. The provision is in excess of the 10% variation allowable within the guidance.

Concern is also raised on the number of garage spaces being inaccurately shown on the parking plan with a number of double garages only being shown with a single garage space including dwelling numbers 3, 4, 16, 18, 44, 45, 46, 77 and 78, which would increase the provision by a further 4.5 spaces.

The increased level of car parking would reinforce the availability of a private vehicle for residents and would not support the uptake of any sustainable transport initiatives.

EV charging would be required to be provided in line with Building regulations

Cycle Parking would be provided in line with WSCC standards.

Sustainable Transport

Vision

No vision has been developed for the site.

Walking

Appropriate pedestrian connections are available or to be improved to allow future residents the opportunity to walk to facilities within the village including the village shop (with opening hours limited to 8.30-4 or 5pm)

Cycling

The lack of dedicated cycle provision and the suitability of the local highway network to accommodate on carriageway cycle (due to topography and vehicle speeds and flows) would likely result in trips out of the village by private vehicle.

Bus Services

Whilst bus stops are located in close vicinity of the site, they have very limited services, with a single trip per day (M-F) between Horsham and Storrington on the 74A and the 74B

and 71 services providing a single trip on a single day. Whilst services are extremely limited

there would be benefit in the provision of bus shelters for those waiting for a bus. It should be noted that the bus service improvements proposed by the previous application do not form part of this application.

Framework Travel Plan

A framework travel plan has been provided. The plan should accord with the WSCC travel plan guidance and include the provision of £150 travel plan vouchers.

Sustainable Transport Improvements

Within the document it indicates that a number of sustainable transport options could be developed, however, the details of these is very limited and insufficient to address how the development would accord with policies contained within the Horsham Local Plan and NPPF.

Comments below are provided on the limited level of information provided.

- *The provision of a Demand Responsive Transport service, providing a flexible form of shared mobility that can operate more efficiently in rural areas compared with conventional fixed-route bus services.*

No details of the DRT have been provided, including details of the effectiveness of the measure, value of the service, procurement and operation details and the ongoing viability of the service.

- *The provision of a Mobility Hub, potentially incorporating an electric bike hire scheme, delivery hub and car club, intended to facilitate mode shift by co-locating a range of shared and low-carbon transport options.*

Details should be provided on the ongoing viability of such schemes in similar locations, given the levels of car parking provided within the site the benefits of a car club to reduce ownership are questioned.

Para 48. "...Whilst electrifying the mode of transport would be beneficial to reduce carbon emissions, such trips would still involve the use of a vehicle rather than specifically assisting with a shift towards non-car modes of travel."

The provision of an electric bike hire scheme is unlikely to result in any significant uptake in cycling and was suggested as part of the previous application. The provision of electric bikes would not resolve the issues of the narrow highway widths when exiting the village and the perceptions of safety.

Para 37 "Storrington Road has some sections through the cuttings both to the north and south which are narrow, constrained and, in my view, difficult enough to navigate with due care and attention even in a typical vehicle. Whilst there is no prohibition on cyclists using the road and even assuming that the surface condition could be improved at the outer edges of the carriageways, there is no prospect of them being widened to assist with the perception of protection from vehicles to encourage a greater uptake of purposeful journeys to local destinations. As such, the option to cycle even to Storrington within the carriageway is likely to remain one for experienced cyclists only. Taking an alternative road route via West Chiltington presents some similarly challenging sections and a longer route overall which seems similarly unlikely as a regular commuting option

- *A potential contribution towards traffic calming along the B2139 Storrington Road (put forward by Thakeham Parish Council to WSCC).*

Details should be provided to the value of the work and contribution. It should be noted that the previous application did not secure these works and a reduction in vehicle speeds or provision of traffic calming would not be required to make the development acceptable in highways terms. Whilst the reduction in speeds and provision of traffic calming that may discourage HGV traffic could improve the perception of safety within the village and to a small extent encourage trips to be undertaken on foot or by bike these would be limited to facilities within the village.

- *Public Rights of Way (PROW) upgrades similar to the original planning application.*

The upgrade of the offsite public rights of way would be similar to those previously proposed, concerns of the additional distance, indirect nature, topography, use in winter and ability to deliver were raised to the previous application and the inspector noted.

Para 39.... "However, even assuming no impediment to delivery of any part of the package of improvement works and related signage, my view is that a limited number of journeys would be made using these routes on foot or bicycle for purposeful journeys to work, to shops, leisure destinations or to school. The reasons for the lack of take up would be due to a combination of the journey times along lengthier, indirect routes; undulations along the routes which present a difficulty for some users; the absence of street lighting; and related safety concerns due to their largely rural contexts. In short,

in my view, whilst a beneficial package of improvements, they would serve more readily as enhancements to the recreational offer for Thakeham residents rather than offering a genuine choice of useable sustainable travel options to minimise reliance on private vehicles”

Conclusion

At present insufficient information has been provided to assess if the proposal would achieve safe and convenient access by a choice of means of travel or encourage and enable an increase in environmentally sustainable means of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport and thereby minimise the impact of car journeys. And as such would be country to the following policies:

NPPF para 115

- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;

Horsham Local Plan 2015 Policy 40: Sustainable Transport (1-8)

Horsham Local Plan 2023-40 reg 19 submission Policy 24 (b-f)

Further information is requested upon:

- The sustainable transport package of measures to be delivered by the development.
- Provision of a vision for the site.
- Refuse tracking to drive of no 1,2 and 3.
- Modification to parking space opposite unit 48.
- Amendment of design or acceptance of convent to 73.
- Recalculation of garage parking spaces, consideration of the overprovisions effects on the uptake of sustainable transport.

Stephen Gee

West Sussex County Council – Planning Service