Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/25/1186
Land Parcel At 511450 123227 , Billingshurst Road, Coolham, West Sussex, RH13 8QN

DESCRIPTION:
Change of use of land from agriculture to a B2 Use (general industry) comprising the importation and processing of timber to produce wood chippings for re-sale.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/1486	Construction of a two storey four bedroom barn style dwelling.	Application Refused on 21.11.2024

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application is set back from Billingshurst road, with a mature tree line along the southern site boundary. The application is retrospective in nature, with tall piles of wood chippings within the site and log piles located next to the tree line. The site is to the west of a residential dwelling, accessed along a private track.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application seeks permission for a retrospective change of the use of the land to general industry use for the processing and storage of timber chippings for distribution. The Design and Access statement outlines that the storage would be an open storage, with the actual processing of the timber only occurring once every 3-4 months. The operations within the site would occur during day time hours only.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 15: Settlement Coalescence
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 39: Affordable Housing
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District

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

Shipley Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031:
Policy HD3 - High quality design

Shipley Parish Design Guidance

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:

Natural England: Standing advice
It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

WSCC Highways: No Objection [Summary]

The design and Access statement outlines that the proposal would be used only once every 3-4 times per year such that the increase of use within the site would not be materially different to what exists currently within the site. Given the above, there are no objections.

HDC Landscape Officer: Objection/ further information required [Summary]
The development would appear to include the storage of wood piles that would be located within the root protection area of the trees within the application site. Further information is sought on how to prevent root compaction and how the development would strengthen the landscaped boundary treatment.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:
Representations:
One letter of Objection has been received from one address, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Noise
- Character
- Retrospective development
- Precedent for future uses nearby

Parish Comments:
Parish Council: Support

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 26 of the HDPF states that proposals outside of the built-up area boundaries must be essential to its countryside location and in addition meet one of four policies including:

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.

Policy 10 of the HDPF seeks to support sustainable rural economic development, and the productive use of land that maintains the relative tranquillity of the countryside in order to generate local employment opportunities and socio-economic benefits for local communities. Policy 10 stipulates that development should be appropriate to its countryside location and must contribute to diverse and sustainable farming enterprises, or the wider recreational offer or rural economy, and, in addition, be contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or result in substantial environmental improvement.

The application site is located outside of the built-up area boundary, and is therefore considered to be within the countryside in policy terms. The proposal would provide some local employment and represent a diversification of an agricultural business which contributes to the local economy. The more industrial action of processing timber for wood chippings would occur only once every 3-4 months such that the site is not considered to regularly result in industrial noisy activities which would disrupt the relative tranquillity of its countryside location.

The proposal would not be considered to result in additional form or result in substantial environmental improvement. Nevertheless, the development would be broadly in accordance with policy 10 of the HDPF and there are therefore no objections to the proposal in principle.

Character:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should take into account townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

The field pattern to the north and east within the locality is comprised of small to medium sized fields enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees and development would have the potential to erode this character. The application site is rural in character. The piles of wood are high, with the Design and Access statement not outlining a maximum height. In this instance, the site does have some screening to the east by a hedgerow and south provided by a line of mature trees.

The Council's Landscape Architect has objected to the proposal on the basis of insufficient information on the basis of the wood piles to the southern boundary with the piles likely being sited within the Root protection areas of the trees. Further information has been sought therefore on the basis that the trees would over time be harmed through root compaction such that the degree to which they will provide screening will be increasingly limited and as such, the development would over time become increasingly harmful to the landscape character of the locality.

An informal consultation was received during the course of the application by the council's Arboricultural Officer, who outlined that in the absence of an Arboricultural appraisal, a condition should be added to the report to request a post and rail fence to span the width of the southern site boundary treatment, located a minimum of 8 metres away from the base of the trees in this location. This form of mitigation measure would decrease the existing root compaction and no further industrial, access, parking or storage use of the land within this area should occur. This would require the relocation of the existing wood piles to outside of the 8 metre minimum buffer zone. A condition can be attached therefore to act as an appropriate mitigation to protect the root protection areas of the trees within the site along the southern boundary and protect the landscape character of the area.

Subject to the condition outlined above, there are no objections to the proposal on the basis of policy 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

A heavy industry use would have the potential to result in unacceptable impacts of noise pollution to the amenities of the nearest residential properties to the east. Given the infrequent use of the application site as outlined within the Design and Access statement, the change of use would be unlikely to cause frequent noise at unacceptable levels, being limited to daytime hours every 3-4 months. Overall, the development would be acceptable in light of policy 32 of the HDPF.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The Design and Access statement outlines that the proposal would be used only once every 3-4 times per year such that the increase of use within the site would not be materially different to what exists currently within the site. WSCC highways have been consulted and there are objections raised. Given the above, there are no objections in light of policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Ecology:

Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.

The application is retrospective in nature with the more intensive uses of the site only being sporadic every 3-4 months during daytime hours. Given the above, it is considered that the proposal would have little potential to harm protected species in such a way as to not have already have occurred if these had been present at the site. As such, it is not considered that it would be reasonable to request further information in regards to protected species. The proposal would largely be used for storage of wood chippings and the development is not considered contrary to policy 31 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality:

The proposal would be used sporadically, with no permanent staff operating within the site and no potential for W.C or staff facilities. Overall, given the nature of the use of the application site, there is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the dwelling 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.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). This requires that development must achieve at least 10% BNG on all habitats within the development site.

The Applicant has not submitted a biodiversity net gain metric given that the application would form an exemption to the requirements as a retrospective development.

Conclusions:

The proposal would result in a development that would be broadly in accordance with policy 10 of the HDPF, facilitating the diversification of an agricultural enterprise that would support the local economy. The proposal is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Regulatory condition**: Within three months of the granting of this permission, a post and rail fence will be built 8 metres away from the southern boundary tree line to form a buffer zone from activities within the site, including the outdoor storage, any industrial equipment and

vehicle access. The buffer zone will be measured from the base of the trees forming the southern curtiledge extending northwards.

Reason: To ensure the protection of the trees within the application site, character of the area, visual amenity and landscape character in accordance with policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District council.

3 **Regulatory Condition**: Only wood chippings, timber and post rails shall be kept or stored at the site at any time.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policies 26 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: No part of the site shall be open for trade, deliveries or industrial processes apart from between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, the hours of 08:00 and 13:00 hours on Saturdays, and at no time on Sundays and Bank / Public Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: The use and operation of the site shall be strictly carried out in accordance with the Submitted Design and Access statement, unless otherwise agreed to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenities within the locality.

6 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020) (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting these Orders), the premises hereby permitted shall be used for the manufacturing and storage of wood chipping only, and for no other purposes whatsoever, (including those falling within Class B2 as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: Changes of use as permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order or Use Classes Order 1987 are not considered appropriate in this case under Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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/25/1186

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Block plan		NONE	21.08.2025

Location plan		NONE	21.08.2025
Design & Access Statement		NONE	21.08.2025
Location plan		NONE	01.09.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 27th October 2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 27.10.2025