



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 13912
Date: 06 February 2026

For the attention of: Alice Johnson

Application ref: DC/25/2057
Location: Land North of Little Slaughterford Chapel Road Barns Green
West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Proposed development of 68 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian accesses, public open space, hard and soft landscaping and associated works including supporting foul and surface water drainage works, and works to existing culverted watercourse on site.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Full planning application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

Summary

Not supportive on landscape grounds	☒
No landscape objection, subject to attached recommendations and/or conditions	☐
Further information required prior to determination	☐
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	☐

This review is based on a desktop study of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents, without a site visit. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

The site is located on the western edge of Barns Green comprising a single grass field bound by hedgerows and trees. Chapel Road is beyond the eastern boundary, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Bridleway ITC-1600 'Smugglers Lane' follows the northern boundary. PRoW Footpath ITC-1596-1 follows the western boundary and is located within an Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland. The wider landscape comprises further ancient woodland and a number of lakes within a countryside setting with extensive PRoW network. Grade II listed Little Slaughterford Farmhouse (1193795) is located to the south of the site.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

2.1. Horsham District Planning Framework

2.2. The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) (HDPF) Proposals Maps identifies the site as being located outside the defined built-up area boundary and therefore designated as countryside. The following policies are considered relevant:

- Policy 26: Countryside Protection
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

2.3. Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 Regulation 19

2.4. As of January 2026, the Horsham District Local Plan (Regulation 19) is 'submitted' and is regarded as relevant. The site is subject to draft allocation BGR1 within Strategic Policy HA6: Barns Green Housing Allocations. This states:

1. The following sites are allocated, as shown on the Policies Map, for the provision of at least 95 homes:

- BGR1: Land South of Smugglers Lane, 3.3 hectares (50 homes)

2. In addition to meeting national and Local Plan requirements, development will be supported where proposals:

BGR1 a) Demonstrate housing is carefully sited and include an appropriate buffer from adjacent ancient woodland; and b) Ensure that appropriate regard is had to the impact on the adjacent Grade II Listed Buildings (Bennetts, Blacksmiths Cottage and The Queen's Head Public House).

2.5. Further Policies include:

- Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character.
- Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection.
- Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes.
- Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.
- Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles.

2.6. The Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan (2024 – 2031)

2.7. The Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 08 October 2025 and covers Barns Green including the site. The following policies are considered relevant: Policy 1 - Green Infrastructure conservation; Policy 3 - Heritage Assets and Itchingfield Conservation Area; Policy 5 - Protection of Green Infrastructure; Policy 12 - Design parameters.

3.0. Review of the proposal/submitted information

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

- 3.1. The application is accompanied by a LVIA prepared by Deacon Design Ltd. Overall, the LVIA has referenced the principles outlined in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute (LI). On review of the LVIA, we found that the assessment lacks continuity and accordance with GLVIA3; therefore, we cannot review the judgements provided and/or assess the efficacy of proposed mitigation. Our comments are below:
- 3.2. The LVIA includes a desktop study, an evaluation of the landscape and visual baseline, an assessment of receptors, and a final summary and conclusion. A field survey was carried out in July 2025, "*when vegetation provides most screening*" (para 2.7, LVIA); however, we welcome reference made to winter views within the narrative of judgments. Appendix 2 LVIA Methodology of the LVIA clearly sets out the process of how final effects have been reached and this is welcomed; however, while we note value has been assessed using Box 5.1 of GLVIA3, there is no reference to the more recent Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations'.

Landscape Character

- 3.3. Section 4 of the LVIA correctly identifies the site as lying within National Character Area (NCA) 121 Low Weald, LCA LW6: Central Low Weald of the Landscape Character assessment of West Sussex (2003); and LCA G2: Itchingfield & Barns Green Wooded Farmlands of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (2003), referencing neighbouring LCAs which is welcomed.
- 3.4. As previously stated, we are disappointed to note the omission of utilising TGN 02/21 to assess value outside of designation. Notwithstanding this, we note reference made to individual landscape features which contribute towards the value of the site including hedgerows, trees, and designated ancient woodland on the site boundaries.
- 3.5. As noted in para 3.28 of the LVIA, Itchingfield commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment to assist in informing their neighbourhood plan. Of this, the site is identified as Landscape Character Area L: Barns Green Village where a key characteristic is "*Important small pastoral fields on rising ground to north and west provide important green gaps that contribute to a settlement with rural character and provides a transition to the wider countryside.*"
- 3.6. Section 7 of the LVIA sets out the assessment of landscape effects where susceptibility has been assessed "*after implementation of all mitigation measures*". There has been no assessment of effects prior to mitigation as per para 1.5 of the LVIA Methodology which is in line with GLVIA3. The LVIA suggests that mitigation has been identified following only the assessment of value and does not follow best practice or the process set out in the

para 1.5 of the LVIA Methodology. We draw attention to Figure 5.1 'Steps in assessing landscape effects' of GLVIA3, which identifies that mitigation proposals should follow the initial assessment of effects and then re-assessed. This is to identify the efficacy of mitigation and where the sensitivities lie.

- 3.7. Furthermore, Landscape receptors lack consistency where 'Landscape features within the Application Site' has been assessed to have medium value (para 4.43) but has not been assessed for the remaining LVIA.
- 3.8. We request summary tables to accompany the LVIA and clarify the approach towards final judgements and where judgements have been combined.

Visual Amenity

- 3.9. We are satisfied with the identified viewpoint locations which cover key areas of concern. We note para 1.12 of the Methodology states that photography is in accordance with LI's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19: 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' for Type 1 (Annotated); however, the photography does not include annotations. Furthermore, given the potential long-distance views from north and south, we request Type 2 (Wireframes) to represent 3D form of development / context from viewpoint 2 and understand the storey heights on the elevated side of the site.
- 3.10. We request summary tables to accompany the LVIA and clarify the approach towards final judgements and where judgements have been combined. This should clearly state the value, susceptibility and sensitivity for each receptor before assessing magnitude of change/effects prior to mitigation.
- 3.11. Overall, the assessment lacks continuity and accordance with GLVIA3; therefore, we cannot review the judgements provided and/or assess the efficacy of proposed mitigation.

Layout and Appearance

- 3.12. We welcome the frontages facing the Ancient Woodland avoiding rear gardens backing onto this valued landscape feature. However, we are disappointed that more of a feature has not been made of the interface between built development and the woodland. We recommend ecological and arboricultural advice is sought regarding any planting within the buffer zone to ensure no negative effects are placed upon the soil structure of the Ancient Woodland. Para 187 of the NPPF requires decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including trees and woodland.
- 3.13. The Proposed Site Layout Plan (Dwg. 24088 P101 Q) identifies the boundary to the Ancient Woodland buffer as 1.2m post and rail fencing. We request that this is specified as cleft post and rail to provide a more rustic appearance in keeping with the woodland

character. We also recommend adopting a less formal approach, replacing the proposed continuous hedge with intermittent clustered groups of coppice planting along the fence line. This will create a more organic edge while allowing for open breaks to maintain some level of passive surveillance. Advice should be sought from arboriculture and ecological specialists to determine suitable species for this location, with hazel being a potential option for coppice groups. Finally, we recommend the inclusion of interpretation boards to inform users about the value of Ancient Woodlands and to explain the function and importance of the buffer zone.

- 3.14. We also have concerns regarding the southern boundary, where a narrow corridor to the rear of properties is closed off on one end. Although we would prefer to resist layouts which result in 'maintenance strips'; where this is not possible, we recommend securing the area or allowing movement through to avoid 'dead ends' which can raise safety concerns.
- 3.15. There is a missed opportunity to provide greater tree provisions across the site, particularly street trees. The Site Sections (24088 / C102A) illustrate a distinct lack of planting across the site. We draw attention to para 136 of the NPPF which states that decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined.
- 3.16. The Site Boundary Materials Layout (Dwg. 24088 Rev P104) identifies 1.8m close board fencing to the rear of plots 47-50 facing onto the parking court. We advise this to be proposed as brick wall or defensible planting is provided as is such adjacent to plots 44-45. Similarly, we expect the same treatment for plots 1 and 17.
- 3.17. The Drainage Strategy (0018.401) identifies bioretention rain gardens along the main spine road which is welcomed; however, it is difficult to understand how these are implemented within the Landscape Strategy (DD715L01D) and the Site Sections previously mentioned.
- 3.18. The Tree Protection Plan (Dwg. 25-1907-TPP) identifies the complete removal of H1 where the AIA states that this is *"to enable the construction of a site access, installation of new drainage and to allow for mandatory sightlines for the new site entrance"*. We question the extent of removals and suggest setting the swale back from the boundary to allow for better retention of H1. Of particular concern is the southern corner approaching the village to retain the sense of arrival from the rural lane.
- 3.19. Furthermore, the SuDS basin and swale along Chapel Road dominate the portion of the site resulting in an unbalanced scheme. We would prefer greater integration of SuDS into the main development to avoid use of over engineered basins. Any SuDS strategy should be in accordance with National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). We welcome the use of brick wall treatment to head walls as illustrated within the Sketch Perspective View 1 (24088 / C103).

- 3.20. We suggest links between both green open spaces should be improved and crossing opportunities made more intentional.
- 3.21. Furthermore, while the planting within the open space is welcomed, we raise concerns of safety where passive surveillance may be limited as a result of the hedged boundary, in particular the LAP. We recommend revisions to the layout to better integrate the built development with open space, play and SuDS with a holistic approach and recommend hedges are maintained low where passive surveillance is required.

4.0. Summary

- 4.1. While we recognise the site is draft allocated, we expect a greater accordance with emerging policy specifically regarding the ancient woodland, and NPPF para 136.
- 4.2. We recommend the layout is reviewed to provide a more holistic approach towards the site and to demonstrate that the proposals are informed by the findings of the LVIA.
- 4.3. Overall, the LVIA lacks continuity and does not follow its own methodology approach. We request clarification on the assessment and recommend summary tables are provided to identify clear judgements for each landscape and visual receptors, followed by proposed mitigation and residual effects thereafter (year 1 and year 15).

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

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Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Horsham District Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.