HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Land North of Rectory Lane Ashington
DESCRIPTION:	Outline Application for redevelopment of the site to provide up to 125 dwellings, access, public open space and associated landscaping, drainage and highways infrastructure with all matters reserved except access.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/1186
RECOMMENDATION:	More Information / Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

The principle of development is acknowledged in the context of the site's proposed allocation within ASN2. However, further information and amendments are required to demonstrate an acceptable landscape-led development framework.

In particular:

1. **LVIA:** Further clarification is required regarding landscape character, residual and cumulative effects, including the basis for reductions in effects at Year 15 where these rely upon indicative mitigation.
2. **Visualisations:** Type 2 and Type 3 visualisations are required from the identified viewpoints, including a Type 3 visualisation from the South Downs National Park and for the proposed site accesses.
3. **Cumulative effects:** The LVIA should assess cumulative landscape and visual effects with the wider ASN2 allocation and relevant committed and allocated development.
4. **Parameter plans:** Density, height, land use, open space and landscape parameters should secure the development envelope, landscape buffers, retained vegetation, veteran tree buffer and other mitigation relied upon by the LVIA.
5. **Landscape framework:** Greater separation should be provided between development parcels and important tree belts and hedgerows to allow their retention and enhancement, with strengthened structural planting particularly along Rectory Lane and the northern and western boundaries.
6. **Open space:** The proposals should demonstrate how the site's requirements integrate with the coordinated provision of open space across the wider ASN2 masterplan in accordance with the OSSR.

MAIN COMMENTS:

Site Description & Context

1. The site lies on the north-western edge of Ashington, outside but adjoining the existing settlement. It comprises three arable fields separated by mature tree lines and bounded by well established hedgerows and trees.
2. Rectory Lane runs along the southern boundary and is a narrow lane lined by mature hedgerows and trees, retaining a predominately rural character. Existing residential development lies to the south, including properties along Rectory Lane and Blakiston Close, with further consented development expected to the west. The immediate context is characteristic of a rural settlement edge, with residential development to the south and east and agricultural land extending to the north and west.
3. Vehicular access for the site is proposed from Rectory Lane. This would introduce a new opening and associated highway works along this frontage, adding to the incremental erosion of the lane's rural character.
4. The site boundaries comprise mature mixed species hedgerows with hedgerow trees, predominantly oak. Two corridors of mature oak trees extend north-south through the site and divide the land into three fields. A veteran oak is also identified within one of these internal tree lines.
5. A tributary of Lancing Brook runs along the western boundary and joins Lancing Brook to the north. Drainage ditches also follow the northern boundary. The land slopes gently northwards, from approximately 31m AOD in the south to 22m AOD towards the north-east.
6. To the north and west, the surrounding countryside comprises arable and pasture fields enclosed by mature hedgerows and trees. The land rises further west towards Warminghurst Farm and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Smaller pasture fields and residential development lie to the east, with Luckista Grove residential park sitting to the north-east.
7. No Public Rights of Way cross the site. PRoW 2490 lies to the north and PRoW 2491 to the east of the site, with further routes through the surrounding countryside. Views towards the site are available from sections of Rectory Lane and adjoining residential properties, with longer-distance views available from higher ground to the southwest.

Landscape Character Guidance

8. The site falls within J2: Broadford Bridge to Billingshurst Farmlands, as defined by the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. This is a generally flat to gently undulating rural landscape characterised by mainly small-scale fields, a strong hedgerow network, mature oaks, scattered woodland and narrow lanes. While suburban influence is identified around Ashington, the area remains predominantly rural. Sensitivities include large scale housing development and incremental changes that erode local character.
9. The site displays a number of characteristics representative of the J2 LCA, comprising three arable fields enclosed by mature treed hedgerows, with two internal lines of mature oak trees reflecting the established field pattern. These features, together with the gently sloping landform and relationship with Rectory Lane, contribute to its rural settlement edge character. The LCA guidance seeks to conserve rural character, retain and restore hedgerows, shaws and mature hedgerow trees, and integrate new development within the existing landscape

framework. The site's mature trees and hedgerows should therefore be retained and form an integral part of the landscape framework for the development.

10. The Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment locates the site within Local Landscape Study Area AS3. This is characterised by small to medium-scale fields, pasture, hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees, with much of the area retaining an unspoilt rural character. Rural character is particularly strong in the western part. Overall landscape capacity is assessed as low to moderate, although this varies across the study area.
11. In relation to the application site, the Capacity Assessment identifies the western part of AS3, north of Rectory Lane, as attractive rural countryside with no capacity to absorb housing development. It is acknowledged that the site has since been proposed for allocation as part of ASN2: Ashington Northern Cluster in the emerging Local Plan. However, this does not negate the landscape characteristics and sensitivities identified by the Capacity Assessment, which remain relevant to the extent and form of development and the landscape framework required.

<u>Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - further information required:</u>

12. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted has been reviewed following the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (2020). Overall, the assessment is proportionate and appropriately recognises the substantial change to the site's landscape character and resulting adverse landscape and visual effects. However, further clarification is required in relation to some of the landscape character, visual, cumulative and residual effect conclusions.
13. While the proposed key landscape and design principles discussed at para 5.2 are generally supported, provision for planting, building heights and density, relied upon to reduce the adverse effects identified, must be secured through the controlling parameter plans.
14. The assessment recognises that development would result in a substantial change to the landscape character of the site:
    - *Moderate-Substantial Adverse effects* on the site and immediate surroundings at Year 1, reducing to *Moderate Adverse* for the site and *Slight Adverse* for the immediate surroundings at Year 15.
    - Effects on the wider J2 LCA are assessed as *Slight Adverse* at Year 1, reducing to *Slight-Negligible Adverse* at Year 15.
    - With regards to Landscape features, effects on trees are assessed as *Negligible Beneficial* at Year 1 and *Slight Beneficial* at Year 15, while effects on hedgerows are assessed as *Moderate Adverse* at Year 1 and *Slight Adverse* at Year 15. The beneficial effects identified for trees are not agreed with. Although most trees and hedgerows would be retained, they are characteristic landscape features that remain vulnerable to development and would be experienced within a substantially different landscape context. Effects on both trees and hedgerows are therefore considered more appropriately assessed as Moderate Adverse at Year 1, reducing to Slight Adverse at Year 15.
15. The LVIA identifies adverse visual effects of varying levels from Rectory Lane, PRoWs 2490 and 2491, nearby residential properties and the churchyard at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The assessment generally predicts a reduction in these effects by Year 15 as *proposed planting matures*. However, the indicative Landscape Strategy provides limited detail regarding the extent of new structural planting and appears predominantly reliant on existing boundary vegetation. It is therefore unclear how the stated reductions in residual effects at Year 15 have

been derived. Where these conclusions rely upon development setbacks, retention of vegetation, structural landscape buffers, open space or the extent and location of development, these measures should be clearly demonstrated and secured through the controlling parameter plans.
This is particularly relevant where the Tree Retention and Removal Plan indicates limited opportunity to strengthen existing tree belts due to the proximity of the proposed development parcels to the existing landscape features.

16. No visualisations of the proposed development have been provided. Type 2 and Type 3 visualisations are required from selected key viewpoints in accordance with Landscape Institute TGN 06/19. Type 2 wirelines would be acceptable for V11, V25, V23, V21 and V27 to demonstrate the scale, massing and extent of the built development. For V30, Type 3 photomontages should be provided, as the assessment relies on proposed planting to mitigate visual effects. Type 3 visualisations should also be provided for the proposed site entrances. The visualisations should show the development at completion and Year 15, supported by clearly stated assumptions regarding planting sizes, species, spacing, management and anticipated growth.

17. With regard to the South Downs National Park, the LVIA identifies the receptor as being of Very High sensitivity (V30) but concludes that there would be no effect on its character or setting. However, the visual assessment identifies that the site would be partially discernible from the South Downs Way near Chanctonbury Ring, with an incremental increase in roofscape and a *Negligible Adverse* effect at Year 1, becoming *Neutral* once materials have weathered. Given the sensitivity of this receptor and the identified visibility of the development, these conclusions should be demonstrated through a Type 3 visualisation, both individually and cumulatively with the wider allocation and committed development. This is required to establish whether further mitigation is necessary.
18. The LVIA acknowledges cumulative development at paragraphs 5.14–5.15, including the committed development south of Rectory Lane and the remainder of the proposed ASN2 Ashington Northern Cluster. It identifies cumulative loss of farmland, increased visibility of built development from Rectory Lane and effects on other receptors, including PRoWs 2490 and 2491. However, it does not assess the magnitude of these changes or provide clear judgements on the resulting cumulative landscape and visual effects.
19. Further cumulative assessment is therefore required, considering the application alongside the remainder of the proposed ASN2 allocation and relevant consented, and allocated development nearby, including schemes identified in the LVIA baseline. The assessment should identify shared landscape and visual receptors and provide clear judgements on the cumulative effects on the settlement edge, landscape character, Rectory Lane, relevant PRoWs and the setting of the SDNP.
20. As no LVIA has been carried out for the wider cluster's masterplan, this assessment is needed to establish whether the conclusions for the application site remain robust in the context of the wider planned expansion of Ashington.

<u>Assessment</u>

21. Open Space Requirements proposals would need to demonstrate how the scheme accords with the requirements of the Horsham District Council's Open Space, Sports & Recreation Review 2021 (OSSR), taking into account the various typologies and respective definitions. As the site forms part of a wider Local Plan allocation, open space provision and distribution must be considered comprehensively across the allocation. Please refer to the wider masterplan comments below.

22. Table 4 on page 56 of the DAS sets out the POS requirements for the 125 homes:
    - Allotments – the proposed 125 homes trigger a requirement for on site allotments. Therefore, in this occasion, traditional allotment provision is expected rather than the proposed 'community orchard alternative'. Please refer to wider masterplan comments below.
    - Natural and semi-natural green space – Provision within the parcel exceeds the requirement.
    - Amenity greenspace – an informal kickabout area is proposed in the northern part of the parcel. Open space in this location is supported although the area may need to be reclassified as parks and gardens. Please refer to the wider masterplan comments below.
    - Parks and Gardens (inc outdoor sports) – please refer to wider masterplan comments below.
    - Children's Play – provision is required within the parcel, including LAPs to meet walkability requirements. For the LEAP, please refer to the wider masterplan comments below.
    - Young People – provision is required within the parcel. Please refer to the wider masterplan comments below and HDC's guide to inclusive spaces for young people.
23. The parameter plan shows development parcels immediately adjoining RPAs, raising concern that sufficient space has been allowed to enhance these landscape features rather than simply retain them. The illustrative masterplan, as indicated on figure 17 of the DAS reinforces this concern.
24. The parameter plan should therefore secure wider landscape corridors around the existing tree belts and allow for their enhancement, particularly along the Rectory Lane boundary. Detailed design will also need to respond to topography, proposed level changes and surfacing close to RPAs.
25. The illustrative masterplan shows rear gardens backing onto these important landscape features. This arrangement should be avoided wherever possible, with existing trees and vegetation kept outside residential curtilages to secure their long term retention and provide a more sympathetic relationship with future occupants.
26. In addition to H1, H3, H6, H8, H10 and H15, which are identified for removal to facilitate the access arrangements, clarification is sought to the removal, full or partial of G7 (identified as English Oak, Cat B2), which also appears to fall within the required visibility splay clearance.
27. While the LVIA and proposed access arrangements refers to replacement planting behind the visibility splays, the extent of existing hedgerow to be removed and proposed replacement planting is not clearly shown. Given this aspect of the proposal is applied in full and relied upon under the mitigation measures to reduce the adverse effects of the scheme, any planting associated with site access must be clearly indicated within a proposed plan. Clarification is also requested to ascertain if the proposed planting is to be planted within existing RPAs, as this will influence appropriate planting sizes and methodology. Planting should be undertaken as early as practicable following formation of the access.
28. The AIA proposes removal of a greater length of H8 than required for the access, due to the condition of the hedgerow. While there is no concern with the removal in principle, this section must be replanted as soon as possible following formation of the access. It is recommended that this section of hedgerow is replanted as advance planting.
29. Also recommended is that the buffer zone for the veteran tree is indicated and secured through the parameter plans.

Wider Masterplan Observations & Open Space Provision:

30. Existing corridors and landscape framework must be enhanced and indicated in the masterplan. Also, robust structural landscape buffers must be added, particularly to the site's north and western boundaries.
31. The provision of street trees to be considered from the outset and indicated in the masterplan.
32. The buffer to Oakwood Copse, protected by TPO/1060, should be clearly indicated, including exclusion of ancillary uses, such as pumping station, within the buffer.
33. Opportunities to secure long distance views of the SDNP escarpment and Church spire identified and secured within the masterplan.
34. The application forms part of a wider development concept of approximately 450 dwellings. The open-space requirements for the application parcel must therefore be considered alongside the distribution and coordinated delivery of open space across the wider masterplan area. Council's Open Space Calculator for 450 dwellings, population 1080 people, has therefore identified a need of approximately 5 hectares of open space. Each open space typology requirement is as follows:

				Open space required per person:			Multi-functional greenspace proposed / potential split:			Children and young people proposed / potential split:	
	occupancy assumption	number of units	calculated occupancy of scheme	Allotments 1.8m2 per person	Multi-functional greenspace 43.9m2 per person	Children and young people 0.7m2 per person	Parks and Gardens 13.8m2 per person	Amenity Greenspace 5.8m2 per person	Natural and Semi-Natural 24.3m2 per person	Children 0.5m2 per person	Youth areas and facilities 0.2m2 per person
				1.8	43.9	0.7	13.8	5.8	24.3	0.5	0.2
unknown	2.4	450	1080	1944	47412	756	14904	6264	26244	540	216
1 bed flats	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 bed houses	1.7	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
2 bed flats	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 bed houses	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 bed flats	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 bed houses	2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4+ flats	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 bed houses	2.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5+ bed houses	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Area required for each typology (m2)	1944	47412	756	14904	6264	26244	540	216
			Area required for each typology (hectares)	0.1944	4.7412	0.0756	1.4904	0.6264	2.6244	0.054	0.0216

35. Allotments - around 0.19ha; Landscape and Park and Countryside officers are of the view this should be located near the PRoW within the masterplan
36. Parks and Gardens - 1.49ha; (primary purpose - Urban parks, country parks and formal gardens, open to the general public. Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. For the purposes of this study this also includes greenspace which may currently provide a sports pitch.). Officers are of the view that this typology should be located in the central part of the masterplan and connectivity to PRoW is desirable.
37. Amenity Green Space – 0.62ha; (primary purpose - Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.)
38. Natural and semi-natural green space – 2.62ha
39. Children – 0.054ha - the provision of one LEAP centrally located and LAPs to meet walkability requirements is recommended

40. Young people – 0.02ha - the provision of an outdoor gym, sheltered seating and stages/dance spaces near a kickabout space, at the centre of the masterplan is recommended
41. Please refer to Part 8 of the OSSR: provision standards where what is expected for each open space typology is described. A land budget plan to demonstrate that the open space requirements generated by the development as a whole, can be secured in the right locations, allowing for the associated buffer zones, minimum accessibility requirements, minimum typology sizes, existing deficiencies, etc, compliant with the OSSR. It must include a table with each proposed typology and associated quantities and block shapes that can be measured against. Please note SuDS areas can and should be included within the open space strategy but will not count towards the quantity requirements as these would be limited in its access and use.
42. It is important to note that while these are minimum requirement figures based on population, when the accessibility parameters and minimum space requirements for each typology are considered, the overall open space requirement may be higher. Therefore, the proposals must also be informed and include an accessibility analysis of the types of open space and facilities within walking distance of the development. The extract below is taken from the OSSR:

285. The recommended accessibility standards for HDC are set out in Table 9.2.1.

Table 9.2.1: Recommended accessibility standards

Open space type	Recommended Accessibility Standard
Parks & Gardens	1,000m
Amenity Greenspace	480m
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	300m (local) 1,000m (Sub-district/strategic)
Provision for children and young people	400m (Children) 1,000m (Sub-district/youth)
Allotment	1,000m

43. With respect to the provision for young people, please have regard to the importance of gender-inclusive design in recreation spaces for older children and young people. The council published an addendum to the OSSR.

ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

Not applicable at this stage. However, a condition will be sought to secure advance planting (pre slab level) for elements of the access proposals.

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DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	09/11/2026