South Downs
National Park Authority

Horsham District Council

Our Ref: SDNP/26/03970/ADJAUT
Contact Officer: Phillip Richards
Tel. No.: 01730 814810

17th November 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Neighbouring Authority Consultation

Applicant: Horsham District Council
Proposal: Adjoining Authority Consultation - Horsham District Council (DC/26/1527) - Reserved Matters Submission comprising: Layout; Landscaping; Scale; and, Appearance pursuant to Hybrid Consent (References: DC/21/2086 and SDNP/21/04702/OUT)

Location: Land West of Ravenscroft, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 4EH

Thank you for your correspondence received 6 October 2026, consulting us as a neighbouring authority on the above noted development proposals.

Although the application site is located outside of the National Park, the Council has a statutory duty to consider the Purposes of the National Park when making its determination.

The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage,
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

Section 245 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (S.245 duty) amends and strengthens the Section 11A (2) duty of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 upon relevant authorities, which includes the National Park Authority itself, to 'seek to further the specified purposes of Protected Landscapes'.

The National Park's comments on the development are as follows:

Thank you for consulting the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) on the above application. The SDNPA makes no comment on the principle of development as this has previously been established through the appeal at the site. The site is located adjacent to the National Park boundary and is therefore considered to be within the setting of the National Park.

Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 strengthens the Section 11A (2) duty of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and requires all relevant authorities including neighbouring local planning authorities to further the National Park's statutory purposes. The first purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.

Development within the setting of a national park is relevant in regard to the section 245 duty, and the NPPF 2026.

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, **while any development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."**

It is therefore important to consider direct and indirect effects upon the National Park designated landscape and its setting as well as its special qualities.

The SDNPA would advise that any development within the setting of the Park should positively contribute to ecosystem services and to biodiversity net gain. New planting should all be native and locally characteristic in order to offer meaningful benefits to wildlife and positively contribute to landscape character. Planting that is overly ornamental and offers limited ecological or landscape value should also be avoided.

Principle and scope of consultation

The SDNPA acknowledges that the principle of residential development, the maximum quantum of 78 dwellings, the principal access arrangements and the provision of community parkland were established through the outline element of the hybrid permission granted on appeal. The Authority's comments are therefore confined principally to the reserved matters of layout, landscaping, scale and appearance, together with their implications for the setting, statutory purposes and special qualities of the South Downs National Park.

The outline permission established the maximum quantum of 78 dwellings, principal access arrangements, broad development parameters and Community Park. The residential parcel lies outside, but immediately adjoins, the National Park and therefore forms part of its setting. Horsham District Council should demonstrate how the detailed Reserved Matters further the National Park purposes, with particular regard to landscape character, wildlife, cultural heritage, dark night skies and relative tranquillity.

The submitted LVIA Addendum concludes that there has been no material change to the landscape and visual baseline and that the Reserved Matters would not result in additional or materially different effects from those previously assessed. The SDNPA does not seek to revisit the principle, quantum or broad landscape and visual effects established through the outline permission. The key issue is whether the detailed housing layout, landscaping, scale and appearance provide a sensitive and enduring transition to the Community Park and National Park.

Landscape, Layout, Green Infrastructure & Visual Impact

The detailed scheme retains the principal green infrastructure components and includes a central green, street trees and verges, a western ecological corridor, retained vegetation and a southern landscape buffer. Additional street trees, the continuous verge west of plots A16 and A34, and parking changes intended to facilitate planting are positive elements.

However, the development contains substantial roads, parking and other hard surfaces. The southern and western edges are particularly important because dwellings, parking, boundaries, lighting and domestic activity will establish the new settlement edge adjoining the Community Park. The Community Park should not be relied upon simply to screen an insensitive residential edge; the layout and landscape framework should themselves integrate the housing with its setting.

The SDNPA recommends that the detailed proposals are revised or supplemented, where necessary, to secure:

- a robust and appropriately landscaped southern and western development edge, using locally characteristic structural planting;
- appropriately located large and medium-canopy trees within streets, parking areas and open spaces, with species and ultimate sizes clearly identified;
- adequate uncompacted soil volumes and rooting conditions, and compatibility between planting, utilities and drainage easements;
- species-diverse hedgerows and effective connections between retained vegetation, the central green, western ecological corridor and southern buffer;
- rationalisation of unnecessary hard-surfaced routes and additional soft landscaping where practicable;
- sensitive, recessive boundary treatments which avoid prominent close-boarded fencing and minimise the visibility of parking, refuse/cycle storage and other domestic infrastructure;
- an integrated landscape-led approach to SuDS rather than isolated engineered drainage features; and
- clear establishment, replacement and long-term management arrangements for the residential landscape framework.

The western ecological corridor should retain its landscape and ecological function. Access arrangements should be clarified and measures secured to prevent inappropriate recreation, garden encroachment and garden-waste deposition. The landscape framework should be designed to establish successfully in its own right rather than relying upon planting solely to conceal built development.

Dark Skies and lighting

The housing lies immediately adjacent to the South Downs International Dark Sky Reserve. Confirmation that the Community Park would remain unlit is welcomed, but this increases the importance of controlling highway, external domestic and internal light spill from the residential parcel.
A detailed lighting strategy, informed by the SDNPA Dark Skies Technical Advice Note, should demonstrate how illumination will be contained within the development and minimised towards the southern buffer, Community Park, western ecological corridor and National Park. It should address luminaire location, number, mounting height, orientation and shielding; horizontal and vertical illuminance; upward light; colour temperature; controls and operating hours; ecological effects; and internal light spill from prominent glazing.

Lighting should be limited to that reasonably necessary for safety and accessibility. Unnecessary decorative or architectural lighting should be avoided, with particular care at the southern and western development edges. Where these matters are already controlled by outline conditions, HDC should use that mechanism and avoid duplicate controls.

Further information/advice on sensitive lighting can be found in the SDNPA's Dark Skies Technical Advice Note which is available via the following link:

https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DNS-TAN-2021-Main Document-External-Lighting.pdf

Ecology, Trees and Heritage

The SDNPA acknowledges that ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are also controlled through the outline permission. The present Reserved Matters application should therefore be considered within that established framework.

- retain and reinforce trees and hedgerows which contribute to habitat connectivity;
- maintain the width, continuity and dark function of the western ecological corridor;
- prioritise diverse native and locally characteristic structural planting where appropriate;
- integrate SuDS, planting and biodiversity objectives;
- minimise artificial illumination of habitat features; and
- ensure adequate buffers and protection from residential encroachment or inappropriate use.

Retained and proposed trees should have suitable spatial relationships with dwellings, highways, lighting and services to avoid foreseeable pressure for pruning or removal and to secure successful establishment.

The heritage balance was considered through the outline permission and appeal. At Reserved Matters stage, the detailed design should not materially increase those effects. Recessive materials and colours, a coherent roofscape, retained vegetation, structural planting, sensitive boundaries and controlled lighting are important, particularly where western-facing elevations or taller elements may be experienced with heritage assets or their wider setting.

Scale and Appearance

The development comprises predominantly two-storey dwellings with three-storey apartment buildings. The broad height parameters were established through the outline permission, and the location of taller elements away from the immediate southern edge assists in limiting their prominence. Nevertheless, the cumulative roofscape, materials and elevations will influence how the new settlement edge is perceived from the Community Park and National Park.

Particular attention should be given to the southern and western elevations. A restrained and coherent palette of materials and colours should be used, avoiding unnecessarily bright or reflective finishes. Photovoltaic panels and other rooftop features should be integrated coherently to avoid a fragmented roofscape. Structural planting should assist integration but should not be relied upon to screen built form that would otherwise appear unduly prominent.

Conclusion

The SDNPA acknowledges that the principle, quantum and broad landscape and visual effects of the residential development have been established. The LVIA Addendum indicates that the detailed scheme remains substantially within the previously assessed parameters. The retention of existing vegetation, additional street trees, landscaped verges, western ecological corridor and southern buffer provides a positive basis for integrating the development with its surroundings.

Further refinement and clarification are nevertheless recommended to ensure that the residential landscape framework is robust, functional and capable of successful long-term establishment. Particular attention should be given to the southern and western edge, tree species and growing conditions, hedgerow diversity, hard surfacing, SuDS, protection of the ecological corridor, boundary treatments, roofscape/materials and control of external and internal light spill.

Overall, the SDNPA raises no objection to the principle, scale or broad landscape and visual effects of the residential Reserved Matters. However, the detailed landscape and green infrastructure proposals should be refined and clarified before approval so that the development establishes a robust and enduring transition to the Community Park and National Park and minimises effects upon the setting and special qualities of the designated landscape.

The detailed acceptability and management of the Community Park itself are being considered separately through the relevant SDNPA Reserved Matters and Section 106 processes. Subject to the matters above being satisfactorily addressed, the housing scheme would be capable of providing an appropriately mitigated transition between the settlement edge of Storrington and the South Downs National Park.

Yours faithfully



TIM SLANEY
Director of Placemaking
South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer
Phillip Richards
phillip.richards@southdowns.gov.uk

.