



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Date: 2 December 2025
Our ref: 11784

For the attention of: Bethan Tinning

Application ref: DC/25/1727
Location: Long Wells Vineyard, Marches Road, Warnham, West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Erection of a six-pitch settled gypsy accommodation site (Retrospective)

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	☐

Site Context

The site is located to the south of Marches Road, outside of any Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB), in a countryside location. It currently comprises of vineyard planting and temporary building associated to the use of the site as a vineyard. The site is accessed by an existing established vehicle access point on Marches Road.

The site boundary to the north is made of hedgerow planting and trees. The southwestern boundary is open to existing cluster of buildings by Northlands Road. The eastern boundary is defined by a shaw (wide tree belt). The site is bounded to the northeast by 2m high close board fence and existing Gypsy and Travellers site beyond.

There is a public footpath further to the north of the site, across an open arable field where intervisibility with the site is limited by intervening vegetation along Marches Road and the site.

The Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (HDLCA) (2003) identifies the site within I2 Warnham & Rusper Wooded Ridge Landscape Character Area (LCA). The key characteristics of this LCA relevant to the site and surrounding area include:

- Strong pattern of shaws and hedgerows.
- Intricate patchwork of small pasture fields.
- Farms and cottages dispersed along lanes.
- Strong historic vernacular of half timber with plaster/brick, tile hanging and weatherboarding.
- Mostly rural character.

The relevant key issues for LCA I2 include “Localised intrusion from suburban features”.

Overall sensitivity to change is identified as high, despite the high degree of enclosure, with key sensitivities to “Any large scale housing/commercial development.” and “Small scale incremental change.”

Relevant Planning and Land Management Guidelines include to:

- Conserve the rural wooded character of the area.
- Ensure any small scale new development responds to the traditional settlement pattern and local design and building materials.
- Conserve and manage the ridgetop woodlands, ghyll woodlands, and shaws/hedgerows.

Planning Policy Context

Within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015), the site is located outside the built-up area boundary and is therefore subject to Policy 26: Countryside Protection. Policy SD6: Landscape, Policy SD7: Design and Policy 31: Green Infrastructure should also be considered. Policy 23: Strategic Policy Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation must also be considered in relation to landscape matters.

Review of the proposal/submitted information

The proposal is for a six pitch site for settled gypsy accommodation. Each plot will include an amenity area and permeable hardstanding for parking, while the remainder of the site is intended for horse grazing.

The introduction of development in this rural location will have some impact on the landscape character. The proposal represents “*small scale incremental change*,” particularly when considered alongside recent development to the north of the site. It is acknowledged that the site already contains some temporary development and an area of hardstanding is also present on site which forms part of this retrospective application.

To manage landscape change and the introduction of urbanising elements, careful consideration should be given to the selection of materials that are sympathetic to the rural character. The existing surfacing material on site should be replaced with a softer, more appropriate alternative that complements the rural setting and reinforces the character of the surrounding landscape.

We recommend that the following comments and recommendations are carefully considered and incorporated to help further refine and shape the proposals:

Proposed layout

The proposed pitches are arranged along the existing unmade track within the site. While we acknowledge that the irregular shape of the site imposes limitations on alternative layout options, we consider that further refinements to the proposed arrangement should be explored.

To help reduce the effects of the introduction of urbanising features such as parking areas and hardstanding, we recommend reviewing the layout to position some of the plots further to the west, and relocate the grazing field closer to the site entrance. This arrangement will provide all plots with views into the grazing area, reduce the visibility of development from Marches Road, and create a more rural character upon arrival.

Alternatively, green spaces could be introduced to plot frontages, with parking and areas of hardstanding relocated to the sides of plots, particularly those to the west of the access track. This approach would soften views and enhance the rural setting.

Boundary treatment

Close board fencing should be avoided. Instead, timber post and rail fencing combined with native hedgerow planting is recommended as a means of subdividing each plot.

The western end of the three plots to the west of the access track should be aligned, and angled boundaries avoided. This will simplify planting implementation and maintenance, while responding more appropriately to the existing development pattern to the southwest.

The proposal also includes an area for horse grazing. We acknowledge that fencing may be necessary and that additional structures for storage may be required. We request clarification and detail information on any proposed buildings or structures associated with horse keeping within the site, as these are not currently shown on the submitted Proposed Block Plan.

Materials and appearance

The submitted Planning Statement refers to timber cladding for the mobile homes as a planning condition, which is welcomed. However, the elevations provided do not include sufficient detail to demonstrate that the timber cladding will be appropriate and sympathetic to the rural setting. Further information on the design, finish, materiality, and colour of the cladding is required prior determination, or at least some photographs of similar timber-clad mobile homes to illustrate the intended appearance.

The inclusion of low pitched roofs in a dark colour is supported, but the specific colour has not been confirmed. This should be clarified.

We welcome the proposed permeable surfacing to parking and access track. Our preference and recommendation is to avoid the use of grey road plannings and instead select a material with a more natural tone that complements the rural character.

Visual impact and mitigation

The site benefits from established vegetation along Marches Road and the eastern boundary. No alterations to the existing vehicle access point are proposed, and therefore, we anticipate that the vegetation along this boundary will be retained. We note that the hedgerows planting wraps around the site access, offering some screening into the site. These sections of hedging should be retained, alongside existing vegetation along Marches Road, to maintain the existing levels of screening.

The proposed development will be visible from nearby residential properties to the southwest (north of Northlands Road). We consider that the visual effects have not been addressed adequately and additional landscape mitigation will be required to manage views into the site. We recommend introducing screening in the form of shaw planting (strip of woodland between 5 and 15 metres wide), as this is characteristic of the local landscape and will positively contribute to the landscape character area. This planting approach would enable the relocation of plots further west within the site, should this layout option be adopted, without resulting in detrimental visual impact or inappropriate landscape features. The shaw planting should include a diverse mix of species and sizes, incorporating understory vegetation and trees ranging from feathered to heavy standards to provide more immediate screening. Long-term management and ownership of this area should be secured through an agreed plan to ensure it is properly maintained and remains effective over time.

We welcome the proposal to infill the gaps within existing hedgerows with native species.

Hard and soft landscaping details

A comprehensive hard and soft landscaping plan should be submitted. The submitted Proposed Block Plan does not provide sufficient detail information regarding the extent of hard standing and soft landscaping areas. Additionally, detail information on the implementation and management of grazing and amenity areas should be provided.

Summary

It is considered that the proposed development could be accommodated within the site in landscape terms, subject to addressing the recommendations and comments outlined above, to ensure that landscape change is managed appropriately.

The site lies within a landscape character area that is highly sensitive to “small-scale incremental change.” The proposal does fall within this category when considered alongside the recent development to the north of the site. It is acknowledged that the site already contains some development, albeit temporary.

While the site benefits from existing vegetation on a number of boundaries, additional planting will be required to mitigate views into the site from properties to the southwest.

To manage landscape change and avoid introducing urbanising elements, careful consideration should be given to the use of materials that are sympathetic to the rural

character. The existing surfacing material on site should be replaced with a softer, more appropriate alternative that complements the rural setting.

To avoid further incremental changes within the site, we recommend that any additional pitch expansion or further development beyond the proposed number of pitches is restricted and secured by condition.

Recommended Conditions

If minded for approval, we would recommend the following conditions for your consideration:

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING SCHEME.

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, density, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roofs, planting preparation and establishment operations. We would recommend an alternative to plastic guards, such as the use of perimeter protective fencing where appropriate, or guards manufactured from 100% biodegradable materials.

The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, built features and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or loss due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of loss and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN (LMP)

No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

- a) Drawing/s showing the extent of the LMP i.e. identifying the areas to which the LMP applies
- b) Written Specification detailing:

- All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.
 - All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.
 - Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment.
 - All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.
- c) Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.
- d) Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.

Reason - To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



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.