HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Development at Rusper Road Horsham West Sussex
DESCRIPTION:	Reserved Matters application pursuant to Condition 5 of Outline Planning Permission reference DC/16/1677 for the Village Centre in RM Area 3 comprising 44 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), 753 sqm (GIA) of flexible retail, leisure, commercial, cafe and restaurant floorspace (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1 and D1), plaza, car and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, access and internal roads and associated infrastructure.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/1018
RE-CONSULT:	1st set of comments in black 2nd set of comments in blue
RECOMMENDATION:	Modification Advice/Modification

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

2nd set of comments

We have reviewed the 'Consultee Comments/Response' and, while it is regrettable that our concerns and recommendations have largely not been taken on board, these were intended to help secure a more thoughtful and responsive scheme—one that better addresses the site's constraints and supports the delivery of its stated objectives. As noted in our previous comments, we understand and agree with the rationale behind the proposed changes. However, in seeking a suitable replacement for the previously approved amenity space, we advocated for a higher quality space, incorporating enhanced design and surfacing materials. It is now for you, as the decision-maker, to determine whether to seek further amendments to the scheme or to proceed with the previously approved materials.

In addition, please refer to the comments regarding Soft Landscaping and Landscape Specification, as the recommendation to restrict use of herbicides across the site remains unresolved.

1st set of comments

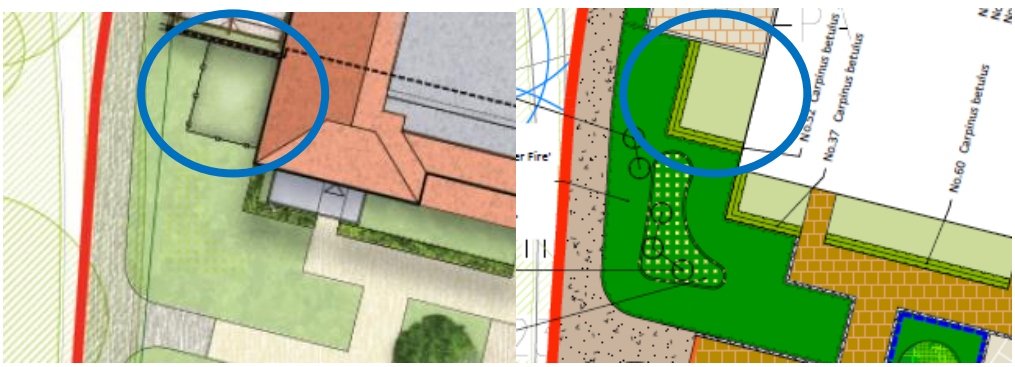
Current proposals indicate a reduction in open space, particularly the public realm hub, and a significant increase in hardstanding when compared to the layout approved under DC/22/2355. We feel there are opportunities for enhancement and that the betterment of the proposals must

be explored. Please see detailed comments and recommendations below, which aim to support the delivery of a more balanced and landscape-sensitive design.

MAIN COMMENTS:

Layout

1. We note and understand the rationale for the changes to the layout, however there are concerns that the size and flexibility of the public open space has been significantly diluted in the new proposals. Furthermore, the amount of 'natural green' space required within the area does not appear to be delivered in accordance with the approved parameter plans and the objectives set out in the DAS. Creating a strong landscape framework in the village centre is at the heart of the masterplan and we are of the view that the current layout has lost sight of this objective.
2. Approved proposals for this area under DC/22/2355 benefitted from areas of informal, recreation amenity grass framed by feature planting and trees. In addition, it had a more formal, secluded garden with seating provision to the west of the village centre building, as well a flexible hardscape space for events. Current proposals do not feature any useable green space and while it is accepted that it's appropriate for a civic square to be predominantly hardscaped for flexibility, a more inspiring, designed space that uses better quality materials must be explored.
3. Given the clear change to the positioning of the public square and relationship with soft landscape, the resin bond gravel material doesn't provide the high-quality finish and robustness that we would expect in this prominent and significant location, and therefore the use of the yorkstone and sandstone is requested.
4. The yorkstone directional paths/surfacing is considered to over dominate the space, and in our opinion, results in an uninspiring public realm. The area between the community centre and western building appears visually and functionally disconnected from the main square, with fragmented planting beds and access paths contributing to the lack of cohesion. We request that this space is reviewed and redesigned to deliver a more integrated and engaging scheme, that clearly justifies the loss of open space previously approved.
5. The location and provision of the undercroft parking is queried as these 2 parking spaces could be accommodated within the parking areas without the additional hardscape and loss green space along the footpath.
6. Clarification is requested in regard to the area to the south of the undercroft parking, bounded by fencing within the Site Layout and by hedgerow within the Landscape Proposals. We query if there is scope to connect this area to the public realm or if it is intended as private space. In addition, fencing should be added to the landscape key, if proposed.
   Noted this intended as private space however fencing has still not been added to this area within the Landscape Proposal Plan. Please add details to the plan and key.

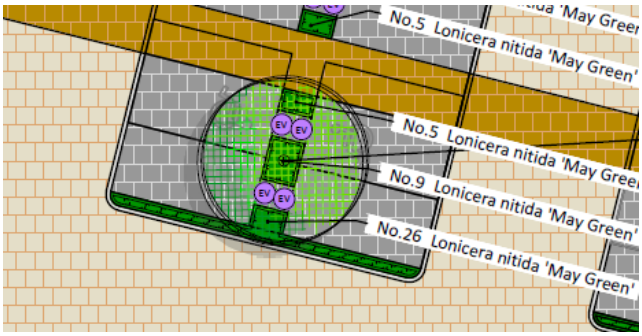


Soft Landscaping

7. 6.61 of the Planning Statement states the following, '*The plaza is designed to be used as a events space, paved with natural stone and resin bound gravel and framed by large liquidambar trees to create a civic environment and to provide year around interest in the central space'*. We note, however, that Liquidambars are no longer proposed in this area. Please update the planting plans accordingly as we concur that Liquidambars would be preferable in this area.
   Justification noted, thanks. Closed.
8. We note a significant reduction in bulb planting compared to approved plans under DC/22/2355, reducing from 1980 to 545. While we acknowledge the variation in red line boundary and therefore do not expect the same quantity, we feel there is scope to deliver more bulb planting, particularly within strips alongside footpaths and Lancet Drive.
   Justification noted, thanks. Closed.

Drainage & Hard Landscaping

9. Please include a root barrier location for the tree indicated below:
   Closed, with thanks.



Landscape Specification

10. We recommend that a 120mm collar should be left free of mulch to prevent the stems/trunks from rotting. Please amend the following sections of the Landscape Specification accordingly: 590, 845.
    Closed, with thanks.
11. We recommend that chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides including glyphosate are not to be applied at any time due to impacts on existing and proposed ecological features, particularly the abutting treeline and waterway. We note mention of alternative methods for weeding throughout the Landscape Specification, such as hand weeding, hot foam or hot water systems, however there remains a reliance on herbicide, which should ideally not be utilised. Please refer to pan-uk.org for guidance and resources, and amend the following sections accordingly: D20/168, Q30/210, Q30/212, D20/221, Q31/300, Q31/305, Q30/340, D20/421, Q28/675.
    We do not agree that HDC has been inconsistent in its approach. The wording cited was intended to recommend that herbicides should not be used. However, the specification continues to propose herbicide use as an alternative hand weeding, which does not address the original concern and recommendation. Regarding the comments that this request is not supported by policy, we wish to clarify that the recommendation aligns with the Council's climate resilience and carbon reduction objectives, as well as the Greenspaces Strategy 2024-2030. A review conducted by the Parks and Countryside team on use of pesticides and herbicides within the District's public spaces concluded that herbicide use, at this stage, should be restricted to specific circumstances, namely, treatment of invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, stump treatment, and limited annual application on selected hard surfaces (e.g. cemeteries and selected paths in car parks). These findings are to be reviewed every two years with the intention of further reducing or ultimately ceasing chemical use.

Therefore, we continue to recommend herbicide use across the site be reviewed and limited to a 'last resort' option only.	
RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A	
NAME:	Elly Hazael Trainee Landscape Architect (Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Specialists Team - Strategic Planning
DATE:	15/08/2025 03/09/2025
SIGNED OFF BY:	Inês Watson CMLI Specialists Team Leader (Landscape Architect)
DATE:	18/08/2025 11/09/2025