Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/24/1369
New Inn Farm , West End Lane, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9RF

DESCRIPTION:

Change of Use of land for equestrian facilities to include an outdoor arena, horse walker and lunge pen.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/1767	Change of Use of land and buildings to equestrian use. Conversion of existing livestock barn to stable barn. Conversion of outbuilding into staff facilities. Installation of new gates to property.	Application Permitted on 28.02.2025

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

New Inn Farm is a 19-acre rural property located on West End Lane, Henfield. The site consists of a mix of agricultural buildings, equestrian facilities, and pastureland, with natural screening provided by trees and hedges. Existing structures on-site include a five-bay ATCOST livestock barn, an open-sided three-bay steel-frame Dutch barn, stable buildings, and various agricultural stores. The property benefits from direct frontage to the River Adur, with a public footpath running adjacent to the western boundary. The surrounding area is predominantly rural countryside, supporting equestrian and agricultural activities. The site currently operates as a small-scale equestrian business focused on breeding and producing young show-jumping horses, with facilities designed to support their training and development. The proposed development aims to enhance these existing operations while maintaining the rural character of the site.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of new equestrian training facilities, which will include an outdoor arena, a horse walker, and a lunge pen. The outdoor arena, measuring 50m x 30m, will feature a sand/wax-based riding surface and be enclosed with timber post and rail fencing. It is designed to provide ample space for training horses over treble fence combinations, which is essential for their progression to competition level. The horse walker, covering an area of 113 square meters, will be a steel-framed, circular exercise facility. It is intended to assist in the controlled daily exercise of horses, supporting warm-up, cool-down, and rehabilitation routines. Additionally, a lunge pen of 176 square meters will be constructed with a close-boarded, sand/wax-surfaced enclosure. This pen will be used for lunging young horses during their initial training stages as well as for exercise routines for more experienced horses.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 29 - Equestrian Development
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Neighbourhood Plan:
The Henfield Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021.
Policy 1 – Spatial Plan
Policy 12 – Design Standards for New Development

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 29: New Employment
Strategic Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development
Policy 32: Conversion of Agricultural and Rural Buildings to Commercial, Community and Residential Uses
Policy 33: Equestrian Development
Policy 45: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 46: Ancillary Accommodation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish Design Statement:

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection - The HDC Commercial Team has reviewed the application for the change of use of land to private-use equestrian facilities, which includes the installation of an outdoor arena, horse walker, and lunge pen. The site is located in a rural area southwest of Henfield, surrounded mainly by farmland, with domestic dwellings about 150 meters to the east at Topfield and Harwards Farm. The Applicant has confirmed that the New Inn Farm dwelling is directly linked to the proposed facilities, so it is not considered a sensitive property for this consultation. The Commercial Team has no objections to the application but recommends specific conditions if the application is approved.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None Received

Parish Comments:

Henfield Parish Council: No Objection

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The proposed development at New Inn Farm, which includes the construction of an outdoor arena, horse walker, and lunge pen, aligns with both local and national planning policies that support rural economic activities while safeguarding the countryside’s character.

Under the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) aims to preserve the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside, permitting development in rural areas only when it is essential to that location and contributes to the sustainable development of rural communities. The proposed equestrian facilities are directly linked to the existing equestrian business at New Inn Farm and are vital for the effective training and care of horses. This proposal enhances the site’s viability while preserving its agricultural and equestrian use, thus aligning with the objectives of Policy 26. Additionally, it is worth noting that a previous planning application (Ref: DC/24/1767) was approved, granting permission for the change of use of land and buildings to

equestrian use, the conversion of an existing livestock barn into a stable barn, the conversion of an outbuilding into staff facilities, and the installation of new gates to the property.

Furthermore, Policy 29 (Equestrian Development) specifically supports well-designed equestrian facilities that do not adversely impact the rural landscape. The planned outdoor arena, horse walker, and lunge pen are designed to integrate with the existing infrastructure and natural screening on-site, minimising their visual impact while improving the standard of equestrian training. These facilities are essential for the welfare and development of competition horses at the farm, aligning with the requirements of Policy 29.

At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 also supports the proposed development. Paragraph 88 promotes the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses, including equestrian enterprises. The proposed enhancements at New Inn Farm directly contribute to this objective by providing modern, fit-for-purpose training facilities that improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the business. Additionally, Paragraph 155 outlines exceptions for certain developments in rural areas, including outdoor recreational facilities such as equestrian training arenas. Although New Inn Farm is not within the Green Belt, the principle of allowing facilities that support outdoor sport and recreation is relevant, reinforcing the suitability of this proposal within the rural setting.

In conclusion, the proposed development is fully in line with the strategic aims of both the Horsham District Planning Framework and the NPPF 2024. It supports rural economic activity, enhances equestrian facilities essential to the site's existing operations, and ensures that the development remains appropriate for its countryside location without negatively impacting the landscape or local amenities. It is however considered reasonable and necessary to impose conditions that restrict the use of the development as a commercial riding establishment and livery.

Design and Appearance:

The proposed development at New Inn Farm has been carefully designed to complement the site's rural setting while ensuring the functionality and sustainability of the new equestrian facilities. The design aligns with the objectives of Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), which emphasize the importance of protecting the character of the countryside, ensuring high-quality design, and maintaining the visual and environmental integrity of rural developments.

Policy 25 (The Natural Environment and Landscape Character) ensures that new developments respect the natural landscape, contribute positively to biodiversity, and minimize environmental impact. The site benefits from existing natural screening, including trees and hedgerows, which will help integrate the proposed facilities into the surrounding landscape. The equestrian facilities are designed to be low-profile and constructed using natural and sympathetic materials, ensuring minimal intrusion into the countryside. Additionally, the use of a sand/wax riding surface in the outdoor arena eliminates the need for water-intensive maintenance, supporting environmental sustainability.

Policy 32 (Quality of New Development) sets out criteria for high-quality, sustainable, and locally responsive design. The site plan and elevations illustrate that the outdoor arena will measure 50m x 30m, enclosed with timber post and rail fencing, ensuring a traditional rural aesthetic. The horse walker, with a footprint of 113 square metres, will feature a steel-framed perimeter with gate pushers internally, a design that maximizes safety and efficiency in horse exercise. The lunge pen, covering 176 square meters, will be enclosed with close-boarded fencing and finished with a sand/wax riding surface, in keeping with the outdoor arena's design. These choices ensure that the facilities remain functional while blending harmoniously with the surrounding environment.

Policy 33 (Development Principles) ensures that new development contributes positively to the built and natural environment, does not lead to overdevelopment, and protects the amenity of nearby properties. The layout and scale of the proposed facilities have been carefully planned to maintain the open character of the site while enhancing its equestrian function. The use of traditional timber fencing and natural-coloured materials ensures that the new structures do not dominate the landscape but instead integrate smoothly into the existing equestrian setting. The positioning of the arena, horse

walker, and lunge pen has been strategically chosen to minimize any potential visual impact while maintaining easy access to the main farm buildings.

Overall, the proposed development is sensitively designed to enhance the site's equestrian capabilities while preserving the rural character of the area. It adheres to the principles of high-quality design, environmental sustainability, and landscape protection, as required by the Horsham District Planning Framework. The thoughtful use of materials and layout ensures that the development will be visually unobtrusive and environmentally responsible, making a positive contribution to the local countryside.

Residential Amenity:

The proposed development at New Inn Farm has been designed to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties, in accordance with Policy 33 (Development Principles) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). This policy requires that new development respects the character of the area, protects existing residential amenity, and does not lead to unacceptable levels of noise, disturbance, or overlooking.

The proposed outdoor arena, horse walker, and lunge pen are located within the existing equestrian setting of the site, ensuring that their use remains consistent with the established character of the area. These facilities will be used exclusively for the training and exercise of horses already housed on-site, meaning there will be no significant increase in activity, noise, or traffic beyond the existing operations. Additionally, the training surfaces of the arena and lunge pen consist of sand and wax, which will not generate dust or excessive noise, minimising any potential disturbance to the surrounding area.

Furthermore, the site is well-screened by natural hedgerows and trees, providing a visual and acoustic buffer that ensures no overlooking or intrusive views from nearby properties. The positioning of the proposed structures ensures that they are located away from the site boundaries, further reducing any potential impact on neighbouring properties.

There will be no increase in vehicular traffic or activity beyond what is already associated with the site's equestrian operations, as the facilities are intended to support the existing horses rather than increase the number of horses or visitors. The development does not include additional residential accommodation or intensified commercial use, meaning that the overall level of activity on-site remains unchanged.

Given these factors, the proposed development is considered to have no detrimental impact on residential amenity. It aligns with the principles set out in Policy 33 by ensuring that the use of the land remains appropriate to its setting, does not cause undue disturbance, and preserves the rural character of the area.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

The proposed development would serve existing equestrian facilities. The surface of the riding arena would be of a material mix that would not require watering. There is no evidence to suggest that the horse-walker would result in a greater consumption of water. For these reasons, there is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive use of the necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a

significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 180 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed.

The applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Metric which demonstrates above 10% net gain is achievable by way of onsite biodiversity gains. However, this is not so significant as to warrant a legal agreement for monitoring. The informative attached details that the proposed net gain shall be secured post-decision.

Conclusions:

In conclusion, the proposed development at New Inn Farm is fully aligned with local and national planning policies, supporting rural economic activities while safeguarding the countryside's character. The construction of the outdoor arena, horse walker, and lunge pen is essential for the continued operation and success of the existing equestrian business, ensuring the welfare and effective training of horses. The development has been designed to integrate seamlessly with the surrounding rural landscape, adhering to policies that emphasize the importance of preserving the natural environment, enhancing biodiversity, and maintaining high-quality design standards.

The proposal also respects the amenity of nearby residential properties, with no anticipated adverse impacts in terms of noise, traffic, or visual intrusion. The use of natural screening, low-profile designs, and environmentally sustainable materials ensures minimal disruption to the surrounding area. Additionally, the development addresses water neutrality and biodiversity net gain requirements, with the applicant demonstrating a significant improvement in biodiversity through on-site enhancements.

Overall, the proposed development not only enhances the equestrian facilities at New Inn Farm but also ensures that the project aligns with the objectives of the Horsham District Planning Framework, the National Planning Policy Framework, and other relevant legislation, making it a positive and sustainable addition to the local countryside.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Regulatory Condition**: During the demolition and/or construction phase of the installation of the new facilities:

a) A licensed waste removal contractor should be used remove any clearance debris and construction waste from site.
b) No burning of materials should take place on site.
c) Hours of construction activities (including deliveries and dispatch) should be limited to 08.00 - 18.00. Monday until Friday, 09.00 - 13.00 Saturdays and no activity on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the submitted plans, and application form unless detail of alternative materials have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to development above ground floor slab level commencing.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall be used solely in connection with the equestrian operations at New Inn Farm, West End Lane, Henfield, and shall not function as an independent commercial enterprise separate from the primary equestrian use of the site, nor as a commercial riding establishment and/or livery.

Reason: An independent commercial operation would result in an over-intensive use of the site, which would be contrary to Policies 26 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and could negatively impact the rural character and sustainability of the area.

6 **Regulatory Condition**: No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed other than with the permission of the Local Planning Authority by way of formal application.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7 **Regulatory Condition**: No music, live or recorded, shall be played on any part of the application site (shown edged in red on plan approved site and location plans, received 09.09.2024) unless otherwise agreed to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT
Biodiversity Net Gain Condition
Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition" which means development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission is Horsham District Council.

This permission will require the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan before development is begun.

For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of the consented development please see the link:
Submit a biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements
There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These can be found at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 74-003-20240214 of the Planning Practice Guidance, which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain.

Irreplaceable habitat
If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/24/1369
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Section plan	Arena Edge Details Post + Rail Fencing	24/2202-20	09.09.2024
Location plan	Location Plan	24/2202-1	09.09.2024
Elevation & Floor plan	Details of Horse Walker	24/2202-10	09.09.2024
Site plan	Site Plan	24/2202-3	09.09.2024
Block plan	Site Block Plan	24/2202-2	11.02.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Shazia Penne Date: 10.03.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 11.03.2025