

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Bethan Tinning
FROM:	WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	02 April 2026
LOCATION:	Land at 512000 114372 Rock Road Washington West Sussex
SUBJECT:	DC/26/0112 Construction of field access and entrance drive. Erection of post and rail fencing and planting of mixed deciduous hedging.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	n/a
RECOMMENDATION:	More Information

I refer to your consultation in respect of the above planning application and would provide the following comments.

Summary

WSCC has previously been consulted on this proposal for a field gate access, visibility splays had been demonstrated at this new location however drawn incorrectly, similarly a comparable drawing was not provided to demonstrate the visibility at the existing access.

Additional information was sought regarding the achievable visibility from the existing access onto Rock Road. This was due to the basis of the new access being implemented as an improvement in visibility over the current.

Existing access

The applicant has submitted a splay set back 2.4m with a single arm in the southern direction to demonstrate visibility toward the crest of the hill, however given the land either side of the access falls within both the applicants' ownership and publicly maintained highway- it is considered that the splays do not represent the maximum achievable visibility at this point.

I note that the splay has been drawn with an offset from the edge of the carriageway. Generally, visibility splays should be drawn to the near side carriageway edge in both directions, to show the full extent of achievable visibility. The Local Highway Authority will however accept a 0.5m offset distance from the nearside edge of the carriageway on this occasion, to account for the actual positioning of a cyclist/driver's tracking whilst travelling along Rock Road.

We would require a visibility splay plan to be drawn from the 2.4m, to show the maximum achievable visibility in **both** directions from the existing access. Photographs do not give sufficient data to draw conclusion on whether the new access would be a safer arrangement.

It is advised that the applicant contacts the WSCC Local Land Charges team regarding the Highway Boundary widths at this location to establish the measurements of maintained highway across the length of the existing access splays.

New Access

As noted above, visibility splays should be drawn from 2.4m to the near side carriageway edge in both directions, to show the full extent of achievable visibility. The Local Highway Authority will however accept a 0.5m offset distance from the nearside edge of the carriageway on this occasion, to account for the actual positioning of a cyclist/driver's tracking whilst travelling along Rock Road. The splays also appear to intersect a substantial amount of established vegetation- of which is sited within third party land. This rendering the sightlines as unachievable and non-maintainable by both the Local Highway Authority and the Applicant.

Visibility splays cannot intersect third party land, as there would be no means of guaranteeing that they would be maintained in perpetuity to create a safe means of access onto the highway.

Furthermore, the height of a driver's eye line is approx 0.6m. The new hedgerow would need to be maintained to prevent obstructions within the visibility splays to a height of below 0.6m in both directions along its entire length. This is to ensure that visibility remains achievable in perpetuity.

Highway Boundary

I have discussed the location of highway boundary along Rock Road with both the Area Highways Manager and Local Land Charges Team and can advise the following.

The highway boundary at the proposed point of access measures on average 1.3m from the back edge of the carriageway and continues as such, to the north, past Appledore Farm.

This highway boundary has been previously measured by the centre of the hedge- (which appears to have been recently replanted at the site frontage.) It is assumed that the proposals seek to locate the hedge further back into the site so as to not interfere with visibility splays.

It should be noted however, that the hedge and trees within this verge; and extending to the north, are not themselves publicly maintained. It is advised that the applicant contacts the WSCC Local Land Charges team regarding the Highway Boundary on Rock Road to establish the measurements of maintained highway across the length of the proposed access splays, prior to re-submitting.

Speed Survey

An alternative for the applicant to consider, would be to carry out a speed survey to establish the speeds that vehicles actually travel within this portion of Rock Road. The data from this survey *may* support a shorter visibility splay which can instead be implemented at the new access point. This shorter splay may be more achievable for the applicant to obtain. From this data WSCC would consider the 85th percentile speeds of vehicles and apply the relevant standard (DMRB/ MfS) to establish the Stopping Sight Distance that is required. The applicant should be aware however that a speed survey may not return data reflecting lower speeds and therefore may not assist in providing a reduction in splay length at this location.

Access Positioning

Alternative locations could be explored for the positioning of the access which may improve visibility of the nearside carriageway and immediate approaching vehicles from the north.

Conclusion

The Local Highway Authority requires additional information relating to achievable visibility at both the existing and proposed points of access onto the highway.

- Splays should be redrawn to show maximum achievable visibility in both directions, for both accesses (in line with guidance above)
- The applicant should consult with the WSCC Land Charges team regarding the position of the Publicly Maintained Highway Boundary along this portion of Rock Road.
- If the existing access is deemed inappropriate for use, the LHA would expect that it will be closed off to match the existing street scene and no longer used. This should be reflected within the associated plans.
- The applicant may wish to employ a Transport Consultant to gather any required data, plans and reports in support of the new access.

Once the above information has been considered, and additional information provided, please re-consult.

Jodie Wilkes

West Sussex County Council – Planning Services