WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Bethan Tinning
FROM:	WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	29 May 2025
LOCATION:	Jack Dunkleys, Birchfield Nursery, Kidders Lane, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9AB
SUBJECT:	DC/25/0810 Prior Notification for the Change of Use of an Agricultural Building to flexible commercial use.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	n/a
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice

This application has been dealt with in accordance with the Development Control Scheme protocol for small scale proposals.

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

History
The Local Highways Authority has been consulted on a similar proposal under DC/25/0625- this sought for Prior Notification of Change of Use to a flexible commercial use, covering the following usages B2, B8, E or Class F or the provisional of agricultural training. This was for a separate building within the wider Birchfield Nursery site although the application seems to use a different address. This application appears to be currently undecided. It is unclear if this application is a fallback or if both will be implemented.

Comments
This application seeks prior approval for the proposed change of use of an office and storage building to flexible commercial use (class E). The site is located off A281 London Road, Henfield.
As part of the prior approval process, there are several matters to be considered. This includes matters relating to highways and transport. However, the GPDO is quite clear as to what highway matters can be considered, namely whether the proposal is likely to result in a material increase or a material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site.

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangements. The LHA would not anticipate that the proposed change of use to a flexible commercial use to provide agricultural training would result in a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site, when compared with the potential of existing use. From inspection of WSCC mapping, there are no apparent visibility issues with the existing access point onto the publicly maintained highway.
An inspection of collision data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period the past five years reveals there has been a single recorded collision at the site access onto London Road. However, this was not attributed to any existing defects with the junction or highway network at this point. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest the existing access is operating unsafely or that the proposal would exacerbate an existing safety concern.

From inspection of the submitted plans and WSCC mapping, there appears to be sufficient space within the site for an appropriate parking provision to be accommodated although the parking provision has not been shown specifically within the plan provided. Given the nature of the proposed flexible use, it would be anticipated that the use of the building would be ancillary to activities of the wider site.
As this is for a flexible use class, the LHA has assessed the parking demand on a worst-case basis, addressing the use class generating the most parking demand. This would generate the requirement for a maximum of 12.5 parking spaces to serve the development.

There is also space for on-site turning to be achievable, allowing vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear.

In summary, the prior approval is considered acceptable in highway terms.

Jodie Wilkes
West Sussex County Council – Planning Services