



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0627

Furzefield Farm, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, West Sussex, BN44 3AW

DESCRIPTION:

Demolition of existing stable buildings and erection of a single barn structure.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/21/0139	Part retrospective application for the erection of 2No. holiday cabins with associated parking, access and landscaping.	Application Permitted on 06.05.2021
DISC/21/0138	Approval of details reserved by condition 3 to approved application DC/21/0139.	Application Permitted on 08.07.2021
DISC/21/0150	Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 4, 5, 8 and 12 on DC/21/0139.	Application Permitted on 06.10.2021
DC/22/0397	Relocation of 1no. approved timber holiday cabin.	Application Permitted on 30.05.2022

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located outside of a defined built-up area boundary and is therefore considered a countryside location for planning purposes. The site is an existing equestrian development and has considerable planning history relative to this use. The subject of this application is a collection of stable buildings located to the west of the existing built development, adjacent to a manège and large paddock area. The remainder of the site consists of hardstanding, a mobile home with associated curtilage, two holiday lets and other equestrian development.

Access to the site is provided by an existing track stemming from Honeybridge Lane, also designated as Ashurst Public Right of Way (ref. 1868_4), which is shared by neighbouring properties.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The applicant seeks to demolish three existing stable block buildings and replace these with a single 'American style' barn to improve functionality, appearance and operations at the yard and allow for continuous investment in and improvement to equine business operations at the site.

The barn will be 300m² in size and incorporate green steel roof sheeting, timber weatherboarding and a pitched roof form. No changes to the existing access arrangements have been proposed and the proposed barn will contain the same number of stable boxes as existing.

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 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 29 - Equestrian Development
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 41 - Parking

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 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 12: Air Quality
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 25: Parking
Policy 31: Rural Economic Development
Policy 33: Equestrian Development

West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018)

Policy M9 - Safeguarding Minerals

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

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

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham District (SDPAN)
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:**INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS**

HDC Arboricultural officer: No Objection

The development is not within influencing distance of any trees of high landscape value or merit. As such, no arboricultural constraints are raised regarding the demolition of the existing stable buildings and erection of a single barn structure.

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection

There are no Environmental Health comments on this application.

HDC Drainage: No Objection (subject to conditions)

HDC Drainage requires more information to determine that the site drainage meets the requirements of the NPPF, PPG and Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). This can be secured via condition.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES**Ecology Consultant:** No Objection (subject to conditions)

The submitted information provides certainty of the likely impacts on designated sites, protected and Priority species & habitats and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.

Southern Water: No Objection

Southern Water has determined that the flow rate for the above site will remain consistent, so capacity is not an issue and no Southern Water assets will be affected. Therefore, Southern Water has no objections to the proposal.

WSCC Highways: No Objection

The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. There are no transport grounds on which to resist the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONSRepresentations:

None received.

Parish Comments:

Ashurst Parish Council: Neither Object nor Support
APC resolved to stay neutral on this application.

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:**

Policy 10 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015) states that rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to generate local employment opportunities and social, economic and environmental benefits for local communities. In the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must:

Contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and either:

- a. Be contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or*
- b. Result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable provided that it supports sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working communities and criteria a) has been considered first.*

The application proposes the demolition and replacement of three existing stable buildings with a single 'American style' barn to allow for a more coherent layout and improve operational efficiency. The applicant has stated that this will allow the business to remain competitive and support ongoing viability, thus contributing to the wider rural economy. The applicant does not consider the existing buildings suitable for conversion due to their poor condition however the proposed barn will be contained within the existing footprint of the yard and is therefore considered to meet point (a).

Policy 29 of the HDPF is relevant in this case and states that equestrian development must:

- 1. Demonstrate re-use of existing buildings is not appropriate; before new or replacement buildings are considered.*
- 2. Be appropriate in scale and level of activity, in keeping with its location and surroundings and relate well to existing buildings;*
- 3. Be well related to an existing bridleway network.*

The applicant has clearly articulated in the submitted Planning Statement that the existing stable buildings are of poor quality and represent a fragmented and inefficient layout, having evolved incrementally as a result of business need. This was confirmed by Officers upon visiting the site. It is therefore considered appropriate in this instance to accept a replacement building rather than require the re-use of existing buildings as per criterion 1.

The proposed barn is larger in scale than the existing three stable buildings, with a ridge height of 4.52m compared with 3.35m at Stable Block 1. However, barns of this scale are not uncommon in the surrounding area and the site is well screened by existing boundary vegetation. It is therefore considered that the proposed barn would still be in keeping with its location, in line with criterion 2. Finally, the site is located adjacent to an existing bridleway (ref. 1868_4) thus demonstrating alignment with criterion 3.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is in line with the relevant policies in the HDPF and a strong principle for this type of development in this location is acceptable.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF (2015) require that all development in the district be of high quality and complimentary to locally distinctive character. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing

and appearance of new development is appropriate as well as that a high standard of building materials, finishes and landscaping are used.

The existing stable buildings on site are typical of equestrian use with timber walls, corrugated concrete roofing and traditional stable doors. The buildings are arranged in a U-shape which creates a yard in the centre and show signs of wear with noticeable bowing in the roof and damage to timber slats. The buildings are considered to have a good relationship to each other but are not so well related to the surrounding equestrian uses on site (paddocks, manège etc.).

The application proposes the demolition of three of the existing stable buildings and their replacement with a single rectangular barn structure which incorporates two large metal shutter doors on the north and south elevations as well as skylights along the roof. The submitted application form states that the walls will be brown wood clad (timber weatherboarding) with a green steel profile sheeting roof. The proposed barn is large in scale and massing than the existing stable buildings, with an increased ridge height of 4.52m and an additional 150m² built footprint (situated on existing hardstanding).

Although the application seeks an increase in the scale and massing of development on site, it is not thought that this would result in a change to the character of the area nor would it be considered inappropriate for its rural location given that it is an inherently rural use. The choice of materials are considered appropriate, although it should be noted that the green coloured roof has the potential to detract from the landscape in other locations. However, in this instance it is thought that the roof would integrate well with the existing boundary vegetation and be largely screened from public view.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is in line with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF (2015) with regards to design.

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 33(2) of the HDPF (2015) states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby properties and land. The application site is fairly isolated with just one residential property located in the immediate vicinity (approx. 60m northeast of the proposal), although it is noted that the access track is also shared by Jessops Farm some 600m to the west.

Given that the site operates as an equestrian business already and is not proposing an intensification of this use, evidenced by the fact that the proposed barn contains the same number/size of stable blocks as existing, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would result in an increase in noise, odour or general disturbance impacts above existing levels. In addition, the proposed barn is to be situated a sufficient distance away from the closest dwelling and will be separated by intervening vegetation so as not to cause a significant change in outlook and/or privacy.

It is therefore concluded that amenity impacts resulting from the proposal are unlikely and the proposal conforms with Policy 33(2) of the HDPF.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF supports proposals which provide safe and suitable access for all vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, public transport and the delivery of goods, whilst Policy 41 requires adequate parking facilities to be provided within developments. In addition, Paragraph 116 of the NPPF sets out that *'development should only be refused on transport grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highways safety grounds, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe'*.

Access to the proposed barn will be via the existing access track stemming from Honeybridge Lane, a C-classified road subject to national speed limit. The existing access track is shared by two other properties and is also maintained as a Public Bridleway (ref. 1868_4). No alterations have been proposed to the existing access and, given that the proposed building will house a similar number of

horses, it is considered unlikely that a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site will be facilitated.

The Local Highways Authority (LHA) was consulted on the proposal and did not consider there to be any transport grounds on which to refuse the proposal. It was suggested that the Public Right of Way Team be contacted for comment however, as no intensification of use and no works effecting the PRow are expected, this was not considered necessary in this instance.

Given the above, it is concluded that the proposal is in line with both local and national highways policy.

Ecology:

Policy 25 of the HDPF (2015) seeks to protect existing biodiversity and green infrastructure in the District by ensuring no net loss, while Policy 31 looks to encourage the provision and enhancement of new habitats as well as outlining requirements for areas of particular importance (SPAs, SACs, SSSIs etc.). This is in line with paragraphs 187-188 of the NPPF.

Upon initial review of the site, it is apparent that there are no statutory designated sites in close proximity with the nearest being Chanctonbury Hill SSSI some 4km to the southeast. There are small patches of ancient woodland approximately 350m to the south of the proposal however these are unlikely to be impacted by the proposal. The application site is located within the amber impact risk zone for Great Crested Newts however as no suitable habitat is being impacted, no further consideration of impacts has been made.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Roost Assessment (dated 04/06/2026 v2.0) which sets out the existing ecological conditions at the site (primarily hardstanding) and evaluates the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats on site. The assessment of the three stable buildings found that they were of negligible value for roosting bats and no evidence of bats utilising the site was found during the survey. The Council's Ecological Consultant has reviewed the submitted information and is satisfied that appropriate mitigation can be secured to ensure ecological compliance.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10th November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of

the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

Officers have undertaken a HRA Screening Assessment which demonstrates that, as the proposal does not result in the intensification of use of an existing mains connection, there is no likely significant effect on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development is compliant with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Drainage and Flood Risk:

Policy 38 of the HDPF states that development should follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, giving priority to development with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flooding elsewhere. Development proposed will: take a sequential approach to ensure most vulnerable uses are placed in the lowest risk areas; avoid the functional floodplain except for water-compatible uses and essential infrastructure; only be acceptable in Flood Zone 2 and 3 following completion of a sequential test and exceptions test if necessary; and require a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment for all development over 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1 and all proposals in Flood Zone 2 and 3.

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF discourages inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development away from the areas at highest risk, while Paragraph 173 states that a sequential risk-based approach should be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding.

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1, which is land defined by the Planning Practice Guidance for the NPPF for Flood Risk and Coastal Change as having a low probability of flooding. Though there are areas of surface water flood risk to the south of the proposal, there is no identified risk at the location of the proposed barn.

The applicant has confirmed in the submitted Planning Statement and Cover Letter that surface and foul water drainage associated with the new development will connect into the existing drainage system, but no further information has been provided. Whilst the Council's Drainage Officer has requested details of the existing drainage system to ensure it aligns with the requirements of national and local policy, in this instance given the proposal is a rebuild of existing stables it is not considered necessary to require such drainage information.

The Council's Drainage Officer has offered advice to the applicant, which is included as an informative below.

Other Matters:

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. Conditions are attached to secure the following:
In addition to these measures, conditions are attached to secure the following:

- o Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement

Subject to these conditions the application will suitably reduce the impact of the development on climate change in accordance with local and national policy.

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. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

The proposal has demonstrated compliance with the relevant local and national planning policy and may now be recommended for approval.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which took effect on 1st October 2017.

It is considered that this development constitutes CIL liable development.

Use Description	Proposed	Existing	Net Gain
Non-residential	300	147.52	152.48
		Total Gain	152.48
		Total Demolition	147.52

Please note that the above figures will be reviewed by the CIL Team prior to issuing a CIL Liability Notice and may therefore change.

Exemptions and/or reliefs may be applied for up until the commencement of a chargeable development.

In the event that planning permission is granted, a CIL Liability Notice will be issued thereafter. CIL payments are payable on commencement of development.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 1 Plans

- 2 **Regulatory (Time) Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun 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:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form.

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).

- 4 **Regulatory Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the Revised Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., March 2026 v2).

Reason: As these matters are fundamental to safeguard the ecology and biodiversity of the area in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

- 5 **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).

- 6 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020) (or any order amending or revoking and/or re-enacting these Orders), the premises hereby permitted shall be used for the stabling of horses and for no other purposes whatsoever, without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: Changes of use as permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order or Use Classes Order 1987 are not considered appropriate in this case to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment under Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT

In addition to Planning Permission, the applicant may additionally require a permit to discharge treated foul water to a water body or to ground from the Environment Agency, where non-mains foul drainage is proposed.

In addition to Planning Permission, the applicant may additionally require Ordinary Watercourse Consent (OWC) from the Lead Local Flood Authority at West Sussex County Council, to consent to any works adjacent to or within an ordinary watercourse.

On the Horsham District Council website, there are several useful documents available to the public, which the applicant may wish to use as guides for their application. To navigate to this page you can follow this link: <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/local-plan-examination/Examination-Library>

Whilst not a mandatory requirement, HDC Drainage welcome and encourage the consideration of rainwater harvesting within the proposed development.

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/26/0627

(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
Supporting Statement	Planning	NONE	08.05.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed	302.26.01	17.04.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing	302.26.02	17.04.2026
Location & Block plan		302.26.03	17.04.2026
Location plan		NONE	17.04.2026
Supporting Docs	Preliminary ecological appraisal and preliminary roost assessment	2	04.06.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Sophie Moore Date: 30/07/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Adrian Smith Date: 31/07/2026