



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0385

Pets at Home, 55 - 69 East Street, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1HR

DESCRIPTION:

Erection of an internal mezzanine extension for veterinary use.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/25/0298	Installation of 2x internally illuminated fascia signs, 1x externally illuminated fascia sign, 2x non illuminated advertisements, 3x window prints and 2x small signs	Application Permitted on 06.06.2025
------------	---	-------------------------------------

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site relates to an existing retail unit occupied by Pets at Home located at 55–69 East Street, Horsham. The premises comprise a large modern retail warehouse style unit positioned on the western side of Horsham Town Centre within the defined Town Centre boundary.

The unit forms part of a wider commercial parade and is adjoined by other retail operators, including Majestic Wine. The building is set back from East Street and benefits from a customer car park to the rear, accessed via Barttelot Road.

The premises currently operates as a pet retail store and includes an existing mezzanine floor within the building. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of residential, retail, commercial and town centre uses, together with associated servicing and parking arrangements.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Full planning permission is sought for the extension of the existing internal mezzanine floor to provide an additional 178.8 square metres of floorspace for veterinary use ancillary to the existing Pets at Home operation.

The proposal would increase the total mezzanine floorspace within the unit to approximately 257.9 square metres. The veterinary facility would operate from within the existing building and would be accessed solely through the main Pets at Home retail unit, with no separate external entrance proposed.

No external alterations to the building are proposed as part of the application. The development would continue to operate within Use Class E, although planning permission is required due to a condition attached to the original planning permission restricting the use of the premises to non-food retail purposes only.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 12 - Strategic Policy: Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
Policy 13 - Town Centre Uses
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
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
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan (HBBNP) (2022)

Policy HB1 – Location of Development
Policy HB3 – Character of Development
Policy HB4 – Design of Development Policy
Policy HB6 – Retaining And Enhancing The Vitality And Viability Of Horsham Town Centre
Policy HB7 – A Welcoming Public Realm
Policy HB9 – Protecting Existing And Encouraging New Commercial Premises And Land

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 4: Horsham Town
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 12: Air Quality
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 18: Local Green Space
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Strategic Policy 29: New Employment
Strategic Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment
Strategic Policy 35: Town Centre Hierarchy and Sequential Approach
Strategic Policy 36: Town Centre Uses

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 Environmental Health: Comment (01.05.26)

In regard to the above planning application, there is insufficient detail in the submission to detail the veterinary use of the building. It explains that the opening hours will reflect the current store opening

hours, but does not specify whether the animals connected to the vet business will be in store overnight. If the vet business closes completely overnight (does not hold animals overnight), then we have no objection. If the vet business does operate overnight by keeping animals in for observation and treatment, then we will need a noise management plan to be submitted to detail how noise will be managed. Without this further detail, the environmental health department would have to object to the application.

Officer Comment

In an email dated 01.05.26 the applicant confirmed that the Unit will not be used for overnight operation, and any pets requiring overnight provision will be referred to the relevant facility, which is not the application site.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WSCC Highways: No Objection (21.04.26)

The site is accessed from Barttelot Road, an unclassified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph. The proposals seek an additional ~245sqm of mezzanine floor space, providing a new veterinary facility for the store. Whilst I appreciate that the proposals could give rise to a material intensification of use, I do not anticipate that this would have a significant impact upon the surrounding highway network. The site is located in a highly sustainable town centre location that is well accessible on foot, by cycle and public transport. The site also benefits from existing car parking provision which appears sufficient to meet the anticipated needs of the site.

In summary, 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, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Representations:

No letters of Objection or support have been received

Parish Comments:

Horsham Denne Parish Council: Comment (20.04.26)

Horsham Denne NC has no objection to the proposed internal alterations but are concerned about what type of veterinary procedures will take place. Not sure if it is relevant but ask if it might be necessary to keep pets overnight?

Therefore, until further information HDNC objects to this application.

Officer Comments

As noted above, the applicant confirmed that the Unit will not be used for overnight operation, and any pets requiring overnight provision will be referred to the relevant facility, which is not the application site.

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 / town centre policy compliance

Policies 1, 7, 9, 12 and 13 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) collectively seek to promote sustainable patterns of development, support economic growth and investment, protect and enhance employment opportunities, and maintain the vitality and viability of existing town centres by directing appropriate main town centre uses to sustainable town centre locations.

In addition, Policy HB6 of the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain and enhance the vitality and viability of Horsham Town Centre, whilst Policy HB9 supports the retention and enhancement of commercial premises.

The proposal relates to the extension of an existing mezzanine floor within an established commercial unit occupied by Pets at Home in order to facilitate ancillary veterinary floorspace operating within Use Class E. Whilst the proposal introduces veterinary floorspace, the use would remain linked operationally and physically to the host retail unit, with no independent external access proposed.

The site occupies a sustainable town centre location with good access to existing services, facilities and public transport connections. The proposal would therefore support the continued commercial operation and diversification of an existing business within the town centre, consistent with the economic growth objectives of Policies 1, 7, 9, 12 and 13 of the HDPF.

The proposal would maintain the active commercial use of the unit and is not considered to prejudice the retail function of the centre. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Impact on vitality and viability of Horsham Town Centre

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF, together with Policies HB3 and HB4 of the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Plan, require development to achieve a high standard of design which responds positively to local character.

The proposed development relates solely to internal alterations and the extension of the existing mezzanine floor within the building envelope. No external alterations to the building are proposed, and the development would not materially alter the appearance of the premises within the street scene.

Given the entirely internal nature of the works, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would accord with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF and Policies HB3 and HB4 of the HBBNP.

Impact on employment and commercial floorspace

Policy 9 of the HDPF seeks to support the retention and enhancement of employment-generating uses and encourages sustainable economic development within the District. Similarly, Policy HB9 of the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Plan supports the protection and enhancement of commercial premises and economic activity within Horsham Town Centre.

The proposal would retain the premises in active commercial use and would diversify the services provided from the unit through the introduction of ancillary veterinary floorspace associated with the existing Pets at Home operation. The development would not result in the loss of an existing employment site or commercial premises and is likely to support continued investment in the operation of the business and associated employment opportunities.

Given that the proposal would maintain and enhance the commercial function of the premises within a sustainable town centre location, the development is considered compliant with Policy 9 of the HDPF and Policy HB9 of the HBBNP.

Design and impact on character

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF, together with Policies HB3 and HB4 of the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Plan, require development to achieve a high standard of design which responds positively to local character.

The proposed development relates solely to internal alterations and the extension of the existing mezzanine floor within the building envelope. No external alterations to the building are proposed, and the development would not materially alter the appearance of the premises within the street scene.

Given the entirely internal nature of the works, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would accord with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF and Policies HB3 and HB4 of the HBBNP.

Highways, access and parking

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF require development to provide safe access arrangements and appropriate parking provision.

The proposal would utilise the existing access arrangements and customer parking facilities serving the site. No alterations are proposed to vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements.

WSCC as Highway Authority have assessed the site and have confirmed that whilst the proposal would result in a modest increase in mezzanine floorspace, the scale of intensification is limited and is associated with an existing town centre commercial use in a sustainable location. Furthermore, the site benefits from existing customer parking provision and accessibility by sustainable modes of transport.

Given the nature and scale of the proposal, it is not considered likely to result in severe impacts upon the local highway network or materially increase parking demand to an unacceptable degree. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Amenity impacts

Policy 33 of the HDPF requires development to safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupiers.

The proposal would not extend the footprint or height of the existing building and no external plant, servicing alterations or changes to opening hours are proposed. The veterinary use would operate in conjunction with the existing Pets at Home retail operation and would remain accessed via the existing store entrance.

Given the commercial town centre context, together with the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to materially harmful impacts in terms of noise, disturbance, overlooking or general amenity when compared to the existing lawful use of the site.

The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy 33 of the HDPF

Sustainability and climate change considerations

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development minimises environmental impacts, promotes sustainable patterns of development and incorporates appropriate sustainable construction and energy efficiency measures where proportionate.

The proposal relates solely to the extension of internal mezzanine floorspace within an existing building located within Horsham Town Centre. The development therefore represents the efficient reuse and adaptation of an existing commercial building in a highly sustainable location accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

Given the limited scale and internal nature of the proposal, no significant construction works or external alterations are required and the development is not considered to give rise to adverse climate change or energy impacts. Due to the scale and nature of the proposal, detailed sustainability or energy measures are not considered necessary or proportionate in this instance.

The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the HDPF.

Heritage considerations

The site lies outside of but adjacent to Horsham (Park Terrace Gardens) Conservation Area. Policy 34 of the HDPF and Aim 2 of the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Plan seek to conserve heritage assets and their settings.

The proposal relates entirely to internal alterations within an existing commercial unit and would not result in external changes to the building or surrounding townscape. As such, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would not adversely affect the significance or setting of nearby heritage assets.

The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy 34 of the HDPF and Aim 2 of the HBBNP.

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 10 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 an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby

complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

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 proposal relates solely to internal alterations and extensions to mezzanine floorspace within an existing commercial building and would therefore be 'de minimis'.

Conclusions:

The application seeks full planning permission for the extension of the existing mezzanine floor within the Pets at Home unit at 55–69 East Street, Horsham, in order to facilitate ancillary veterinary floorspace operating within Use Class E.

The proposal would support the continued operation and diversification of an existing town centre business within a sustainable and accessible location. The development would retain the premises in active commercial use and would contribute positively toward the economic function, vitality and viability of Horsham Town Centre, consistent with Policies 1, 7, 9, 12 and 13 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and Policies HB6 and HB9 of the Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposed development relates entirely to internal alterations within the existing building and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the area, neighbouring amenity, highway safety, parking provision, heritage assets, biodiversity interests or wider environmental considerations.

The proposal is therefore considered to represent sustainable development and is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan (2022). Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval, subject to appropriate conditions.

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:** The veterinary use hereby permitted shall operate as ancillary to the existing Pets at Home retail unit only and shall not operate as an independent standalone veterinary practice.

Reason: In the interests of the character and function of the premises, town centre impacts, parking demand and amenity impacts. This condition is imposed in accordance with Policies 12, 13, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Regulatory Condition:** The veterinary use hereby permitted shall operate only between the following hours:

- 09:00 to 19:30 Mondays to Fridays;

- 09:00 to 19:00 on Saturdays; and
- 10:00 to 16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

No veterinary procedures, consultations, treatment, admissions or collections shall take place outside of these hours. No animals shall be kept, boarded or housed at the premises overnight at any time.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area and to ensure that the use operates in a manner compatible with the character of the locality, in accordance with Policies 32 and 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.

Under Regulations 4, 5, 7 & 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 the statutory biodiversity gain condition required by Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which:

1. does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (a hedgerow habitat or watercourse habitat identified for the purposes of the biodiversity metric);
2. is the subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;
3. is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development (In determining whether a development is undertaken solely or mainly for this purpose, no account is to be taken of any facility for the public to access or to use the site for educational or recreational purposes, if that access or use is permitted without the payment of a fee);
4. consists of no more than 9 dwellings, is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, and consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding ("Self-build or custom housebuilding" has the same meaning as in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended)).

In addition, the Biodiversity Gain Plan Condition does not apply to applications for major development made before 12 February 2024, or non-major development made before 2 April 2024.

Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

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/26/0385

(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
Floor plan	Proposed Ground Floor and Mezzanine Layout Plan	8072/02 REVISION E	01.04.2026
Location plan	Location Plan	8072/20 REVISION B	19.03.2026
Block plan	Block Plan	8072/21 REVISION B	19.03.2026
Floor plan	Existing Ground Floor and Mezzanine Layout Plan	8072/01 REVISION B	24.03.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Daniel Holmes Date: 29.05.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 17.06.2026