



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0732

Coombewick House Mobile Home , London Road, Ashington, West Sussex, RH20 3AU

DESCRIPTION:

Temporary siting and residential occupation of mobile home with associated decking and ramped access for a (further) temporary period of three years, together with permanent retention of the existing access track and turning area.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/15/1272	Prior approval of proposed change of use from agricultural use to residential dwelling house	Prior Approval Required and Permitted on 05.08.2015
DC/16/0932	The temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking and the laying of a road/access track	Application Refused on 10.08.2016 Appeal Allowed on 19.05.2017 PINS ref: APP/Z3825/W/17/31680 13
DC/20/0941	Variation of condition 1 and 2 to previously approved application DC/16/0932 (The temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking and the laying of a road/access track) Relating to permit retention of the mobile home, access decking, and access track for a further three year period.	Application Permitted on 02.07.2020
DC/21/1474	Demolition of existing barn and stables building. Erection of a new dwelling, retention of existing access with hard and soft landscaping works.	Application Refused on 21.10.2024
DC/22/1633	Prior Notification for change of use of an agricultural building to residential (Use Class C3) to form 1no dwellinghouse.	Prior Approval Required and PERMITTED on 17.10.2022
DC/23/1202	Variation of condition 2 and 3 of previously approved application reference: DC/20/0941 (Variation of condition 1 and 2 to previously approved application DC/16/0932 (The temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking and the laying of a road/access track) Relating to permit retention of the mobile home, access decking, and access track for a further three year period.) To allow retention of the mobile home, access decking, and access track for a further three year period.	Withdrawn Application on 05.11.2024
HRA/24/0003	Application under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 relating to Prior Approval consent DC/25/0830.	Application Permitted on 18.11.2025

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site lies to the east of the A24 (London Road), Ashington, within a rural countryside location outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary. Access to the site is obtained via a private track and bridleway (WIS/2500/1) which connects to the A24 to the north-west. The site forms part of the wider Coombewick House holding.

The site contains a former agricultural barn and associated stable buildings, together with a mobile home positioned to the east of these structures. The mobile home is served by associated decking and ramped access, and by an access track and turning area extending from North Lane/bridleway to the residential unit. The application site is bounded by open agricultural land, with areas of woodland, including ancient woodland subject to Tree Preservation Order controls, located to the north and east.

The site has a lengthy planning history relating to proposals for the residential conversion of agricultural buildings under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, together with applications for the temporary siting of the mobile home and associated access arrangements. Temporary planning permission for the mobile home, decking and access track was originally granted on appeal under application DC/16/0932 for a three-year period and subsequently extended under application DC/20/0941 until 2 July 2023.

Planning permission for the temporary mobile home arrangement has now expired. However, the mobile home, decking and access arrangements remain in situ and continue to be occupied. Most recently, prior approval was granted under application DC/25/0830 for the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse, together with the associated Habitats Regulations Assessment approval, both of which remain extant.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks planning permission for the temporary siting and residential occupation of the existing mobile home, together with its associated decking and ramped access, for a further temporary period of three years.

The application also seeks planning permission for the permanent retention of the existing access track and turning area serving the site.

The mobile home, decking, ramped access and access track are already present on the site. The proposal does not involve the stationing of an additional unit, the enlargement of the existing accommodation, or any further operational development beyond the retention of the existing structures and works.

The applicant's Planning Supporting Statement refers to the site's extensive planning history and previous appeal decision relating to the mobile home and access track and contends that the development has not resulted in demonstrable harm to the character of the countryside, residential amenity, highway safety, drainage or ecology. The application seeks to regularise the continued presence of the mobile home whilst retaining the existing access infrastructure serving the site.

However, it is noted that the application has been submitted after the expiry of the previous temporary planning permission granted under application DC/20/0941 and falls to be assessed on its own planning merits having regard to the current site circumstances and the development plan.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 27 - Settlement Coalescence
Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
Policy 29 - Equestrian Development
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

Policy ASH1 – Overall Spatial Strategy for Ashington
Policy ASH3 – Parking Provision
Policy ASH5 – Landscaping and Countryside Access

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

Policy 1 – Sustainable Development
Policy 2 – Development Hierarchy
Policy 3 – Settlement Expansion
Policy 6 – Climate Change
Policy 7 – Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 8 – Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy 9 – Water Neutrality
Policy 11 – Environmental Protection
Policy 14 – Countryside Protection
Policy 19 – Development Quality
Policy 20 – Development Principles
Policy 24 – Sustainable Transport
Policy 25 – Parking

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

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

Parish Design Statement:

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham (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 Arboriculture Comment (13.08.2026)

The mobile home in question, is situated adjacent to an area of designated ancient woodland known as Coombewick Ghyll, which is additionally protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 0743. The eastern flank wall of the structure is located approximately 5 metres from the woodland edge and therefore falls within the 15-metre buffer identified in Natural England's Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland. It is acknowledged that this separation distance would not accord with current best practice for new development and that ancient woodland is afforded a high level of protection as an irreplaceable habitat.

It is recognized that there is a long-standing relationship between the built form of the mobile home and the adjacent woodland, and that it and parts of its curtilage fall within the 15-metre buffer identified within Natural England's standing advice for new development within influencing distance of ancient woodland. Consequently, the existing spatial relationship between the development and the ancient woodland would not accord with current best practice were a new residential structure proposed in this location today. It is also noted that paragraph 193(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)¹ affords significant protection to irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, where development would result in their loss or deterioration.

Notwithstanding this, from the submitted information it would appear that the application does not seek to alter the built form of the mobile home, enlargement of the residential curtilage, or any other form of encroachment towards the ancient woodland. As such, the scheme as proposed would not materially alter the existing relationship between the mobile home and the adjacent woodland.

HDC Compliance: Comment (14.05.2026)

This site has been the subject of a significant number of planning applications and prior approval applications since 2015 involving the proposed conversion of agricultural buildings to form residential dwellings, and the stationing of a mobile home on the land. The mobile home stationed at the site has been directly linked to the approvals granted.

An application for the temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking and the laying of a road/access track was submitted to the Council in 2016, which was refused planning permission by the Council, but allowed on appeal for a three year period by the Planning Inspectorate under application reference DC/16/0932. At that time the mobile home was already on site and was occupied by the owner and her family. The justification given at the time was that the site benefited from permitted development rights for the conversion of the vacant barn on the land (ref: DC/15/1272) and it was the appellant's intention to remain in the caravan whilst work was carried out to complete the permitted barn conversion.

Over the next few years, a number of further applications for prior approvals were submitted to the Council for the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse, and in 2020 an application was submitted (reference DC/20/0941), which sought to retain the mobile home access decking, and access track for a further three year period i.e. until 2nd July 2023. Once again, the justification to keep the mobile home was on the basis that at the time of consideration, there was a Prior Notification granted under Class Q of the GDPO to allow the conversion of an existing barn on the site temporary consent was required to support the on-site accommodation of the applicant and family for the duration of the works.

The most recent Prior Notification application for the Change of Use of an Agricultural Building to 1no. dwellinghouse on the site was granted under application reference DC/25/0830 on 18th July 2025, and the corresponding application submitted under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which related to this Prior Approval was granted on 18th November 2025.

As such, whilst the most recent temporary planning permission for the mobile home, access decking, and access track expired on 2nd July 2023, it has not been considered to be expedient to enforce against this matter, as there were extant approvals in place to convert the agricultural buildings to residential dwellings, and previously the Planning Inspectorate had considered this a justification for the

¹ Since changed to Policy N6(2) of the NPPF 2026)

mobile home to remain on the site whilst work was carried out to complete the permitted barn conversion. Indeed in 2023 a further application was submitted to retain the mobile home, access decking, and access track for a further three year period under application DC/23/1202, however the Council eventually treated the application as 'finally disposed of' under Article 40(13) of the Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) order 2015.

With the matter not moving forward however, and the conversion of the agricultural buildings not taking place, the landowner has been advised by the Planning Compliance Team that the mobile home needs to be removed from the site. The landowner has instead made this application to retain the mobile home on the land for a further period of three years.

HDC Environmental Health: Comment (01.06.2026)

There is insufficient sewage/drainage information to determine if the proposal is acceptable, so further comments will be necessary when this has been provided

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WSCC Highways: No Objection (04.06.2026)

West Sussex County Council, in its capacity as Local Highway Authority, raises no objection to the proposal.

The Highway Authority notes that the site is accessed via North Lane, a privately maintained road connecting to the A24 (Basing Hill) to the north. It further notes that the mobile home has been present on the site for a number of years and that the application seeks only the retention of the existing arrangement. As such, the proposal is not considered to represent a material intensification of use.

The Highway Authority advises that there are no apparent visibility issues associated with the junction between North Lane and the A24. A review of Sussex Police collision data for the previous five-year period identified no recorded collisions in the vicinity of the junction, and therefore there is no evidence to suggest that the junction operates unsafely or that the proposal would worsen any existing highway safety concerns.

The site is also considered to benefit from sufficient space for off-street parking and turning within the site.

Accordingly, the Local Highway Authority concludes that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety and would not result in severe cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. Therefore, no transport grounds exist to resist the application.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

2 letters of Objection have been received from 1 address. Including a representation submitted on behalf of Coombewick Farm and a separate Counsel's Opinion. The objections raise the following material planning considerations:

- The proposal represents a third request for a temporary permission, contrary to Planning Practice Guidance which states that it will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission.
- The original appeal decision and subsequent temporary permissions were granted on the basis that the mobile home would facilitate an approved barn conversion; however, no conversion works have been undertaken despite successive Class Q approvals.
- There is insufficient evidence that the currently approved Class Q conversion will be implemented and therefore limited weight should be attached to it as a fallback position.

- Given the length of time the mobile home has remained on the site, the development can no longer reasonably be described as temporary and should be assessed as a permanent residential use in the countryside.
- The proposal conflicts with countryside protection and sustainability policies and would perpetuate residential development in an unsustainable rural location.
- The permanent retention of the access track and turning area is not justified and would result in ongoing harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.

Parish Comments:

Wiston Parish Council: Objection (02.06.2026)

The Parish Council objects to the application in its entirety and considers both elements of the proposal to be contrary to the development plan.

In relation to the proposed further temporary retention and residential occupation of the mobile home, the Parish Council notes that temporary permissions have been granted successively since 2016 and argues that a further consent would result in the mobile home remaining on site for approximately 13 years. The Council considers that repeated temporary permissions are not justified and that the proposal should now be assessed as a permanent dwelling in the countryside. The Parish Council considers the proposal to conflict with HDPF Policies 1, 3, 4, 20, 25, 26, 30 and 40 as the site lies outside any Built-Up Area Boundary, is not considered essential to a countryside location, lacks evidence of any rural worker need, would perpetuate development in an unsustainable location and would continue to harm the character of the countryside and setting of the South Downs National Park.

In relation to the proposed permanent retention of the access track and turning area, the Parish Council considers that the infrastructure was originally approved only in association with a temporary use and that its permanent retention would result in unjustified development within the countryside contrary to HDPF Policy 26. It is further argued that there is no independent need for the access track, that retaining it permanently could undermine future enforcement action and establish an undesirable precedent. The Council also raises concerns regarding drainage and surface water management and requests confirmation from the Highway Authority that the access arrangements are acceptable on a permanent basis.

The Parish Council therefore requests that both the temporary retention of the mobile home and the permanent retention of the access track and turning area be refused. Should permission be granted, it requests that any consent remains strictly time-limited, with restoration of the land required upon cessation of the use.

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

Background and Planning History

The planning history of this site is extensive and is a significant material consideration in the determination of the current application. The site has been the subject of numerous planning applications and prior approval applications relating to the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use and the stationing of a mobile home within the site.

Planning permission was originally sought in 2016 under application DC/16/0932 for the temporary stationing of a mobile home and access decking together with the laying of an access track. The application was refused by the Council on 10 August 2016 due to concerns regarding the impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside. At that time the site benefitted from a Prior Approval granted under Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order for the conversion of an agricultural building into a dwellinghouse and it was stated that the mobile home was required to provide temporary accommodation whilst those works were undertaken.

A subsequent appeal (APP/Z3825/W/17/3168013) was allowed in May 2017. In allowing the appeal, the Planning Inspector concluded that the mobile home and access track would not result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and granted a temporary three-year consent. The Inspector specifically noted that the site benefitted from permitted development rights for the conversion of the existing barn to a dwelling and accepted that the appellant intended to remain within the mobile home whilst works to implement the conversion were undertaken. The permission was granted on a temporary basis only and was subject to conditions requiring the removal of the mobile home and access track and restoration of the land at the expiration of the consent period.

In July 2020, application DC/20/0941 was approved, extending the temporary planning permission for a further three years until 2 July 2023. As with the appeal decision, the extension was supported on the basis that an extant Class Q approval existed for the conversion of the agricultural building to a dwelling and that the mobile home would provide temporary accommodation whilst those works were undertaken.

Although a number of Class Q prior approvals have subsequently been granted on the site, including the most recent approval under application DC/25/0830 and associated Habitat Regulations approval, no conversion works have been undertaken to date. Likewise, the temporary planning permission granted under DC/20/0941 expired on 2 July 2023 and the mobile home, decking, access track and turning area remain in situ.

In 2023 a further application (DC/23/1202) was submitted seeking a further three-year extension of the temporary consent, it was not determined and was subsequently treated as finally disposed of under Article 40(13) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Consequently, no planning permission presently exists for the continued siting and occupation of the mobile home or the associated access arrangements.

The proposal represents a third request for a temporary extension of the mobile home following the expiry of the previous temporary consent and seeks for the first time the permanent retention of the access track and turning area. The application must therefore be assessed on its own planning merits having regard to the development plan, relevant national policy and guidance, the planning history of the site, and all other material considerations.

Principle of Development:

The application seeks planning permission for the continued siting and residential occupation of an existing mobile home, together with associated decking and ramped access, for a further temporary period of three years. Planning permission is also sought for the retention of the existing access track and turning area serving the site.

The site lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary and is therefore located within the countryside for the purposes of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). Policy 26 of the HDPF seeks to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside by restricting development to that which has an essential need to be located in a rural area. Similarly, Policies 3 and 33 seek to promote

sustainable patterns of development and ensure that development respects local character and context.

National policy adopts a similar approach. Policy S5 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) confirms that only certain forms of development should generally be supported outside settlements, reflecting the need to safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and promote sustainable patterns of development. The continued residential occupation of a mobile home within this countryside location would not ordinarily be supported as a permanent form of residential development and therefore conflicts with both the spatial strategy of the development plan and the underlying objectives of national policy.

The planning history of the site is, however, a significant material consideration. Temporary planning permission for the stationing of the mobile home and associated access arrangements was originally refused by the Council under application DC/16/0932 but subsequently allowed on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate in May 2017. In allowing the appeal, the Inspector concluded that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and accepted that there was a legitimate justification for temporary accommodation on the site whilst works were undertaken to implement an approved Class Q barn conversion. Temporary planning permission was subsequently extended under application DC/20/0941 on the basis that an extant Class Q approval remained in place, and that residential occupation of the mobile home was linked to the intended conversion of the agricultural building.

That temporary permission expired on 2 July 2023 and the present application therefore represents a third request for a temporary period of consent. Officers acknowledge that Planning Practice Guidance advises that temporary planning permissions should generally only be granted where there is a clear justification and that it will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission. The prolonged presence of the mobile home on the site and the repeated reliance upon temporary permissions are therefore matters which weigh significantly against the proposal.

Furthermore, despite a succession of Class Q approvals having been granted since 2015, including the current extant Prior Approval under reference DC/25/0830, no conversion works have been undertaken. Officers therefore agree with objectors that the original justification advanced for the mobile home carries less weight now than when the matter was first considered by the Planning Inspectorate in 2017. This is a material consideration which weighs against the proposal.

During the course of the application, the applicant was invited to provide further information regarding implementation of the approved conversion and his legal interest in the site. The applicant confirmed that he is not the registered owner of the land, does not presently have unilateral authority to undertake the approved conversion works, and is unable to provide any reliable programme for commencement or completion of the development. Whilst the applicant maintains that implementation remains his intention, he acknowledges that this is dependent upon the resolution of ongoing ownership and legal matters beyond his sole control.

Whilst ownership disputes are principally private legal matters rather than planning considerations, the Council must nevertheless assess the likelihood of the approved development being delivered where that development is relied upon to justify a further temporary planning permission.

The site continues to benefit from an extant Prior Approval under application DC/25/0830 for the conversion of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse. This remains a material consideration. However, the weight that can be attributed to the approval is significantly reduced by the planning history of the site. Since 2015, several successive Class Q approvals have existed on the land, yet no conversion works have been undertaken. The current application therefore arises in circumstances where residential occupation of the mobile home has continued for a prolonged period without any meaningful progress towards implementation of the approved conversion works.

Officers note the applicant's contention that works associated with the approved Class Q conversion, including drainage infrastructure, have been undertaken at the site and that these works amount to a meaningful start of the approved development. However, no formal determination has been made by the Local Planning Authority as to whether the approved development has been lawfully commenced,

nor has sufficient evidence been submitted as part of the current application to demonstrate that the works undertaken constitute implementation of the Prior Approval. In any event, the provisions of Class Q require that the development is completed in three years from the date of the decision, nor implemented. Accordingly, this matter attracts very limited weight in the assessment.

Officers attach only limited weight to the existence of the extant Class Q approval as a fallback position. Whilst the approval remains capable of lawful implementation, the planning history, the absence of any demonstrable progress towards delivery, and the applicant's inability to provide a programme for implementation, mean that the Local Planning Authority cannot reasonably conclude that the approved conversion provides a sufficient justification for a further temporary residential permission.

Taking all matters into account, Officers conclude that the proposal would perpetuate a form of residential development in the countryside contrary to Policies 3, 26 and 33 of the HDPF and Policy S5 of the NPPF. Significant weight is attached to the absence of any convincing evidence that the current Class Q approval will be implemented and to the fact that previous temporary permissions have failed to achieve the purpose for which they were originally granted. The proposal therefore represents an unjustified extension of residential occupation in the countryside and conflicts with the development plan. The planning balance is considered further below.

Design and Appearance:

Policy 25 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) seeks to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character and the visual qualities of the natural environment. In addition, Policies 32 and 33 require development to achieve a high standard of design which responds positively to local character, respects its landscape setting, and integrates sympathetically with surrounding built form and open countryside. The assessment therefore turns on the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area and whether the proposal would result in unacceptable visual harm.

The application does not propose any additional built development. Rather, it seeks the continued retention of the existing mobile home, associated decking and ramped access, together with the permanent retention of the existing access track and turning area. These elements have been present on the site for a considerable period and form part of the existing site context.

The site occupies a rural location, and the mobile home inevitably results in a degree of encroachment into the countryside. However, the Planning Inspector previously considered the visual impact of the development and concluded that the mobile home would not appear visually incongruous within its countryside setting. The Inspector noted that the dark timber-clad appearance of the structure, together with its relationship to the existing barn and stable buildings, resulted in it appearing as part of a cluster of relatively modest rural buildings rather than as an isolated feature within the wider landscape. The Inspector also noted that the mobile home is not readily visible from public viewpoints due to its position behind existing buildings and the surrounding landform.

Officers are satisfied that the circumstances on the ground have not materially changed since those conclusions were reached. The mobile home remains visually associated with the existing group of buildings and benefits from screening provided by existing vegetation and surrounding structures. Whilst objection has been raised regarding the prolonged presence of the development, the visual characteristics of the development itself remain unchanged and there is no evidence before the Council that its continued presence has resulted in significant harm to the wider landscape character of the area.

In respect of the access track and turning area, Officers acknowledge that the current proposal differs from previous permissions in seeking their permanent retention. The Planning Inspector's findings regarding the track were reached in the context of a temporary proposal and therefore only limited weight can be attached to those findings insofar as permanent retention is concerned. Nevertheless, the access track has now existed on the site for a number of years and has become established within the landscape. The track is constructed using materials appropriate to a rural setting and does not present as a highly urbanising or engineered feature within the countryside. Furthermore, the

application does not propose any extension or intensification of the access arrangements beyond those already present on the site.

Whilst the proposal would result in the continued presence of development within the countryside, Officers consider that any resulting visual harm is localised and limited. The development remains closely associated with the existing built form on the site and does not significantly alter the landscape character of the wider area.

The proposal has also been assessed against Policy DP3 of the NPPF which requires development proposals to respond positively to their context and integrate with their surroundings.

Given the established presence of the mobile home and its visual relationship with the existing group of rural buildings, the proposal is not considered to conflict with the design objectives of Policy DP3.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with the design and landscape objectives of Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and policy DP3 of the NPPF (2026).

Amenity:

Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) requires development to protect the amenities of existing and future occupiers and to avoid unacceptable impacts arising from matters such as overlooking, loss of privacy, noise, disturbance, overbearing impacts or loss of outlook. The assessment therefore considers whether the continued occupation of the mobile home and retention of the associated works would result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential amenity.

The proposal relates to the retention of an existing mobile home, decking, ramped access, access track and turning area which have been present on the site for a considerable period. No extensions, physical alterations or intensification of the use are proposed as part of the application.

There is considered to be sufficient separation distance between the application site and adjoining residential properties, particularly Coombewick Farm, which is the nearest neighbouring dwelling, to prevent any unacceptable impacts arising from overlooking, loss of privacy, dominance or loss of outlook. Furthermore, there is no evidence before the Council that the continued occupation of the mobile home has resulted in unacceptable levels of noise or disturbance during the period in which it has been present on the site.

Whilst objections have been received regarding the principle of the development and the length of time the mobile home has remained on the site; there is no substantive evidence that the development causes material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Accordingly, Officers are satisfied that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity and would comply with the requirements of Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Impact on Trees and Ancient Woodland

National policy affords significant protection to irreplaceable habitats. Policy N6(2) of the NPPF states that development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

The application site lies adjacent to Coombewick Ghyll Ancient Woodland, an irreplaceable habitat which is additionally protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) No. 0743. National planning policy affords significant protection to ancient woodland due to its irreplaceable nature, and Natural England's Standing Advice identifies a buffer zone of at least 15 metres between ancient woodland and new development.

The mobile home and associated residential use are located within this buffer zone and, if proposed as new development today, would not be fully consistent with current guidance relating to development in proximity to ancient woodland. However, the current application does not propose any physical

alterations to the mobile home, an expansion of its footprint, an extension of the residential curtilage, or any encroachment further towards the woodland edge.

The proposal therefore maintains the existing relationship between the mobile home and the adjacent woodland and would not, in itself, give rise to any additional direct impacts upon the ancient woodland or trees protected by the TPO beyond those already established. In the absence of any proposed operational development or intensification affecting the woodland margin, no material arboricultural objections are raised to the proposal.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would not result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and is acceptable in arboricultural terms.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) seeks to ensure that development incorporates safe and suitable access arrangements for all users and does not result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety or the operation of the transport network. The assessment therefore considers whether the continued use of the site and the permanent retention of the access track and turning area would result in any adverse highway implications.

The site is accessed via North Lane, a privately maintained road which connects to the A24 (Basing Hill) to the north. The application relates to the retention of an existing mobile home and associated access arrangements that have been in place for a number of years and does not propose any intensification of the existing use or any alterations to the established access arrangements.

The Local Highway Authority has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection. It advises that the mobile home has been present on the site for several years and that the proposal does not represent a material intensification of use. The Highway Authority further notes that there are no apparent visibility concerns associated with the junction between North Lane and the A24 and that a review of collision data supplied by Sussex Police for the previous five-year period identified no recorded collisions in the vicinity of the junction. As such, there is no evidence to suggest that the junction operates unsafely or that the proposal would exacerbate any existing highway safety concerns.

The Highway Authority also confirms that the site benefits from sufficient space to accommodate an appropriate level of off-street parking and on-site vehicle turning. Officers further note that there are no changes proposed to North Lane, the existing site access, or the already established access track and turning area beyond their retention.

Having regard to the comments of the Local Highway Authority and the absence of any evidence demonstrating highway harm, Officers are satisfied that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would not result in severe cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy 40 of the HDPF and Policies TR3 (Locating Development in Sustainable Locations), TR4 (Street Design, Access and Parking) TR6 (Assessing Transport Impacts) of the NPPF (2026).

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 Policy N6(1) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026).

Other Matters:

Environmental Health Officer Comments:

Environmental Health have raised concerns regarding the proximity of the mobile home to site boundaries and advise that a caravan site licence may be required if planning permission is granted.

Officers note that the application relates to the retention of an existing mobile home which has been present on the site for a considerable period and no evidence has been submitted demonstrating that its current siting has resulted in harm to residential amenity, fire safety or any other planning consideration. Furthermore, matters relating to compliance with caravan site licensing requirements are dealt with under separate legislation and do not in themselves justify withholding planning permission.

Environmental Health have requested further information regarding the existing foul drainage arrangements serving the mobile home. Officers note, however, that the application relates to the continued occupation of an established unit which has been served by existing foul drainage infrastructure for a number of years. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the existing arrangements have resulted in pollution, nuisance or other environmental harm. In the absence of any technical objection identifying an unacceptable impact, Officers do not consider that the matter warrants refusal of the application. Nevertheless, in the interests of environmental protection, a condition requiring details of the existing foul drainage arrangements and confirmation of their adequacy can reasonably be imposed.

Environmental Health have suggested a condition restricting the storage and burning of waste. Officers do not consider such a condition necessary, given the absence of evidence that waste-related activities are occurring on the site or giving rise to planning harm.

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 application is retrospective made under Section 73(A) of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Planning Balance and Conclusion:

The application seeks a further temporary planning permission for the siting and residential occupation of a mobile home in the countryside together with the retention of associated works. The site lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary where development is subject to the restrictive provisions of Policies 3 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. Residential development in such locations is only supported where there is an overriding justification and where it would not undermine the spatial strategy of the development plan.

The planning history of the site is a significant material consideration. Temporary planning permission for the mobile home was originally granted on appeal in 2017 and subsequently extended in 2020. In both instances, considerable weight was attached to the existence of approved Class Q conversions and the temporary accommodation needs associated with implementing those developments. The permissions were therefore granted on the basis that the mobile home represented a genuinely temporary arrangement pending completion of approved residential conversion works.

Officers have carefully considered the additional information submitted by the applicant during the determination of the application. The applicant advises that it remains his intention that the approved Class Q conversion under application DC/25/0830 should be implemented and that the approval has not been abandoned. He contends that the approved conversion remains a realistic prospect, noting that the Prior Approval remains extant, the agricultural building remains in place and that the Class Q scheme remains the approved residential development route for the site.

However, the applicant also confirms that he is not the registered owner of the land, does not presently have unilateral authority to undertake the approved conversion, and is unable to provide a reliable timetable for commencement or completion of the works. Whilst Officers have afforded weight to the applicant's stated intention to pursue the development, implementation remains dependent upon future ownership and legal matters which are presently unresolved. No substantive evidence has been provided demonstrating that the approved conversion is likely to proceed within the period sought by the application.

Despite successive Class Q approvals having existed on the site since 2015, no conversion works have been undertaken. The previous temporary permission expired in July 2023 and the current proposal therefore represents a third request for a temporary consent. Planning Practice Guidance advises that it will rarely be justifiable to grant repeated temporary permissions. In the circumstances of this case, the prolonged failure to implement successive approvals significantly reduces the weight that can be attached to the current fallback position.

Officers have also had regard to the applicant's assertion that drainage works undertaken on the site constitute a meaningful start of the approved Class Q conversion. However, the current application is not one seeking a formal determination as to whether the Prior Approval has been lawfully implemented and insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate this conclusively. Furthermore, even if some weight is afforded to the claimed commencement of development, the absence of any meaningful progress towards completion of the approved conversion over a prolonged

period remains a significant concern and materially limits the weight that can be attached to the fallback position, particularly as the qualifying element is completion rather than implementation.

The Local Planning Authority acknowledges that no unacceptable technical impacts have been identified in respect of landscape character, residential amenity, highway safety, ecology, trees or drainage. These matters weigh in favour of the proposal. However, the absence of technical harm does not in itself justify the continuation of a residential use in the countryside where the principal temporary justification has not been demonstrated. Officers also note that the application seeks permanent retention of an access track and turning area that were originally approved in association with a temporary arrangement. In the absence of a satisfactory justification for the continued residential occupation of the mobile home, insufficient justification has also been demonstrated for the permanent retention of this associated infrastructure.

Nevertheless, the principal issue in this case is whether there remains a sufficient planning justification for a further temporary residential permission in the countryside. Having regard to the prolonged failure to implement successive Class Q approvals, the applicant's inability to provide evidence of a realistic programme for implementation of the approved conversion, the advice contained within Planning Practice Guidance, and the resulting conflict with the countryside protection policies of the development plan, Officers conclude that the material considerations are insufficient to outweigh the identified policy conflict.

Accordingly, the proposal constitutes an unjustified form of residential development in the countryside and planning permission should be refused

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason:

- 1 The site is located outside of any settlement boundary and has not been allocated for development. The proposal would not promote sustainable patterns of movement, with the location remote from existing settlements, creating a dependency on private vehicles which would not provide a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and visitors. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Policies 2, 3, 4, 26 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2026). There are no material considerations or benefits which would outweigh this identified policy conflict.

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/26/0732

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan	Location Plan	EX-01 Rev P2	07.05.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing Mobile Home	EX-04 Rev P2	13.05.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Daniel Holmes Date: 22.09.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 24.09.2026