



Horsham District Council
Parkside
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

Our ref: 18921
Date: 25 June 2026

For the attention of: Sam Whitehouse

Application ref: DC/26/0671
Location: Land Off Old Crawley Road Faygate West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Outline Application for a development of up to 120 dwellings (including 45% affordable) with all matters reserved except for access.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Outline planning application. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

Summary

Not supportive on landscape grounds	☒
No landscape objection, subject to attached recommendations and/or conditions	☐
Further information required prior to determination	☒
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	☐

This review is based on a desktop study of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The Site is located to the north-east of Horsham, and comprises a singular arable farmland parcel to the east of Old Crawley Road and the B2195 Crawley Road. The residential edge of Horsham is located along the south-west boundary. The Birches woodland forms the south-east site boundary, and a tree/hedgerow boundary forms the north-east.
- 1.2. The Site is located within the High Weald National Landscape. Two Grade II listed buildings are located west of the Site.
- 1.3. The Site formed part of a larger application for 473 dwellings under DC/20/0470, which was dismissed at appeal in 2021.



2.0. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1. Within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015), the following policies are considered relevant:
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
 - Policy 26: Countryside Protection
 - Policy 30: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape)
 - Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- 2.2. Within the Horsham Local Landscape Capacity Assessment (2021), the Site is located within Area 17 Land North East of Horsham. The capacity summary states: *“Some of the landscape features and qualities of the area are sensitive to development. The overall rural character and moderate-high visual sensitivity means that there is some limited capacity for housing development closer to the existing urban edge but this should not extend further south and north east as this could be perceived as a significant incursion into the AONB or ribbon development along the A264. Employment development would be very visually conspicuous, except on the lowest ground close to the urban edge”*.
- 2.3. For Medium-scale housing within Area 17, there are moderate capacity for residential development, which is defined as *“This area has an ability to accommodate development in some parts without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation. There is a need for each proposal to be considered on its individual merits to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts”*.

3.0. Review of submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 3.1. The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken by fabrik Chartered Landscape Architects in February 2026.
- 3.2. We are largely satisfied with the submitted methodology included within Appendix B, and consider it complied with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (GLVIA3).

Landscape Character

- 3.3. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area L1: St Leonard's Forest within the Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (2003). Key characteristics which are relevant to the Site include:
- Narrow flat topped ridges and steep sided ghylls
 - Regular pasture and arable fields
 - Confined views
 - Woodlands

- 3.4. We welcome the inclusion of Table 6 which provides a clear summary of the assessed landscape character effects throughout the LVIA.
- 3.5. The effects on the Site Landscape Character are assessed as **medium-high** sensitivity, **high** magnitude of change with a **major adverse** effect at Year 1. The LVIA acknowledges the effects relates to the Site and therefore we agree with this assessment. Beneficial effects are also judged in relation to the provision of public open space (POS) and woodland planting, however we appreciate the differentiation between these Site effects.
- 3.6. The effects on the National Landscape are assessed as **medium** sensitivity (**high** value & **low** susceptibility), **negligible** magnitude of change with **negligible** effects at Year 1. Based on the Table 3.3 Landscape Susceptibility within the Methodology, low is defined as *“The receptor has a disjointed composition with little - no links to adjacent key characteristics. The type of development proposed is unlikely to alter the overall integrity of the receptor and is capable of incorporating recommendations as set out in published guidelines”*.
- 3.7. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development site forms a small part of the National Landscape and is located on a less tranquil and rural area of the wider landscape, we consider that the judgement of low susceptibility underplays the character of the site in context with the High Weald National Landscape. The Site is a small and irregular productive field bound by hedgerows and woodland, and some long views to the north, which are key characteristics of the National Landscape.
- 3.8. Whilst we recognise that the Site is influenced by the urban edge of Horsham, it also forms part of the transitional landscape into the National Landscape, forming a buffer between the urban edge and the more characteristic areas of the protected valued landscape.
- 3.9. Overall, regarding other landscape receptors within the submitted LVIA, where our judgements may differ these are not deemed substantial.

Visual Amenity

- 3.10. Viewpoint photography was undertaken in January 2026 demonstrating winter leaf-cover and therefore representing the worst-case scenario.
- 3.11. Table 1 confirms that the number and location of viewpoints included within Figure 15 were previously agreed.
- 3.12. Within Table 6 (Page 139), all users of PRowS have been grouped under ‘Transient receptors using Public Rights of Way’, and all road users have been grouped under ‘Transient receptors using the road corridors’. Given the range in effects experienced by visual receptors in different locations, a breakdown of PRowS and roads into separate receptors would be expected. This would provide a more accurate assessment of the effects experienced to each receptor.

- 3.13. Differentiation is made within Para 9.2.58 that local effects are **moderate**, and distant effects are **negligible**. Whilst we do not disagree with these judgements, Table 6 averages these effects and assesses that PRowS generally experience **minor-negligible** adverse effects. We consider that grouping PRowS into a single visual receptor dilutes the assessment and underestimates the visual effects on users, which would otherwise be experienced as moderate adverse.
- 3.14. Table 6 assesses that effects on road users are averaged at **moderate-minor** adverse. We do however not disagree with the assessed **moderate** adverse effect clarified within Para 9.2.52 for road users immediately adjacent to the Site.
- 3.15. **Major** adverse effects are acknowledged for the residents of New Moorhead Drive, located to the south of the Site. We concur that effects are not possible to be reduced at Year 15, given the obstruction of long-distance views into the National Landscape and change in use of the adjacent field from open countryside to residential.
- 3.16. We note that some views are obtained to and from the wider landscape to the west of the National Landscape, north of the Site. Whilst this is represented by Viewpoints 19 and 20, we also recognise that these views are from the Approved development site under DC/16/1677, and therefore this view is likely to change as part of the residential development.
- 3.17. Overall, we do not disagree with the assessed effects on visual amenity within the submitted LVIA. Where our judgements may differ, these are not deemed substantial.

4.0. Review of Proposals

- 4.1. The Site is located outside the built-up area boundary (BUAB) of Horsham and is therefore located within the countryside and within the High Weald National Landscape (former AONB).
- 4.2. Policy 30 'Protected Landscapes' refers to the protection of the High Weald National Landscape. It states; "*Development proposals will be supported in or close to protected landscapes where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts to the natural beauty and public enjoyment of these landscapes as well as any relevant cross boundary linkages.*"
- 4.3. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) states that development within National Landscapes must "*seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*". Within the proposed scheme, enhancements to the National Landscape relate to the woodland planting on the site perimeters, where hedgerow and tree planting contributes to the multi-layered planting approach set out within the High Weald Design Guide and enhancing habitat connectivity. As the planting matures, it will also contribute to containing the existing urban edge of Horsham which is currently a hard defined boundary.

- 4.4. Notwithstanding the above enhancements, the principle of introducing a large number of houses into an undeveloped field does not largely contribute to enhancing the natural beauty of the High Weald National Landscape. Whilst the LVIA does acknowledge the effects associated with the development, we emphasise that regardless, significant effects on both landscape character and visual amenity will still arise from the proposed development on the more sensitive receptors.
- 4.5. The Birches woodland provides strong visual containment to the east, limiting views from PRoWs to the east. The trees and hedgerows on the north-eastern boundary also provide some visual containment from the surrounding landscape. The southern and western site boundaries remain more open and are varied in containment, however the wider wooded character and urban edge of Horsham limit mid- and long-distance views towards the site. We consider that the surrounding vegetated character reduces the extent of visual influence and containment although the site remains sensitive due to its transitional role and landscape context and provides a sense of separation between the urban edge of Horsham and the wider National Landscape.
- 4.6. In Paragraphs 16 and 25 of the Appeal Decision for DC/20/0470 (Ref: APP/Z3825/W/21/3266503), which proposed 473 dwellings over a much larger site, it was stated that the western parcel (the Site) has some connection to the settlement edge which contributes to its transitional character, and is also less connected to the wider landscape. As such, the western parcel was identified as the part of the site with the lowest landscape sensitivity and greatest potential to accommodate development with comparatively reduced effects.
- 4.7. From a landscape perspective, it is acknowledged that this parcel represents the least sensitive component of the wider appeal site. However, it nonetheless retains a degree of sensitivity due to its transitional position within the National Landscape, its elevated topography, and its role in providing a buffer to more sensitive adjoining fields. While some of these effects may be localised, they are nonetheless meaningful in the context of a nationally protected landscape.
- 4.8. A key concern within the Appeal Decision was the impact on PRoW 1587. Given the containment of the Site and its physical and visual separation from the PRoW, we concur with the assessment that the effects on this receptor are not significant.
- 4.9. However, further information on the relationship between the houses, the existing perimeter wooded boundaries and the PRoWs would be useful to demonstrate whether the rooflines are visible above the tree canopy. To verify that impacts on the wider National Landscape and other PRoWs are indeed negligible or minor-negligible adverse (respectively), as per the LVIA, we request the provision of wireline visualisations and cross-. These should demonstrate how the proposed parameters would be realised on site, allowing a robust assessment of whether built form would break the skyline or be seen above existing vegetation.

4.10. The High Weald Housing Design Guide (2019) should be referenced and considered within any application. If minded for approval, we advise that the following recommendations are considered to ensure compliance with relevant guidance:

- Whilst we recognise that the public open space (POS) is situated around the proposed SuDS basin on the lowest elevation part of the Site, we consider that the wider POS should form part of the countryside edge buffer to the east (Page 15). This would provide an opportunity to form a POS with a relationship to the adjacent woodland and soften the transition from the urban edge to the countryside.
- The scheme relies heavily on large parking courts (Page 31) and cul-de-sacs (Page 14) which are not preferable forms of road hierarchy or parking arrangements, and do not encourage permeability of the Site. A number of these are also bound by rear-garden fences which does not provide strong passive surveillance. We advise that this approach is used less throughout the scheme.
- Any parking courtyards should be softened with planting and other soft landscaping (Page 31).

5.0. Summary

- 5.1. Overall, while the proposed development is located on the least sensitive parcel of the wider appeal site and benefits from a degree of visual containment, it nevertheless occupies a transitional position within the High Weald National Landscape and retains a notable level of landscape sensitivity.
- 5.2. The LVIA is broadly robust in its methodology and conclusions. However, it is considered that certain judgements tend to understate the extent of impacts on more sensitive receptors.
- 5.3. Although mitigation in the form of structural planting and green infrastructure would provide some benefits over time, the introduction of residential development within an undeveloped field would result in unavoidable adverse effects on landscape character and aspects of visual amenity.
- 5.4. Further clarification and supporting information is required in the form of cross-sections and wireline visualisations to demonstrate whether the proposed built form would break the skyline or be viewed seen above over existing vegetation.
- 5.5. Overall, the proposed introduction of major development within the National Landscape would not conserve or enhance the site. Given the scale of development proposed, it is not considered feasible to avoid adverse landscape effects, as required by Policy 30 of the HDPF. Furthermore, although the site may be less tranquil than other parts of the designated landscape, this does not diminish the weight of protection afforded to National Landscapes.

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Horsham District Council.

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.

