

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/1801	Case Officer:	Anna Tidey
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Construction of 3 single storey, temporary, modular buildings for medical use providing elective and surgery facilities, a staff welfare unit and new access ramp		
Site:	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, Princess Royal Hospital, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4EX, ,		
Validation Date	21 Jul 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	14 Aug 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	15 Sep 2026
Target Date:	15 Sep 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Anna Tidey</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	15 Sep 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/1801

**University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, Princess Royal Hospital, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4EX,
Construction of 3 single storey, temporary, modular buildings for medical use providing elective and surgery facilities, a staff welfare unit and new access ramp
Ms Eva Tomoga**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

CONSULTATIONS

WSCC Highways: This proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. It is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraphs 114 -117, December 2024. There are no transport grounds to resist this proposal. Recommend a planning condition to require the submission and approval by the LPA of a site set up plan during construction.

Further comments: No objection to reviewed Site Setup Plan. The need for the planning condition is eliminated.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Haywards Heath Town Council: No comment.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of three single storey, temporary modular buildings for medical use providing elective and surgery facilities, a staff welfare unit and new access ramp at the Princess Royal Hospital, off Lewes Road in Haywards Heath.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/23/0098. Extension to existing hospital to provide a new endoscopy unit for a range of high volume, low complexity endoscopy procedures. Approved October 2023.

DM/21/2108. New Urology Unit at Princess Royal Hospital. Approved July 2021.

DM/16/4475. Single storey building to house an MRI scanner and associated equipment (D1 use) for a temporary period of seven years. Approved December 2016.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) is located on the eastern side of Haywards Heath. It consists of a number of buildings of differing architectural styles, located within extensive grounds.

The application site is located within the hospital grounds and next to the MRI unit. Works to install the proposed mobile medical units and associated ramps and access corridors have largely been completed on the site, which is a tarmacked area, formerly laid out and used as a staff car park, which provides a total of 61 car parking spaces. Access for vehicles to the area is provided via the internal road which serves other parking spaces and the A&E department to the north west.

To the west of the site are existing brick hospital buildings. To the north there is an existing plant room building, from which service ducting has been constructed. The A272 link road passes to the east of the site, from which there are limited public views of the site.

The site lies within an Amber Impact Zone for Great Crested Newts.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application has been supported by plans which show the installation of two mobile hospital units and a staff room unit, attached by a circulation corridor.

The application details that the units are temporary and will provide approximately 284 square metres of floor space to maintain elective and urgent surgical capacity during refurbishment works to the wider PRH hospital, with the structures expected to be in place for five years whilst the refurbishment works to the main building take place.

As the height of the mobile units is set above the level of the car park they are shown to be externally accessed by a series of ramps and steps. In addition the plans illustrate that a new covered link corridor is to be constructed from an existing external covered walkway, which extends partly along the northern elevation of the existing MRI building, to allow a covered access pathway from that building into the new hospital units.

The units, which are already installed, are single storey flat roofed units with light grey metal clad wall panels. The proposed fire separation walls are also grey. The connecting ramps and steps will have black painted handrails and contrasting, tactile floors. It is confirmed that the development provides wide corridors for wheelchair users and trolley movement within clinical areas.

The proposed floor plans illustrate that the western unit will accommodate an anaesthetic room, a UCV theatre and a recovery room, with associated shrub and changing rooms. The eastern unit will accommodate a 4 bed ward, with associated nurse station area, toilets and changing rooms. The attached staff room will have an internal office and toilets.

The application has been accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, which clarifies that the proposed development is for a temporary period 'to maintain elective and urgent surgical capacity during refurbishment projects at the site. The facilities are not intended for use as intensive care or high dependency units. The units will be single-storey. Together, they will provide wards and theatre areas along with supporting spaces, including staff offices, clean and dirty utility rooms, toilet facilities, change room, and plant areas.'

The statement confirms that the provision will be in mobile units and these will accommodate a limited number of patients, to maintain a high staff-to-patient ratio. It is confirmed that the supporting areas, including the staff offices, utility rooms, WCs, and plant spaces will only be used on a temporary or intermittent basis and will not have permanent occupancy.

The drainage and service connections for the units will connect into the existing hospital infrastructure and will be powered from an existing electric power source on site.

It is confirmed that clinical and linen waste from the mobile wards will be stored in a secure external bin storage for collection.

The application was accompanied with a Transport Report, which confirms that the existing PRH has a total of 699 car parking spaces. This confirms that in order to accommodate the proposed development 45 car parking spaces, from the 61 within the site boundary, will temporarily be suspended and taken out of use from the wider hospital provisions, leaving 16 for use.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and Site Allocations DPD.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP21 Transport
DP25 Community Facilities and Services
DP26 Character and Design
DP29 Noise, Air and light Pollution
DP38 Biodiversity

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan -made 15 December 2016.

Relevant policies:

L5 Community service buildings
E8 Major development and sustainability
E9 Design
T1 Pedestrian and cycle connections

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council is consulting on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant policies:

DPS6 - Health and Wellbeing
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPN2 - Biodiversity Net Gain

DPN7- Noise Impacts
DPC6- Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC
DPT4- Parking and EV Charging Infrastructure

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Design
- Transport
- Impact on residential amenities
- HRA
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Principle of development

The site lies within the built up area of Haywards Heath. Policy DP25 in the District Plan states in part that:

'The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.'

This support is echoed in Policy L5 in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan which states:

'The provision of new community service buildings including medical and educational services in the Plan area will be supported where demand exists, provided the proposal can demonstrate the site is suitable in terms of access, servicing, car/cycle parking and design and will not lead to a loss of amenity for local residents.'

The policies contained within the newly published NPPF are material considerations which should be taken into account in decision-making from the day of its publication, i.e. from 17th August 2026.

The NPPF recognises that Development Plan policies which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in the NPPF should be given very limited weight. In this context, the aims of Policy DP25 of the District Plan and Policy L5 of the Neighbourhood Plan are inconsistent with the NPPF and should be afforded very limited weight. Greater weight should be given to the relevant NPPF policy under HC6: Retention of key community facilities and public services infrastructure.

The proposed development will provide a service for which a clear medical need has been identified. It will be located at an established hospital site which serves much of the District, and the wider area.

Having regard to the above, the principle of the proposed development of additional support facilities at this site is acceptable in the context of both the development plan and the NPPF.

Design

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and requires all proposals to be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages as well as addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. Policy E9 in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan has similar aims. These policies are considered to be materially inconsistent with the NPPF and as such should be afforded very limited weight, greater weight should be given to the relevant NPPF policies.

Section 14 of the NPPF is titled 'Achieving well-designed places' and includes Policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places. This requires consideration of the context of new development, to include the character and features of the site and its setting. It seeks to support developments that are well located and support healthy communities. Greater weight should be given to national decision-making policy DP3.

Also relevant in the determination of the application is the design guidance contained in the Mid Sussex Design Guide. The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high-quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

It is important to note that good design is not just about the external appearance of new development, but is also about function. This is particularly the case for the proposed development, which is designed to deliver very specific medical services associated with the existing hospital health provisions.

The external appearance of the three proposed modular buildings are modern in appearance, with a simple colour pallet and plain external materials. Due to the location of the buildings they are not widely visible from public vantage points. It is considered that the external appearance of the buildings, which are temporary in form, is satisfactory. As they are single storey in form they will be subordinate to the existing adjacent hospital buildings.

Internally the new modular buildings will provide a functional space for the hospital facilities, which provide a significant public benefit.

Overall, it is considered that the design of the proposed modular buildings is functional and their external appearance is acceptable. The associated covered walkways, corridors and ramps will link the units to the existing buildings and will improve the existing function and facilities at the hospital, and are considered acceptable design solutions for the users of the facilities.

As such the application complies with Policy DP26 in the District Plan, policy E9 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Design Guide principles and the aims of NPPF Policy DP3.

Transport

Policy DP21 in the District Plan seeks to take account of whether a scheme is sustainably located to reduce the need for travel, that appropriate opportunities have been taken up to facilitate and promote the increased use of alternatives to the private car, that the safety of road users and pedestrians is protected, adequate car parking is provided and the scheme avoids severe additional traffic congestion. This policy is considered to be materially inconsistent with the NPPF and as such should be afforded very limited weight, greater weight should be given to the relevant NPPF Policies TR3 - Locating development in sustainable locations, TR4 - Street design, access and parking and TR6 - Assessing transport impacts.

NPPF Policy TR3 aims for development to be sustainably located to enable good accessibility for users and to make the most of existing transport infrastructure.

NPPF Policy TR4 encourages development proposals to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycle movements and to facilitate access by public transport.

NPPF Policy TR6 encourages development proposals that generate transport movements to be supported by transport statements, assessments and travel plans. It states that development proposals should be refused if they would have an adverse impact upon the transport network in terms of capacity, congestion or highway safety.

The site is within the built up area of Haywards Heath. It is a well-established medical facility, and the site is well served by public transport. The proposal is served by an internal road off the main access into the hospital site, and as a result of the proposal there would be no change for access to the site and onto the public highway.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have reviewed the proposal with regards to highway safety and capacity matters. They have reviewed the submitted Transport Note (TN) and associated plans.

The LHA conclude that the temporary loss of 45 car parking spaces could be accommodated within other car parks in the wider hospital area. The proposal is not expected to result in any additional or new trips on the network, as the proposed trips are relocating trips from the main hospital that would otherwise already be taking place.

Overall, the LHA has raised no objection to the application. A planning condition was originally recommended to require a site set up plan to be approved by the LPA (for the construction period). As the development is well underway on the site this site set up plan has been requested and reviewed during the course of determining the application. It has been agreed by the LHA that the proposed details are acceptable and no planning condition is required.

The site is within the built up area of Haywards Heath and can be accessed via foot, wheeling or by cycle. Given this fact, and as the proposal is for an enhanced facility at an existing hospital, it is considered that adequate car parking would remain for hospital users.

There are no reasons for the LPA to disagree with the LHA assessment. As such the application complies with Policy DP21 in the District Plan and the aims of Policies TR3, TR4 and TR6.

Impact on residential amenities

Policy DP26 of the District Plan requires developments to demonstrate that it does not cause significant harm to amenities of existing nearby residents (or future occupiers), taking into account matters such as impact on light, privacy and outlook. As already identified, this policy is considered to be materially inconsistent with the NPPF and greater weight should be given to the relevant policies in the NPPF.

The NPPF contains Policy L2: Making effective use of land, which seeks to make better use of vacant or underused land (part 1.b refers to redeveloping car parks amongst other underused land areas).

Policy P3 refers to Living conditions and Pollution and requires consideration of likely effects of development upon living conditions (para 2a) and daylight/sunlight access for neighbouring residents and occupiers (para 2b).

Principle DG45 in the Design Guide refers to the need to consider privacy of existing and future residents and it is noted that privacy may be affected by the relationship of buildings to each other.

The nearest neighbouring properties are located some 50m (approx.) from the site on Hurstwood Lane, to the east of the hospital site boundary, and beyond the route of the A272. The distance of the proposed development from these properties means that the use of the modular units will be unlikely to cause any significant impact upon the neighbouring residential amenities of those dwellings.

The proposal would not impact upon residential amenities of those living near the hospital site. As such it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy DP26 of the District Plan, and Policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF in respect of this issue.

HRA Assessment

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the competent authority - in this case, Mid Sussex District Council - has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site of focus is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The potential effects of development on Ashdown Forest were assessed during the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. This process identified likely significant effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA from recreational disturbance and on the Ashdown Forest SAC from atmospheric pollution.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development in this planning application.

Recreational disturbance

Increased recreational activity arising from new residential development and related population growth is likely to disturb the protected near-ground and ground nesting birds on Ashdown Forest.

In accordance with advice from Natural England, the HRA for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, and as detailed in District Plan Policy DP17, mitigation measures are necessary to counteract the effects of a potential increase in recreational pressure and are required for developments resulting in a net increase in dwellings within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation approach has been developed. This mitigation approach has been agreed with Natural England.

This planning application does not result in a net increase in dwellings within the 7km zone of influence and so mitigation is not required.

Atmospheric pollution

Increased traffic emissions as a consequence of new development may result in additional atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest. The main pollutant effects of interest are acid deposition and eutrophication by nitrogen deposition. High levels of nitrogen may detrimentally affect the composition of an ecosystem and lead to loss of species.

The potential effects of the proposed development are incorporated into the overall results of the transport model prepared for the Mid Sussex Transport Study, which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal.

Conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the proposed development.

No mitigation is required in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

A full HRA (that is, the appropriate assessment stage that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European site) of the proposed development is not required.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Local Planning Authority has statutory biodiversity duties under s40 NERC Act 2006 (as amended) for the delivery of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

The application is for the development of a site that is less than 0.2 ha, which is hard surfaced. The site meets the de minimus exemption because the site is a car park with a sealed surface with no biodiversity value.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

To conclude, the proposed development will provide enhanced health services facility at the PRH site, which will be of benefit to the general public. The principle of the proposed development of additional support facilities at this site is acceptable in the context of both the development plan and the NPPF.

The modular buildings are almost complete and are not widely visible. Their installation and use will not adversely impact upon the character of the area. The design of the modular buildings is functional and their external appearance is acceptable. As such the application complies with Policy DP26 in the District Plan, the Design Guide principles and the aims of NPPF Policy DP3.

The proposal will have no detrimental impacts on access to the site, which is accessible by foot, wheeling or by cycle. The LHA accept the temporary loss of some on site staff parking as a result of the installation of the units. As such the application complies with Policy DP21 in the District Plan and the aims of NPPF Policies TR3, TR4 and TR6.

The proposal would not impact upon residential amenities of those living near the hospital site. As such it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy DP26 of the District Plan, and Policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Overall, it is considered that the benefits provided by the scheme outweigh the temporary loss of some parking on this sustainably located site and the application can be supported.

Consequently this application is recommended for approval.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Anna Tidey