



Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Our ref: 15687
Date: 24 March 2026

For the attention of: Steven King

Application ref: DM/26/0577
Location: Land West Of Turners Hill Road And North Of Huntsland Including Hurst Farm Turners Hill Road Crawley Down West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Outline application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved), for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 230 dwellings, a care home (use class c2) up to 70 beds, and community facility, and associated infrastructure including new access points off of Turners Hill Road, with associated spine road and car and cycle parking, together with provision of open space, play facilities, utilities infrastructure, surface water drainage features, and associated works.

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.

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The application site is located to the west of Crawley Down village and comprises several undulating pasture fields which are surrounded by established vegetation and woodland. Farmsteads and isolated properties are located in the surrounding countryside and appear close to the site boundaries. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run along three of the four site boundaries.
- 1.2. The Site has existing Outline consent for 150 dwellings, a care home (Use Class C2) up to 70 beds, and community facility, and associated infrastructure, under planning reference DC/24/0016. The red line boundary, access and layout differs between the Approved Scheme and the application site.



2.0. Planning Policy Context

Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) (Adopted March 2018)

2.1. Policies of considered relevance include [inter alia]:

- Policy DP12 Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy DP22 Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes
- Policy DP26 Character and Design
- Policy DP37 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy DP38 Biodiversity

2.2. The MSDP is currently being updated and reviewed. The Submission District Plan (Reg 19) identified the site as occupying the northern half in DPA9 'Land to the west of Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down' (SHELAA ref. 688), and also DPA10 'Hurst Farm'.

Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (January 2016)

2.3. The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

- Policy CDPN 01 (Securing Sustainable Local Infrastructure)
- Policy CDPN 02 (Retention and Enhancement of Recreational and Local Green/Open Spaces)
- Policy CDPN 05 (Control of New Developments)
- Policy CDPN 06 (SuDS)
- Policy CDPN 08 (Coalescence)
- Policy CDPN 09 (Protect and Enhance Biodiversity).

Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007/2014)

2.4. The site is identified as located within Parcel 3 (Crawley Down Northern Fringe). The sensitivity of this character area is judged as substantial, owed to the substantial areas of woodland and intact hedgerows, well defined settlement boundary, sloping ground, significant areas of woodland links and contributes to prevention of increased coalescence with groups of scattered settlement. The landscape value is however judged as slight (2007), with a medium capacity (2014).

2.5. The 2014 study defines medium capacity as (Table 3.4, Page 47) *"there is the potential for limited smaller-scale development to be located in some parts of the character area, so long as there is regard for existing features and sensitivities within the landscape"*.

3.0. Review of the LVA:

3.1. The application has been supported by the submission of a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) undertaken by SLR Consulting Limited, dated February 2026.

3.2. Overall, we are generally satisfied with the submitted Methodology within Appendix A, and agree it accords with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact (GLVIA3).

- 3.3. The approach to assessing visual effects within the LVIA considers the consented scheme DC/24/0016 as part of the baseline. Para 5.33 of GLVIA3 states “*The aim should be to describe the landscape as it is at the time but also to consider what it may be like in the future in the absence of the proposal*”. We judge that the consented scheme forms part of the future baseline, not the current baseline. Whilst we would have expected a full assessment of each of the receptors based on the current baseline condition, we do not consider amendments necessary at this stage and instead focus comments on the areas where the assessment has materially changed as a result of the revised proposals.

Landscape Character

- 3.4. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6 - High Weald. Key characteristics of this LCA include wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, attractive, locally secluded and tranquil, drained by sinuous gill streams, long views over the Low Weald, significant woodland cover, sense of enclosure, pattern of small irregular assart fields, rich biodiversity.
- 3.5. A number of the landscape receptors are judged to have neutral effects after 15 years (Table C-4), described as “*changes which are consistent with the characteristics of the landscape.*” (Para 4.7.1). If assessed against the current baseline, we would not agree with the effects are neutral, owed to the change from rural countryside to residential. However, we note that the assessment considers the baseline that of the Approved Scheme DC/24/0016.

Visual Effects

- 3.6. Field 8 to the north of the site has now been included within the scheme, facilitating a new access at Hurst Farm and a new site for the care home. Viewpoints 11, 16, 17 and 18 representing PRoW 35W and Turners Hill Road will be affected by the amendments to the proposed development and red line boundary.
- 3.7. Viewpoint 11 and Viewpoint 18 represents PRoW 35W looking south towards Field 8. Table D-3 assesses that the effects on Viewpoint 11 are major-moderate, reflecting the change from agricultural and rural character to a residential character. We do not disagree with this judgement.
- 3.8. Overall, we acknowledge that the whole development site has very few visual receptors, all of which are located on the immediate site boundaries. Visual effects are agreed to be localised and limited, however the value of these views should not be undervalued given their particular sensitive locations.
- 3.9. We therefore do not disagree with the assessed effects for receptors affected by the inclusion of Field 8 and new access, within the submitted LVIA.

4.0. Review of Proposals:

- 4.1. The inclusion of Field 8 as part of the Masterplan extends the development further north. Whilst the development of this parcel furthers the urban encroachment to surrounding landscape, the north-west is wooded in character and is very enclosed and contained, reducing the potential landscape and visual effects.
- 4.2. The development reduces the gap between the development parcels and PRow 35W, increasing the visual effects on this susceptible pedestrian route. However, there are no wider visual effects owed to the surrounding wooded character. Mitigation planting is however proposed on the northern edge to reduce the visual effects. This is reflected within the submitted LVIA.
- 4.3. This parcel offers opportunities for a more intentional entrance design to the scheme, separating pedestrians and cyclists from the main carriageway and also placing a focal building (care home) at the entrance. This enhances the road hierarchy and reduces pressure on the approved Wychwood Place access.
- 4.4. A number of Category C/U trees and groups are proposed for removal within the northern parcel, to facilitate the development and access to the site. We are disappointed by the loss of Category B T32 within the northern parcel to facilitate the access road, however we recognise that avoidance of this tree would result in development within the 15m Ancient Woodland buffer.
- 4.5. The proposed housing located in the south-west corner of the scheme now severs the linear public open space (POS) which runs along the full extent of the western edge. We advise that setback is provided from the western boundary to allow for a physically and visually continuous POS, and also form stronger pedestrian connectivity. We would therefore advise that the Land Use Parameter Plan and the Green Infrastructure Plan are amended to provide for a wider setback in this corner, to allow for a continuous pathway along the POS and a softer edge to the countryside.
- 4.6. We question whether there are opportunities to connect into the PRow network in the north-west corner of the site, within the POS close to the care home.
- 4.7. The SuDS basins located on the site peripheries, particularly when close to the countryside edge and when in view of surrounding PRows, should be designed to sympathetic to the countryside edge. Limited urbanising features (such as galvanised railings and precast concrete headwalls) should be proposed, and the basins should have lots of soft landscaping which will also enhance visual amenity and biodiversity.

5.0. Summary:

- 5.1. The utilisation of the northern Field 8 for the care home and new access provides opportunities for better legibility and street hierarchy, and reduces pressure on the Wychwood Place access. The sense of enclosure and containment of the northern parcel reduces the landscape character and visual effects associated with the development.
- 5.2. We advise that the above recommendations are considered to enhance the scheme.

6.0. Recommended Submission Documents:

- Hard Landscape Plan
- Soft Landscape Plan
- Landscape Management Plan
- SuDS Strategy
- Landscape Strategy

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 Mid Sussex 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.