

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0182	Case Officer:	Tracie Axford
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Formation of track and hardstanding.		
Site:	Hazelden Farmhouse, Hazelden Place, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4RH, , ,		
Validation Date	3 Feb 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	6 May 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	27 May 2026
Target Date:	31 Mar 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Tracie Axford

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	27 May 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0182

**Hazelden Farmhouse, Hazelden Place, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4RH, ,
Formation of track and hardstanding.
Steve Lawrence And Kate Brock**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

None

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Drainage Engineer - No Objection

WSCC Highways - An existing field gate will be utilised, with an internal track and hardstanding linking the application site to the maintained highway. From inspection of local mapping, there are no apparent visibility concerns with the existing field gate access. The relocated access location appears to be an improvement over that of the current existing vehicle access point further west.

I would request that the proposed access point be formalised by means of a vehicle crossover (VCO), to prevent mud/debris being distributed onto the carriageway by exiting vehicles. Such works would be subject to a licence obtained from WSCC, and constructed to a specification agreed with a WSCC Highway Area Engineer. I attach a relevant informative note below.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

If the LPA are minded to approve the application, the following informative should be applied:

Vehicle Crossover - Minor Highway Works

The applicant is advised that in addition to obtaining planning permission that they must also obtain formal approval from the highway authority to carry out the site access works on the public highway. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a vehicle crossover licence shall be granted because the highway license process considers wider factors than are considered by the Highway Authority at planning stage.

Essex CC Place Services Ecology: No objections subject to conditions

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

No comment

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks permission for the formation of a track and hardstanding.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site lies on the northwestern side of Turners Hill Road. There is an existing gate and access point into the land. The wider area consists of sporadic residential properties and various rural uses set in wider countryside of fields and woodland.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for the formation of a track from Turners Hill Road. It will be approximately 145 metres in length and end at a hardstanding of some 30m by 20m.

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, Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) and the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 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 on 28th March 2018. The relevant policies are:

DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP26 - Character and Design

DP38 - Biodiversity

Site Allocations DPD

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.

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan

The East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan was made on 2 November 2016.

Relevant Policies:

Policy EG3 - Promoting Good Design

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 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and the stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, 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:

DPS1 - Climate Change

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

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 and Character and Impact on the AONB
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenities
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Principle of Development

Policy DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states (in part):

'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.'*

The site is currently in agricultural and equine use. The proposed track and hardstanding would allow for long farm machinery to access and traverse the site. The existing access is deemed inadequate for the type of vehicles needing to use the site and is in a poor condition. The proposal would allow for turning within the site and visibility would be improved at the new access point.

The proposed track will establish a permanent and practical connection to the site and, in turn, the public highway, thereby ensuring that the property can be accessed safely and consistently throughout the year. It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with policy DP12 and be acceptable in principle.

Design and Character and Impact on the AONB

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to character and design and states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace; - contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27);*
- creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan relates to promoting good design and states, '*Planning permission will normally be granted where development proposals meet the following criteria:*

- a) The form of the proposed development is proportionate and in keeping with the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the surrounding area;*
- b) The layout of the proposed development respects the topography and character of the site, protects important landscape features and does not harm adjoining amenity;*
- c) The proposal does not result in the loss of buildings or spaces that would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area;*
- d) The proposal ensures satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and provides adequate parking, cycle storage and refuse facilities on site;*
- e) The design of new buildings and the layout of spaces, including footways, car and cycle parking areas, should be permeable and provide connectivity with neighbouring areas;*
- f) New development must be inclusive and where appropriate make satisfactory provision for the safe and easy access for those with mobility impairment; and*

- g) The design of new developments must result in the creation of a safe and secure environment and incorporate adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour; and*
- h) Proposals make provision for green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement.'*

It is proposed that the track and hardstanding would have a geo-textile membrane and crushed concrete base which would allow for long agricultural machinery to traverse the site safely as parts of the land are sloped. The permeable construction of the track would avoid increased surface water runoff. As tracks and hardstanding are typical features in rural areas in combination with agricultural and equine activities, it is not considered that this track would appear as incongruous. The proposed track will establish an improved permanent connection to the site ensuring that the property can be accessed throughout the year. The boundary hedgerows would ensure that the development would be partially screened.

It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with policy DP26 of the MSDC District Plan, and EG3 of the neighbourhood plan.

Whilst not within the AONB, the application site is located opposite the High Weald AONB of which the boundary is on the southeastern side of Turners Hill Road. Policy DP16 relates to the High Weald AONB and states:

'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;

- o the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
- o the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
- o character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and*
- o the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.*

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.'

The proposed track and hardstanding are necessary to allow for turning within the site and will ensure that the site can be accessed safely and consistently throughout the year. The site is largely screened by boundary hedgerows, therefore long-distance views into the AONB are limited.

It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with policies DP16 and DP26 of the District Plan and policy EG3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

In terms of impact upon neighbouring amenities Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that development:

'does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);'

Policy EG3 states that proposals should "not harm" adjoining neighbours amenity whereas policy DP26 of the MSDP states that development should not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution. There is therefore some conflict between the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan in this respect. Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published. As such, policy DP26 of the MSDP is considered to take precedence and therefore the test in this instance is whether the development causes significant harm to neighbouring amenities as outlined above.

The closest neighbouring residential property lies approximately 200m to the southwest of the site and therefore any noise and disturbance from vehicles using the track would be minimal and not be

considered significant or unacceptable for the purposes of policy DP26 and DP29 of the District Plan. Appropriate boundary hedgerows would ensure the impacts on surrounding dwellings in respect of activity on site would be minimised.

Ecology

Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and*
- Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and*
- Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and*
- Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and*
- Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas.*

Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution.

Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such interests. Geological conservation interests include Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.'

Details relating to ecology were provided by the applicant. The Councils ecological consultant was consulted and responded that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the NPPF and the legislation outlined above.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain this application is deemed to have been granted subject to the biodiversity net gain condition for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

The biodiversity net gain condition is set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 7A, Part 2, 13(2). It states:

'The condition is that the development may not be begun unless—

- (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority (see paragraph 14), and*
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan (see paragraph 15).'*

In addition, the Council's Ecological consultant has considered the proposal in terms of the Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Statutory Biodiversity Metric and raises no objection to the scheme, subject to conditions. Subject to compliance with suitably worded conditions, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the NPPF and the legislation outlined above.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

There would be no adverse visual impact as the access track is deemed not to detract from the character of the area. The proposal would not be detrimental to surrounding residents. There would be no harm to biodiversity and biodiversity net gain is sought by conditions.

As such the development is considered to preserve the setting of the area of outstanding natural beauty and is considered to comply with policies DP12, DP16, DP26, and DP38, of the District Plan, policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan and the contents of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Tracie Axford