



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

Our ref: 18353
Date: 4 June 2026

For the attention of: Katherine Williams

Application ref: DM/26/1228
Location: Land West Of London Road Handcross West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 55 dwellings, including affordable homes, together with green and blue infrastructure, vehicular access from London Road, pedestrian/cycle access from London Road, the provision of utility services structures and the demolition of an existing agricultural building.

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.

This review is based on a desktop study without a site visit, of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The application site is located to the north of Handcross village. The A23 forms the western site boundary, and London Road forms the eastern site boundary. The Site itself comprises a rectangular grassland field, with well-vegetated boundaries of small woodland parcels, trees and other vegetation. A small access track forms the northern site boundary, and the northern residential edge of Handcross is located to the south. The western edge is a Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) Adopted 2018

- 2.1. The Site is located within the National Landscape and therefore Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty must be considered. Other policies of considered relevance include Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside; Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows and Policy DP38: Biodiversity.



Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2019)

- 2.2. Policies relevant to this application include:
- Policy 1: Protecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - Policy 3: Green Infrastructure

Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Assessment (2007/2014)

- 2.3. The Site is located within Area 19 Pease Pottage - Handcross High Weald. Within the 2014 update, the area is assessed as having substantial sensitivity, moderate value and low/medium capacity.
- 2.4. Table 3.4 defines low/medium capacity as; *“A Low/medium capacity rating indicates that development is likely to have an adverse effect on most of the character area and while smaller development may be possible in a very few locations within the character area, it will not be suitable for strategic scale development.”*

3.0. Review of the LVA:

- 3.1. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology in April 2026 (Rev 02). We broadly agree with the Methodology and approach submitted in Appendix C, and judge that the approach is in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (GLVIA3).

Landscape Character

- 3.2. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) HW2 High Weald Forest of the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2003), and LCA 8 Worth Forest of the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2005).
- 3.3. Key characteristics of LCA 8 Worst Forest which are relevant to the site include; dense woodland, enclosed small fields, arable and pastoral enclosed by shaws, hedgerows and fencing.
- 3.4. A review of effects on landscape receptors has been included within Table 5.1. **Moderate adverse effects** are assessed for the landscape pattern, with all other landscape receptors experiencing minor adverse effects or less.
- 3.5. The LVA does not provide an assessment of the effects on the relevant LCAs identified. We would have expected that the methodological approach to assessing landscape effects be applied to all relevant LCAs. This approach ensures an assessment of effects on the holistic combination of features and characteristics specific to the site or the LCAs.
- 3.6. Although not specifically included within the LVA, we assess that the effects on The Site and Immediate Context would have been at least **moderate adverse**, although would likely be higher.

- 3.7. We would also have expected the High Weald National Landscape to have been included as a separate landscape receptor within Table 5.1. The summary (Para 5.22) does however state that there are no adverse effects on the National Landscape. Given its location between the A23, London Road and Handcross village, we assess that the site contributes little to the High Weald National Landscape.
- 3.8. Notwithstanding our comments on the judgements provided, we assess that the effects on landscape character are generally minor.

Visual Effects

- 3.9. The viewpoint photography was undertaken in January 2026, representing reduced leaf-cover in winter conditions and the worst-case scenario. The viewpoint map is included in Figure 4.2
- 3.10. Given the limited public receptors in the surrounding area, and the perimeter vegetation which encloses the site, we recognise the limited visual effects associated with the development.
- 3.11. A new access is proposed opposite College Close, and represented by Viewpoint 4. Tree removals will be required to facilitate a new access into the site. The submitted LVIA (Table 5.2) assesses that **minor adverse effects** will occur in this location, owed to the new access. We judge that the effects could be considered **moderate-minor adverse**, however where our judgements may differ these are not deemed substantial.

4.0. Review of Proposals:

- 4.1. The Site is not connected to the built-up area boundary (BUAB) of Handcross, however is situated adjacent to the cluster of existing dwellings and Handcross Primary School located to the north of the village.
- 4.2. The Site is well enclosed from the surrounding landscape, owing to its strong vegetated boundaries and its location within an already defined field parcel. The site is clearly contained by established roads and adjacent properties, which form a robust and defensible edge. This provides a clear limit to further outward expansion and will contribute to preventing development from encroaching north.
- 4.3. A Parameter Plan (Dwg no. 7671-PL02) has been submitted for review. From a landscape perspective we are largely satisfied with the submitted land use parameters, and the proposed building heights of 2-storeys across the entirety.
- 4.4. If minded for approval, we advise that the following comments are considered through the Reserved Matters stage.

- 4.5. We welcome the retention of the large trees in a linear arrangement across the site, which accords with Policy 3 of the Slaughtam Neighbourhood Plan. These have been integrated into the submitted Parameter Plans, which is welcomed. Works are required within the RPA of a number of trees, however no-dig construction is proposed within the Tree Retention and Protection Plan (Dwg no. LLD3685-ARB-DWG-205 Rev.00).
- 4.6. The built frontages are largely facing on to the vegetated outer edges of the site, which is welcomed. This provides opportunities for linear POS and connections around the site and good passive surveillance.
- 4.7. The Site perimeter is largely served by usable connected Public Open Space (POS) along its edges. However, the north-western dwelling and the proposed substation interrupt this connectivity, preventing a continuous route. It is therefore recommended that a circular walking loop be provided around the Site to ensure full and uninterrupted pedestrian circulation.
- 4.8. As an accessible basin, we advise that this space is not surrounded by a fenced boundary and instead remains open for public use. Soft landscaping can be used alongside sensitive edges as a buffer for pedestrians, as well as enhancing the visual amenity and biodiversity of the basin.
- 4.9. The gradients of the basin should not exceed 1:3, and preferably 1:4. This will encourage public use of the basin. This is particularly important given that a large proportion of available open space is taken by SuDS interventions. Precast concrete headwalls with galvanised railings should not be used.
- 4.10. The Landscape Strategy (Para 4.7) states that *“the proposed asphalt access road would be fringed with soft landscape and incidental play features.”*. We question whether the main access route is the most appropriate location for play.

5.0. Summary

- 5.1. From a landscape perspective, we judge there is capacity for development within this site. Where our judgements may differ from the effects within the LVA, these are not deemed substantial. We are satisfied with the submitted Parameter Plan however advise that the recommendations are considered throughout the Reserved Matters stage, if minded for approval.

6.0. Recommended Submission Document(s):

- Hard Landscape Plan and Boundary Treatments
- Soft Landscape Plan
- Landscape Management Plan

- SuDS 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.

