

Planning Statement

Planning application for
Provision of new access for agricultural purposes
at
Land off Cuckfield Lane, Warninglid, Haywards Heath RH17 5SN
on behalf of
Kirsty Allen

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Planning & Development



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the application for the formation of a new access for agricultural purposes at land off Cuckfield Lane, Warninglid, Haywards Heath RH17 5SN. This Statement should be read alongside the planning application forms, location plan and site plan.
- 1.2. This Statement sets out the background to the application and need for the development, before summarising the planning history of the site and relevant planning policies. It then analyses the proposals against that background before concluding how the development would meet those policies and other material considerations.
- 1.3. This application is for a new field access which is required and will be used for the purposes of agriculture. The access will help to establish a firm foundation which will allow for agricultural vehicles to appropriately drive into the site without degrading the land.

2. Site Description and Proposals

- 2.1 The application site is located in a rural area to the east of Warninglid, off the B2115 road. Warninglid is a village consisting of a number of residential houses and a church. The nearest major town is Haywards Heath, which is located a significant distance away, to the south east.
- 2.2 The proposed access would serve a field to the south of the B2115 and it would be used for general agricultural purposes. The applicant is applying for a new access to be taken from Cuckfield Lane to allow for the land to be sold off. The access has been designed to allow sufficient space for agricultural vehicles. The land is used for pasture and the existing access is reliant on access over third party land, this can create conflict from a legal point of view.
- 2.3 The proposed access is required for agricultural operations and is essential for accessing the land with modern agricultural equipment. The location of the access is on the south side of a relatively straight section of the road and therefore the proposed access will benefit from good visibility in either direction and is therefore a safe access point to the land.
- 2.4 The laying of the access with a permanent material will ensure that the access to the land to avoid rutting and poaching by farm vehicles when accessing the field. The field has an area of 2 hectares, however the proposed access area is 24m².

Planning History

- 1.1. There is no planning history for the site.

2. **Planning Policy**

- 2.1. The site is located within a rural area of Mid Sussex District Council and is within the High Weald National Landscape. As such, applications for development will be assessed against policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2. The Framework confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This seeks to balance the economic, environmental and social impacts of development and is defined as development that is in accordance with the Framework.
- 2.3. Section 6 of the Framework concerns a prosperous rural economy. It states that sustainable growth in rural areas should be supported, including the development and diversification of agricultural businesses.
- 2.4. Section 9 provides national planning policy on development affecting transport matters. This makes clear that development should be approved unless there is an unacceptable impact on road safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network are severe.

Local Plan

- 2.5. The Local Plan is the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. There are also a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), together with the High Weald AONB Management Plan. The site is also within the neighbourhood plan area for Slaugham.

- 2.6. The Local Plan contains the main policies for development in the district, including where development is to be directed. Policy DP12 concerns the landscape and countryside matters. It confirms that the rural or landscape character of the area should be maintained and enhanced and that development which is necessary for the purposes of agriculture should be permitted provided that the quality of the rural and landscape character is maintained or enhanced.
- 2.7. Policy DP16 of the Local Plan states that development will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and states that small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB (now known as National Landscape) that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.
- 2.8. The Design Guide SPD 2020 contains policies for new development. Policy DP26 expects all development to be of a high quality design and layout and to be sensitive to the countryside. It provides a number of criteria against which new development should be assessed relating to the design of development and sustainability.
- 2.9. Policy DP38 relates to biodiversity. This policy confirms that development proposals should be informed by local ecological and geological evidence. There is a presumption in favour of development proposals that promote nature conservation and management and restore or create Priority Habitats. Where development would directly or indirectly affect protected or priority species, it will only be permitted where the species involved will not be harmed or appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place.
- 2.10. The Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan under policy 12 recognises that the economic growth of the Parish should be supported. Development should be in keeping and not have an unacceptable impact on the local road network.

3. **Analysis**

- 3.1. The proposal concerns a new agricultural access to serve a 5 acre field located to the south of Cuckfield Lane. The application would create a new access and establish its own independent access. The new arrangement would ensure that there is a field gate and associated hardstanding to independently serve the field without the reliance on use of third-party land. The access will be laid with MOT type 1 hardcore and the railings will be timber post and rail with a timber 5 bar gate.
- 3.2. It is suggested that the following issues are of most relevance in this case and are dealt with in detail below:
 - a. Impact on landscape character including High Weald National Landscape.
 - b. Highways.
 - c. Biodiversity.
- 3.3. In this case, the proposal is for an agricultural access with a solid base which is essential to access the agricultural field to the south of Cuckfield Lane. The access will make the adjacent field accessible and will be suitable for modern farming equipment. The arrangements will allow for agricultural vehicles to access the field with the hardstanding being necessary to reduce rutting and poaching of the land in addition to assuring longevity.
- 3.4. The access can often be developed under Part 6, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. However, this cannot be within 25m of the metalled part of a trunk or classified road. Cuckfield Lane is a classified B road. As such a planning application is therefore submitted.

Landscape Character

- 3.5. The new access is to link the field directly with Cuckfield Lane. The proposal is commonly seen in the AONB or National Landscape and its wider rural landscape and so would present a form of development that would not appear out of character with its surroundings. The new access will have limited impact on the High Weald National Landscape.

Highways

- 3.6. The new access will be located on a relatively straight section of the road and it is suggested that the access point would at that point allow for maximum visibility in both a westerly and easterly direction for any moving agricultural vehicles, which is similar to that afforded at other accesses on this part of the road. On exiting or entering the access, agricultural vehicles will have no material impact on the surrounding highway network as the same equipment already uses the lane.
- 3.7. Whilst there is an access to the south the applicant would not object to this being the removed should the Council deem it necessary. This can be controlled by imposition of a suitably worded condition.

Biodiversity

- 3.7 The proposal is less than 25 square metres in size. Due to this, it falls within the de minimis exception to biodiversity net gain rules and provision for biodiversity net gain is not required.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The proposal is for works to establish a new access. The access will link the field directly to the highway network and is essential for the agricultural operations on the field. The field is currently used for pasture.
- 4.2. The access will be laid to a permanent base made from MOT type 1 hardcore to accommodate the agricultural machinery that needs to access the field and will reduce the likelihood of rutting and poaching.
- 4.3. The access will not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.4. The access will provide safe vehicular access for slow moving agricultural vehicles.
- 4.5. Biodiversity net gain consideration is not needed as the proposed access is less than 25 square metres in size.
- 4.6. For the above reasons, it is suggested that the Case Officer should be able to support the application and planning permission granted under delegated powers.



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