

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

Our ref: 13608
Date: 22 January 2026

For the attention of: Rachel Richardson

Application ref: DM/25/3191
Location: Land To The South Of Burleigh Lane Crawley Down West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Outline application with all matters reserved except for access from Burleigh Lane, for the erection of up to eight self-build/custom build dwellings, drainage and ancillary 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 south-east of Crawley Down, and to the south of Burleigh Lane which forms the northern site boundary. The Site comprises a singular assarted grassland field with strong perimeter boundary trees and vegetation. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Sussex Border Path PRoW (56W) follows the northern boundary along Burleigh Lane, and a PRoW runs along Sandhill Lane to the west. Priority Habitat (Deciduous Woodland) is located on the southern boundary of the site.

2.0. Planning Policy Context

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

Policies considered relevant include [inter alia]:

- Policy DP12 Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP37 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy DP38 Biodiversity

2.2. Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (2016)

The proposals should have consideration for:

- Policy CDNP06: Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Policy CDNP08: Prevention of Coalescence

- Policy CDNP09: Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

2.3. Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (2007/2014)

The site is located within 4 Crawley Down Southern Fringe. The Landscape Sensitivity of this area is assessed as moderate. The area is also assessed as having moderate value owed to moderate scenic beauty with limited tranquillity, medieval assarts, the separation to Turners Hill and good boundary vegetation. The study concludes an overall Medium Capacity for development.

Para 5.2.2 states that a “*rating of Medium identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, in some parts of the character areas, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.*”

3.0. **Review of the LVIA**

- 3.1. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted to accompany the application, undertaken by Landscape Visual in December 2025.
- 3.2. Landscape Character
The site is located within:
 - HW1 'High Weald' of the West Sussex Land Management Guidelines
 - Area 6 'High Weald' of the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment
- 3.3. Key characteristics across this LCA include: wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- 3.4. The LVIA judges that LCA Southern Fringe will experience moderate neutral effects, and LCA High Weald Plateau would have no effects (Table 5.2). We judge that the introduction of development into a characteristic assarted small-field with thick vegetated boundaries and a rural character, would constitute an adverse nature of effect.
- 3.5. Table 5.2 provides an overview of the landscape character effects. We judge that The Site as a landscape receptor should also have formed part of the assessment. Based on the methodology included in the submitted LVIA, we judge that the site has medium sensitivity, large magnitude of change and overall major to moderate significance of effects. The development would introduce a large change into the undeveloped parcel along the rural lane.

- 3.6. It will be difficult to mitigate the landscape character effects on this site, when introducing built development into a currently undeveloped rural parcel of land.
- 3.7. Owed to the selection of landscape receptors, we judge that the effects on more localised landscape character are undervalued.
- 3.8. **Visual Effects**
- 3.9. Viewpoints have been identified and illustrated on Figure 3.2 of the LVIA. Whilst several viewpoints have been included in the surrounding landscape, we judge that PRoW WOR/58W Sandhill Lane has been underrepresented. PRoWs are one of the most susceptible visual receptors, and we therefore would have expected photography from these locations towards the application site to form part of the assessment.
- 3.10. Sussex Border Path (PRoW WOR/56W) along Burleigh Lane is the only visual receptor to be assessed as part of the LVIA. We recognise that owed to the surrounding woodland cover and strong boundaries, that the visual envelope associated with the development is relatively small.
- 3.11. As per Table 7.1, all viewpoint receptors are assessed to have a neutral nature of effect. We would consider that effects on the Sussex Border Path would be adverse, owed to the removal of vegetation to form the access to the site and the introduction of built development into an undeveloped parcel. We therefore judge that an adverse nature of effect will be experienced along parts of this PRoW.
- 3.12. Within the LVIA, moderate effects are judged from Viewpoints 2 and 3, which are located closest to the proposed new access into the site. We do not disagree with this judgement. Other viewpoint receptors along the Sussex Border Path are assessed as minor effects.
- 3.13. Overall, we judge that the proposed development will be contained within the landscape owed to the surrounding vegetation, and the visual effects judged within the LVIA are representative.

4.0. Review of the Proposals

- 4.1. Site Allocation SA22 Land North of Burleigh Lane is located north of the site, on the opposite side of Burleigh Lane and abutting the edge of Crawley Down. Proposals for within this site have been submitted under DM/25/1593, with access from Woodlands Close to the north-west. In the Committee Report dated 20th November 2025, Para 2.31 states that "*It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted for this development*". This application forms the gap between Crawley Down edge and the site.
- 4.2. Whilst the approved application provides some context, the assessment of landscape character and visual effects is based on the current existing baseline. Therefore, it is noted

that the site is disconnected from the edge of Crawley Down and is surrounded only by singular detached dwellings with larger gardens. The density of the development is therefore not consistent with existing development within the immediate surroundings. The layout and density of the proposals emulate existing development within Crawley Down, which is located 50-100m away to the north-west.

- 4.3. However, owed to the enclosed character of the local landscape, the separation from the dense urban edge of Crawley Down is not strongly perceived. Dwellings are noted on either side of the road as users traverse down Sandhill Lane and Burleigh Lane.
- 4.4. An adverse effect on the rural character of Burleigh Lane will occur by development of the site, with the removal of trees to provide access, additional built form surrounding the lane, and also increase in vehicular movement on this minor lane. It is important to mitigate the impact of adverse effects on the character of this lane through the development proposals.
- 4.5. There is minimal visual impact associated with the proposed development, however, Sussex Border Path runs along the northern boundary. Mitigation should be proposed to further minimise the visual effects from this highly susceptible receptor, through additional planting on the northern boundary.
- 4.6. We judge that major-moderate effects arise on the local landscape character, which is not reflected in the LVIA. It will be difficult to mitigate the landscape character effects on this site, when introducing built development into a currently undeveloped rural parcel of land.
- 4.7. The Site is located within an area which possesses a rural character, which should be maintained throughout all development proposals. Permeable tarmac is proposed for the roadways throughout the scheme, which will contribute towards the urbanisation of this rural area. Instead, we advise that the pavement is removed, and a shared surface (block paving) is proposed instead, which will appear less urbanising than a tarmac surface, and also contribute to the visual amenity.
- 4.8. Feature trees of a larger stock size should be proposed to the west of plot A1, as this will be visible from the entrance to the scheme from Burleigh Lane/Sussex Border Path. This will further reduce the visual impact of any proposals, soften the development and reduce the impact on the current undeveloped landscape character.
- 4.9. As per the Maintenance report within the Landscape Proposal (0373-NDLD-L-3050 Rev. 01), the removal of guards and stakes will also need to be included, once the tree has established. Details on the proposed guards will also need to be submitted.
- 4.10. No information has been provided on any SuDS interventions within the site. Details of the SuDS proposals should be included within any further submissions.

5.0. Summary

5.1. Based on the submitted LVA, we judge that some landscape and visual effects have been undervalued, and some receptors have been omitted from the assessment. Notwithstanding this, we judge that some development could be accommodated within the site without significant landscape or visual impact.

5.2. We advise that parameters, building heights and landscape strategy is submitted as part of this application, prior to approval so these can be secured as part of the Outline permission.

5.3. We advise the above recommendations are also considered.

6.0. Recommended Submission Documents

6.1. If minded for approval, we advise the following documents are submitted at Reserved Matters:

- Hard Landscape Plan
- 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.