

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2618	Case Officer:	Caroline Grist
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Construction of new high dependency unit within existing hospital including a range of new clinical facilities to support patients with high needs. In association with the internal alteration a new secure patient area is to be created adjacent to the building with revised external fire access routes and a new 5.2m high security fence.		
Site:	Chalkhill, Princess Royal Hospital, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4NQ, ,		
Validation Date	21 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	14 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	12 Dec 2025
Target Date:	16 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Caroline Grist</i>

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Stephen Ashdown</i>	Date:	15 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2618

Chalkhill, Princess Royal Hospital, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4NQ, Construction of new high dependency unit within existing hospital including a range of new clinical facilities to support patients with high needs. In association with the internal alteration a new secure patient area is to be created adjacent to the building with revised external fire access routes and a new 5.2m high security fence.

Mr Iain Martin

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received in objection to this application. In summary the following issues have been raised:

- Question where the fence will be positioned, how tall it will be and if it will back onto the view from the rear bedroom window of 1 Colwell Close;
- Fence may obstruct the view of trees and wooded area;
- During the summer there has been extreme noise disturbance during the day from one of the patients; and
- If a new external area is to be constructed this may affect neighbours with noise.

It should be noted that a copy of the plans and supporting information, showing the position of the fencing and its height, have been made public on the planning register throughout the application period.

When assessing a planning application only material planning considerations can be taken into account, which does not include the loss of a view. A planning application also cannot be used to address existing concerns at a site. The proposal itself needs to be assessed on its own merits, taking into account relevant planning policies and any material considerations.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Southern Water

The development site is not located within Southern Water's statutory area for water supply services. Please contact South East Water who are the relevant statutory undertaker.

Southern Water has determined that the flow rate for the above site will remain consistent, so capacity is not an issue, and no Southern Water assets will be affected. Therefore, Southern Water has no objections to this proposal.

Drainage Engineer

We have reviewed the information submitted and can confirm we have no comment to make on the application.

TOWN COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No comment.

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is sought to construct a new high dependency unit within existing hospital, including a range of new clinical facilities to support patients with high needs, and a new secure patient area is to

be created, adjacent to the building, with revised external fire access routes and a new 5.2m high security fence.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

HH/152/99 - Young persons residential mental health unit. Permission.

06/01348/FUL - Construction of a new two storey children's and adolescent mental health inpatient and day patient unit with associated educational, therapeutic and recreational facilities and landscaped areas. Permission.

14/03610/FUL - Removal of Existing security fence and replacement with 5.2 metre high fence. Permission.

DM/18/4990 - Erection of a 4m high security fence around existing garden. Permission.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Chalkhill forms part of the Princess Royal Hospital and is located to the eastern side of the hospital complex. It is a detached, south facing, two storey building. It is finished in brick and sections of cladding at the first floor.

The site is located within the built up area of Haywards Heath. To the east of the site is the orthopaedic treatment centre, whilst directly to the west is St Francis Sport and Social Club. To the north west is Elsdon, a dwelling. Access to Chalkhill is gained from the south, whilst Colwell Road is to the north. An area of trees is situated between the Chalkhill building and Elsdon and Colwell Road. The application building is set back from the access by an area of landscaping and a parking area.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning permission is sought to use the existing building as a high dependency unit. The submitted plans show that this would occur predominantly through internal works to the existing floor plan. The staff area is to be moved further south, within the building, and additional clinical facilities to be sited in the north west corner of the building. This would include the creation of a new reception, a bedroom, observation room, staff toilet, sensory room and calm room.

Externally a fenced area is shown around the new reception and bedroom, which is identified as a new secure external compound. This would use an existing area of playground and hard surfacing, which formally was the location of a shed, and would be enclosed by a 5.2 metre high security fence. The first 2.5 metres of the fence is to be blanked to provide patient privacy. Additional hard surfacing is proposed outside of the fencing, to be used as a fire escape route. The elevations also show that two ground floor windows are proposed to be reduced in size and two external doors installed.

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.

Specifically Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states:

'In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to:

- a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to application,*
- b) Any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and*
- c) Any other material considerations.'*

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

The requirement to determine applications "in accordance with the plan" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy, but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

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 at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP25 - Community Facilities and Local Services

DP26 - Character and Design

DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Site Allocations Development Plan Document

The Site Allocations DPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

There are no relevant policies.

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan

The Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 15th December 2016.

Relevant policies:

Policy E9 - Design

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Consultation Draft

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:

DPS2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

DPS6 - Health and Wellbeing

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPI6 - Community and Cultural Facilities and Local Services

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and

sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

The NPPF sets out the government's policy in order to ensure that the planning system contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives to sustainable development, such that the planning system needs to perform an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states *'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.'*

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states *'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'*

With specific reference to decision-taking paragraph 48 states that planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Design Guide/Code

Published in 2021, the National Design Guide illustrates how the government consider well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out that this national document, along with the National Model Design Code, should be used to guide decisions on application in the absence of locally design guides or design codes.

ASSESSMENT

It is considered that the main issues that need to be considered in the determination of this application are as follows;

- Principle;
- Design and impact on character of the area;
- Impact on amenity;
- Biodiversity Net Gain; and
- Planning balance and conclusion.

Principle

The application relates to Chalkhill, part of the Princess Royal Hospital. Health care facilities are considered under policy DP25 of the Mid Sussex District Plan which, in part, states:

'The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported.'

Where proposals involve the loss of a community facility, (including those facilities where the loss would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs locally) evidence will need to be provided that demonstrates:

- o that the use is no longer viable; or
- o that there is an existing duplicate facility in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility; or
- o that a replacement facility will be provided in the locality'.

The Design and Access Statement supporting the application sets out that Chalkhill treats children and young people that are experiencing emotional difficulties, mental health problems and eating disorders.

With regards to the proposed development, the Design and Access Statement states:

'The proposal responds to a growing demand for high-dependency care within the district and region. The existing hospital infrastructure is insufficient to meet the increasing complexity of patient needs, particularly in areas requiring secure and intensive clinical environments. Key drivers for the development include rising patient acuity, national NHS priorities to modernise and expand hospital infrastructure, local population growth, and the need for secure facilities to ensure patient and staff safety'.

The proposed use would therefore be the same as the existing. It is also noted that the number of patients and staff would remain unchanged.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would represent an improvement to an existing community facility, which would enable the hospital to meet the current needs of patients.

Design and impact on character of the area

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 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:

- o *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- o *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;*
- o *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- o *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- o *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- o *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);*
- o *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- o *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- o *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- o *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;*
- o *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development'.*

This ethos is echoed within Policy E9 from the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

The Mid Sussex Design Guide seeks to ensure a high standard of design across the District. In relation to boundary treatments it, in part, states:

'6.5.7 Boundary treatments should be reflective of the area and local traditions in terms of height, structure and materials; however, this should be balanced with the need for natural surveillance'.

Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to protect all trees within the district and discourages development that would damage or lead to the loss of trees that contribute to visual amenity or character of the area.

The application relates to a building within the Princess Royal Hospital complex. The only external works proposed, as part of the application, relate to the rear of the building. They would comprise the addition of a fenced area, walkway associated with the fire escape and changes to the arrangement of windows and doors.

With regards to the fencing, it is acknowledged that the fencing is to be tall, reaching to the top of the second floor windows. The application form sets out that the fencing is to be green in colour, with the lower section blanked off for patent privacy. There is existing fencing around a section of play area, in the north eastern part of the site, and further west along the building. Furthermore between the fencing and Colwood Road, where there could be the potential for public views to the development, there is a mature section of planting and trees. Additional information supplied during the course of the application, which appears consistent with what was observed during the Officer's site visit, confirms that no trees would need to be felled to accommodate the proposal. A small section of leylandii would need to be pruned to install the path. As such, whilst the scale of the fence is acknowledged, given its colour, lightweight finish and position, it is considered that it would not cause significant harm to the existing building or the wider streetscene.

With regards to the proposed changes to the arrangement of the ground floor windows and doors, it is considered that their design would appropriately reflect the existing character of the building. They are also to be finished in materials to match the existing windows and doors. As such it is considered that they would be appropriate in design terms.

Impact on amenity

In terms of the impact to neighbouring dwellings the test, as set out under policy H9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan, is that the privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded. 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.

Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the proposed development on 1 Colwell Close. This property is located on the northern side of Colwell Road, to the north of the application site. It is also separated from the development by an area of mature planting and trees, which is to be retained. Given the distances and screening, it is considered that the proposal would not have a harmful impact to the light, outlook or privacy of 1 Colwell Road.

With regards to noise concerns, the building is to be continued within its existing use and there is no proposed increase in patients as a result of the works. Neighbouring houses are at a distance from the proposed fenced area, which is already used as an external space, and the trees and planting form a buffer. As such it is considered that the development would not create noise significantly beyond the existing levels that would be associated with the premises.

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

comprises development below the de-minimis threshold meaning that this development is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Planning legislation requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary for the planning application to be assessed against the policies in the Development Plan and then to take account of other material planning considerations including the NPPF. The Development Plan in this instance consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan.

Courts have confirmed that the Development Plan must be considered as a whole, not simply in relation to any one individual policy. It is therefore not the case that a proposal must accord with each and every policy within the Development Plan.

It is considered that the principle of the development would be acceptable and the external works would be acceptable in design terms. The development would not result in significant harm to the amenities of surrounding residential properties. It is therefore concluded that the development would accord with policies DP25, DP26 and DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy E9 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Caroline Grist