

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/2721	Case Officer:	Andrew Horrell
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Change of use of land to equestrian, erection of a sand school, an all-weather turnout area and creation of a porous track for private equestrian use.		
Site:	Greenacres Farm, Wineham Lane, Bolney, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5SD, ,		
Validation Date	22 Oct 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	19 Nov 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	16 Dec 2025
Target Date:	17 Dec 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Horrell

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	2
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	16 Dec 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/2721

**Greenacres Farm, Wineham Lane, Bolney, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5SD,
Change of use of land to equestrian, erection of a sand school, an all-weather turnout area and
creation of a porous track for private equestrian use.
Ms Jen Booth**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of support have been received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Essex CC Place Services Ecology: No objections subject to conditions

Naturespace: We are satisfied with the approach provided and therefore recommend the use of a compliance condition to secure the measures outlined within the report.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection

INTRODUCTION

Full planning permission is sought for change of use of the land to equestrian and associated works including an all-weather turnout area and creation of a porous track.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

BK/047/97 - REPLACEMENT LEAN-TO BUILDING FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES. (approved)

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Greenacres Farm is a detached bungalow characterised by face brickwork and timber doors and windows. The existing fields to the rear serve horse grazing.

To the north of the site is woodland to the highway, to the south of the site is hedging to neighbouring Greenacres Cottage beyond, to the east of the site is the driveway with a timber clad agricultural building to the north with highway beyond to the west of the site is fields.

The site is located within the countryside.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The fields to the rear of the property are to be changed to equestrian use with the creation of a sandschool.

The sandschool approximately measures 60m in depth and 25m in width. It will be enclosed by post and rail timber fencing which measures 1.4m in height, An access gate on the north-west elevation measures 3.6m in width and some 1.4m in height.

The proposed turn out area is formed within a quadrilateral shaped field which measures 28.5m in minimum depth and 49.7m in maximum depth and 40m in maximum width and 21.7m in minimum width.

It is surrounded by 1.4m post and rail timber fencing with an access gate on the south-east corner measuring 3.6m in width and 1.4m in height.

A Porous Type 1 MOT track linking the turnout area to the Sand School measures some 64m in length and 5m in width, widening to 9.5m at the entrance to the sand school.

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, the Site Allocation Development Plan Document and the Bolney 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 Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted at Full Council on 28 March 2018.
Relevant policies:

Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
Policy DP26: Character and Design
Policy DP38: Biodiversity

Site Allocations DPD

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

There are no relevant policies.

Bolney Neighbourhood Plan

The Bolney Neighbourhood Plan was made on 21st September 2016.
Relevant policies:

BOLE1 - Protect and Enhance Biodiversity
BOLE2 - Protect and Enhance the Countryside
BOLD1 - Design of New Development and Conservation

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 31 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:

DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
DPB1: Character and Design

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Nov 2020)

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 4 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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 is also a material consideration and paragraphs 8 (overarching objectives), 11 (presumption in favour of sustainable development), 131 and 135 (design), 187 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) and 193 (biodiversity and ancient woodland), are considered to be relevant to this application.

ASSESSMENT

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.'*

BOLE2 of the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan has a similar ethos and states:

'Outside the Built-up Area Boundary, development must demonstrate that it does not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape. In particular, development proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of BOLD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan'.

The proposed sandschool and turnout area would be used for privately owned horses, which are already present at the property. This would be an equestrian use which is recreational use that would be appropriate and common within the countryside. The proposal would be seen in relation to the residential curtilage of the dwelling. The Sandschool and access track would be some 65m from Wineham Lane and Cowfold Road at the nearest points from the vehicular highway and would therefore not be visible from public location.

Whilst the turnout arena would be on the corner with Cowfold Road, it is flanked by woodland and would be well screened but where viewed, would be seen in relation to the existing residential property and the existing fields and would be of a size and scale which would be appropriate for its equestrian use.

It is therefore considered that although the proposal would not be used for an agricultural purpose it would protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, which is the core objective of policy DP12 and BOLE2 of the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with policies DP12 and BOLE2 and be acceptable in principle.

Design and Character

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design and states in part that:

'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 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);*
- o incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed; '*

At neighbourhood plan level, policy BOLD 1 states in part that:

'Planning permission for new development will ordinarily be permitted subject to the following criteria: It is designed to a high quality which reflects Bolney's rural nature and responds to the heritage and distinctive character by way of; height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings, and the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape); and It does not have an unacceptable impact on the setting of any heritage asset; and It respects the natural contours of a site and protects and sensitively incorporates well-established natural features of the landscape including trees, species -rich hedgerows and ponds within the site; and It will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution'

The proposed sandschool, access track and turnout area would be of a form, scale and design which is considered appropriate and in proportion to the existing property and proposed use. The proposed sand school and turnout areas include a perimeter fencing and gate with an overall height of 1.4 metres and would not include any lighting which would reduce its visual prominence.

As stated above, the proposal would not be readily visible from Wineham Lane or Cowfold Lane but where visible, it would be in character with the rural locality. It is therefore considered that due to the design and form of the proposal, it would reflect the rural character of the area and would be appropriate to the character of the wider site. Therefore, the proposal is deemed to comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy BOLD1 of the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy DP26 of the District Plan refers to amenity and states that development proposals 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'.

Policy BOLD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals should 'not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution'.

In cases where there is a discrepancy between District and Neighbourhood Plan policies, legislation states that greater weight should be given to the Plan (and policy) that has been adopted at a later date. In this instance the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan was made in September 2016 and the Mid Sussex District Plan adopted in March 2018. As such, it is considered that greater weight should be given to the District Plan policy, DP26, with the test being whether the proposal would result in significant harm to neighbouring amenities.

Given the nature of the proposal and the relationship with neighbouring properties, no harm to overlooking, outlook, light or privacy will be caused. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy BOLD1 of the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan.

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.'

The site falls within the red Impact Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts. As such the Newt Officer comments are reported above. The case officer has no reason to disagree with the newt officer that the proposal is deemed acceptable subject to condition.

The ecologist have outlined 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, Chapter 15 of 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 compliance with suitably worded conditions, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Chapter 15 of the NPPF (including paragraph 193) and the legislation outlined above.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application is considered acceptable in principle, with equestrian use of the land being an appropriate use in a rural location. There would be no adverse visual impact as the proposed fencing and access track deemed to be sympathetic to the character of the area. The proposal would not cause significant detriment to surrounding residents. There would be no harm to biodiversity and biodiversity net gain is sought by conditions.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP12, DP26 and DP38, policies BOLD1 and BOLE2 of the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Horrell