

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/1243	Case Officer:	Katherine Williams
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Proposed provision of a mobile home for use as a rural workers dwelling for a temporary 3-year period in connection with the existing equine livery business.		
Site:	Pookberry Farm, Pookbourne Lane, Sayers Common, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9HD, ,		
Validation Date	15 Jun 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	1 Sep 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	15 Sep 2026
Target Date:	10 Aug 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Katherine Williams

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	0
--	--	-------------------------------	---

Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	17 Sep 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/1243

**Pookberry Farm, Pookbourne Lane, Sayers Common, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9HD,
Proposed provision of a mobile home for use as a rural workers dwelling for a temporary 3-year
period in connection with the existing equine livery business.
S Pullen**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

No letters of representation received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

Flood Risk and Drainage - No objection, recommend conditions and informative
Street Naming and Numbering Officer - recommend informative

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Twineham Parish Council confirms it has no objections to the application.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of agricultural building and replacement with single residential dwelling with associated garage.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

01/00475/FUL - Construction of all weather riding arena. Granted

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is located off the western side of Pookbourne Lane, within the countryside.

The site includes an existing stable yard and forecourt area with fields and arena beyond to the west. The site shares an access onto the highway with Pooklands, a residential property to the south, with the driveway of this property extending between the stable yard and the highway. This sets back the application property from the highway. Along the northern boundary of the site extends a public footpath, which provides public views of the site.

The locality is characterised by loose knit sporadic residential and equestrian development, with areas of open fields and woodland. The properties are largely set back from the highway with mature hedging and trees along either side of the highway which largely obscures properties from view and gives the locality a verdant rural character.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The proposed temporary dwelling would be positioned to the west of the stable yard and to the south of the arena. The proposal would be accessed off the existing access point of Pookbourne Lane and would extend around the northern side of the stable yard using the existing track. The track would then be extended along the western side of the stable yard to a proposed parking area.

The proposed dwelling would be a 3-bed 6 person unit and would have a depth and width of some 15 metres and 7 metres. The building would have a pitched roof with an overall height of 4.36 metres and an eaves height of some 3 metres. The proposal would be constructed in cladding and roof tiles.

The proposal also includes cycle and refuse storage.

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) And 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.

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.

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocation DPD and Twineham 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 District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

- DP4 - Housing
- DP5 - Planning to Meet Future Housing Need
- DP6 - Settlement Hierarchy
- DP12 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- DP15 - New Homes in the Countryside
- DP17 - Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- DP21 - Transport
- DP26 - Character and Design
- DP27 - Dwelling Space Standards
- DP28 - Accessibility
- DP38 - Biodiversity
- DP39 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocations DPD

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

No relevant policies.

Twineham Neighbourhood Plan (made March 2016)

Relevant policies:

TNP1 - Delivery of Housing

TNP2 - Design

TNP4 - Landscape and Environment

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 is currently at Examination with initial hearings held in February/March 2026. The Council is consulting on Main Modifications which are required to ensure the plan is legally compliant and sound. The District Plan remains at Examination until the Inspector has published his report, until that time 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:

DPS1: Climate Change

DPS2: Sustainable Design and Construction

DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage

DPS5: Water Neutrality

DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery

DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain

DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure

DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

DPC6: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

DPB1: Character and Design

DPT3: Active and Sustainable Travel

DPT4: Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

DPH1: Housing

DPH2: Sustainable Development - Outside the Built-up Area

DPH11: Dwelling Space Standards

DPH12: Accessibility

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) (August 2026)

National Planning Policy Guidance

Technical Housing Standards

ASSESSMENT

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

- The principle of development;
- Design and Character
- Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties
- Impact on future occupants of the development
- Highway Impact and parking provision
- Ashdown Forest
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Planning Balance and Conclusion

Principle of Development

As noted above, planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In terms of policy designations, the starting point for this assessment is that the application site falls outside of the built-up area of Twineham and Hurstpierpoint as defined by the District Plan. As such the site is located within the defined Countryside.

Policy DP12 of the District Plan refers to the protection of the Countryside and states, in part, that development will be permitted in the countryside provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and is necessary for the purposes of agriculture or is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan. Policy TNP4 of the Neighbourhood Plan echoes the ethos of this policy in terms of maintaining the rural landscape.

Policy DP6 sets out when development outside the defined built-up area resulting in the expansion of settlements would be considered acceptable.

Policy DP15 of the District Plan relates in part to new homes in the countryside and sets out the special justifications where new homes would be permitted. Special justification would include;

- Essential agricultural or forestry workers accommodation
- Exceptional design quality for isolated new homes
- Rural exception sites
- DP6 requirements being met

These policies have very limited weight as they are materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policies S3 and S5 of the NPPF.

Policy S3 of the NPPF sets out presumption in favour of sustainable development for development proposals, and requires development outside of settlements to be considered against policy S5. This policy sets out a list of forms of development that is acceptable outside of a settlement, including point 3 which states:

'Development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.'

Policy HO11 states:

,

1. *Development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where one or more of the following circumstances apply:*

- a. *There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;*
- b. *The development would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets in accordance with policy HE4;*
- c. *The development would reuse a redundant or disused building and enhance its immediate setting, including proposals which would secure the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building (subject to taking into account any harm to its significance, as set out in policy HE6);*
- d. *The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or*
- e. *The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:*
- f. *Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and*
- g. *Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.'*

The proposal relates to a temporary consent to allow for the erection of a dwelling for the need for a rural worker in connection to the existing equestrian business in operation on the site. This need is considered to be essential for ensuring the wellbeing and the horses for reasons of animal welfare. Pooklands, the residential property located to the south of the site, is occupied by a family member of the applicant and is not subject to any agricultural, forestry or equestrian occupancy condition, and could be sold separately from the land holding at any point. It is also considered that the essential need cannot be fulfilled by any other existing accommodation near to the property.

From the accounts provided it is clear that the profits from the equestrian business have increased over the last three years, however as of yet not sufficient or consistent enough to support a rural worker. Due to this, a permanent rural workers dwelling cannot be granted at this stage, however a temporary consent can be granted at this time to allow the rural business to grow.

Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle and complies with policies DP12 and DP15 of the District Plan, policy TNP4 of the Neighbourhood Plan and policies S3, S5 and HO11 of the NPPF.

Design and Character

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design. Policies TNP1 and TNP2 of the Neighbourhood Plan also relate to character and design. However, these are considered to have very limited weight as it are materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Policy DP3 of the NPPF sets out the key principles for well-designed places. This sets out in part that proposals should respond to their context, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

The Mid Sussex Design Guide sets out the principles of high quality design, principle DG38 is relevant to the current proposal.

The proposed unit would be of a simple form and design to reflect the intended temporary use. The building would be located to the rear of the existing stable yard and would not be seen from Pookbourne Lane, although it would be visible from the public footpath to the north of the site and would be seen in relation to the existing stable yard and is not considered to have a harmful impact on the character area.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policies DP26 of the District Plan, TNP1 and TNP2 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant principles of the Mid Sussex Design Guide and policy D3 of the NPPF.

Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that new development does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings. It is considered that this policy has very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF and consideration should be given to policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Policy L2 of the NPPF relates to making effective use of land. Part L2(1dii) requires proposals to have '*acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space*'.

Policy P3 of the NPPF relates to living conditions and pollution. Part 2(b) of this policy requires proposals '*Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site*'.

To the south east is Pooklands which would be some 55 metres from the proposed unit with open fields in between. To the north is Berrylands which would be some 100 metres from the proposal with mature planning and trees in between. Given the separation distances and relationships between the properties it is considered that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of these neighbouring properties.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy DP26 of the district plan and policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Impact on future occupants of the development

The Government's Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards document was published in March 2015 and replaced the Council's adopted Dwelling Space Standards Supplementary Planning Document on 1st October 2015. It sets out space standards for all new residential dwellings, including minimum floor areas and room widths for bedrooms and minimum floor areas for storage, to secure a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future residents.

Policy DP27 of the District Plan reflects these national requirements and is consistent with policy PM13 of the NPPF, and has full weight.

The proposal is to provide a three bed, six person dwelling which from Officer calculations indicate would meet the floor space standards and therefore comply with policy DP27 of the District Plan, the National Dwelling Space Standards and policy PM13 of the NPPF.

Parking Provision

Policy DP21 of the District Plan relates to transport and requires proposals to be sustainably located and provide adequate parking. However, this is considered to have very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to policies TR3 and TR4 of the NPPF.

Policy TR3 of the NPPF relates to the locating development in sustainable locations to limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical.

Policy TR4 sets out the key principles for street design, access and parking. Part (e) of this policy states that development should provide a suitable number of parking spaces for a range of transport modes where appropriate, reflecting the local and nature of the development and any locally set standards in the development plan.

The proposal would not result in any changes to the existing access point onto the highway and the proposal would result in the extension of the existing track within the site and would create a parking area for 2 No. vehicles. The WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Development requires a minimum of 2.1 parking spaces 2 No. cycle spaces.

The proposal is considered to meet these requirements and the proposal is considered to comply with policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies TR3 and TR4 of the NPPF.

Ashdown Forest

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations'), the competent authority - in this case, Mid Sussex District Council - has a duty to ensure that any plans or projects that they regulate (including plan making and determining planning applications) will have no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site of nature conservation importance. The European site of focus is the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The potential effects of development on Ashdown Forest were assessed during the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. This process identified likely significant effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA from recreational disturbance and on the Ashdown Forest SAC from atmospheric pollution.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development.

Recreational disturbance

Increased recreational activity arising from new residential development and related population growth is likely to disturb the protected near-ground and ground nesting birds on Ashdown Forest.

In accordance with advice from Natural England, the HRA for the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, and as detailed in District Plan Policy DP17, mitigation measures are necessary to counteract the effects of a potential increase in recreational pressure and are required for developments resulting in a net increase in dwellings within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA. A Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation approach has been developed. This mitigation approach has been agreed with Natural England.

The proposed development is outside the 7km zone of influence and as such, mitigation is not required.

Atmospheric pollution

Increased traffic emissions as a consequence of new development may result in atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest. The main pollutant effects of interest are acid deposition and eutrophication by nitrogen deposition. High levels of nitrogen may detrimentally affect the composition of an ecosystem and lead to loss of species.

The proposed development was modelled in the Mid Sussex Transport Study as a windfall development such that its potential effects are incorporated into the overall results of the transport model, which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal.

Conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that there would be no likely significant effects, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC from the proposed development.

No mitigation is required in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

A full HRA (that is, the appropriate assessment stage that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European site) of the proposed development is not required.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 relates to flood risk and drainage. It is considered that this policy has very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF and consideration should be given to policies F4, F6 and F7 of the NPPF.

Policy F4 sets out when a site specific flood risk assessment should be submitted with a proposal. Policy F6 relates to development in areas at risk of flooding from rivers and Policy F7 requires development proposals to not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers and not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The Flood Risk and Drainage Team have commented on the application and raise no objection and recommended a condition, which was addressed by the submission of further information to address surface water and foul water drainage. Therefore, the condition which will be included will ensure that the works are in accordance with the information provided.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at a very low risk of fluvial flooding. A tributary of the River Adur (Pook Bourne) lies to the south of the site, with another drainage ditch to the north. The proposal is located outside the mapped flood risk areas.

Given the comments received it is considered that the proposal complies with policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies F4, F6 and F7 of the NPPF.

Sustainability

Policy DP39 relates to sustainable design and construction. It is considered that this policy has very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF and consideration should be given to policies CC2 and CC3 of the NPPF. Which relate to mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

A sustainability statement has been submitted with the application which include the following measures:

- orientation to maximise solar gains
- high efficient lighting fixtures and fittings
- high level of insulation
- double glazing
- water efficient appliances

The site is located within the countryside and some distance from Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint. The proposal create a temporary dwelling for an essential rural worker, which is supported in principle and would provide bicycle storage for the unit. It is therefore considered that although the site is not located within a sustainable location the proposal does comply with the objectives of policy DP39 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies CC2 and CC3 of the NPPF and is acceptable.

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 of a self-build dwelling 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 Twineham Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal would give temporary consent for a rural worker's dwelling which would support the equestrian business on site, and therefore acceptable in principle. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and impact on the rural character of the countryside, would not cause harm to neighbour amenities, and acceptable in terms of flood risk and drainage and parking.

For the reasons set out within the assessment section, it is considered that the application complies with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP12, DP15, DP17, DP21, DP26, DP27, DP38, DP39 and DP41, and Twineham Neighbourhood Plan policies TNP1, TNP2 and TNP4 and the relevant policies of the NPPF.

The application is therefore considered acceptable.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Katherine Williams