

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/0696	Case Officer:	Hamish Evans
Application Type:	Full Application		
Proposal:	Construction of a two lane cricket net structure measuring approximately up to 35 metres in length and 9.3 metres in width and up to 4 metres in height.		
Site:	Adastra Park, Keymer Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8QE, , ,		
Validation Date	23 Apr 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	11 Jun 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	10 Sep 2026
Target Date:	18 Jun 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	Hamish Evans

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	54
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Signed and Agreed By:	Stephen Ashdown	Date:	11 Sep 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/0696

**Adastra Park, Keymer Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8QE, ,
Construction of a two lane cricket net structure measuring approximately up to 35 metres in
length and 9.3 metres in width and up to 4 metres in height.
Keymer Hassocks Cricket Club**

Summary of Representations

55 third-party letters of representation have been received in respect of this application. 50 letters of support have been received stating the proposal would enhance the existing community facility. One letter queries whether the proposed nets are moveable. There are four letters of representation that object to the proposal, the reasons they object to the proposal are summarised below:

- Should use existing nets,
- Impact on other users of the park,
- Better areas for the proposal,
- Could encourage anti-social behaviour,
- Would remove an existing bench,
- Obstruct the use of the park, and
- Block views of existing greenery.

Summary of Consultees

MSDC Tree Officer

No objection, subject to conditions.

MSDC Ecology

No objection, subject to conditions

MSDC Flood Risk and Drainage Team

No comment.

MSDC Environmental Protection

No objection subject to conditions.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

Hassocks Parish Council

No comment.

Introduction

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a two-lane cricket net structure at Adastra Park Keymer Road Hassocks BN6 8QE.

Relevant Planning History

None considered relevant.

Site and Surroundings

The application site is located within the built up area boundary of Hassocks and within a WSCC Archaeological Red Area for a Roman Road.

The application site consists of the eastern area of the existing recreation ground which consists of large grassed areas, areas of woodland, a skate park, cricket greens and ancillary buildings. The existing eastern boundary treatment consists of some 2.0 metre high hedgerows, 1.8 metre high timber closed-board fencing and significant tree lines. An open field is located to the north and west of the site, residential dwellings are located to the east of the site and a woodland is located to the south of the site.

Application Details

The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a two-lane cricket net structure at Adastra Park Keymer Road Hassocks BN6 8QE.

The proposed development is to be located in the southeastern area of the recreation ground. It would measure some 35.0 metres in length, 9.3 metres in width and a total height of 4.0 metres. The proposed cricket lanes would be contained within a steel frame with green and black steel mesh. The playing surface would be faced in a synthetic carpet, coloured green with a blue border. Each lane would have a shock absorber pad for the bowling area. Between the lanes would be a netting curtain system to divide the lanes with a white mesh which is secured by galvanised steel tubes. It has been confirmed that the proposal would not include any external lighting.

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, the Site Allocation DPD and the Hassocks 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 the 28th March 2018. Relevant policies include;

DP6 - Settlement Hierarchy
DP24 - Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities
DP26 - Character and Design
DP34 - Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DP37 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DP38 - Biodiversity
DP41 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Site Allocation DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29th June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031. No policies are considered relevant to this application.

The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 24th June 2020.

Policy 9 - Character and Design
Policy 10 - Protection of Open Space
Policy 12 - Community Facilities

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:

DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DPB1: Character and Design
DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets
DPI5: Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities
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) (August 2026)

ASSESSMENT

The main issues for consideration are:

- The principle of development;
- Character and design;
- Impact on amenities of residents;
- Impact on trees,
- Ecology;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Heritage Assets;
- Biodiversity; and
- Planning balance and conclusion.

Principle of Development

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, Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan and the Site Allocation DPD.

Policy DP6 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to development within built up areas and policy DP24 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities. A similar ethos is contained within policy 12 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan. Policy 10 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan relates to the protection of open spaces. However, these are considered to have very limited weight as they are materially inconsistent with the NPPF. Greater weight should be given to policy HC4 of the NPPF which states that the substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a new community facility would be provided.

The site is located within the Hassocks built up area boundary which is considered to be sustainable. The proposal is for the provision of a new leisure facility within the recreation ground. The Council's Leisure and Cultural Strategy recommends that *'further provision is made in the District to meet sports clubs demands.'* The application has been submitted by Keymer Hassocks Cricket Club, who have advised that *'The siting and design meet KHCC's operational needs by providing a high-quality, modern training facility that replaces an outdated mobile net system. This will support youth development, increase participation and provide safer, more consistent practice conditions.'* As such it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with the strategic aims of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy for Mid Sussex and a new community facility would be provided. Due to the nature and scale of the proposal it is not considered to harm the use of the existing recreation ground. Taking into account the above it is considered that the proposal would comply with policy HC4 of the NPPF, policies DP6, DP12 and DP24 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policies 10 and 12 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Third-party representation letters have been received objecting to the application for a number of reasons, these include that the development should utilise the existing nets within the recreation ground, that it would impact other users of the recreation ground, that there are better areas for the proposal, it would remove the existing bench and obstruct the use of the park. Whilst these comments are noted given the scale and nature of the proposal it is not considered to impact the use of the existing recreation ground. The LPA must also only consider the application before them rather than alternative proposals. The agent has confirmed that a bench will not be removed as part of the proposal.

Character and Design

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design. In addition, policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan has a similar ethos. However, these are considered to have very limited weight as they are 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 proposed development would be relatively modest in its scale. There would be views of it from within the existing recreation ground however, the views from outside the recreation ground will be limited due to the existing boundary treatment surrounding the recreation ground and the siting of the proposal. There is a similar temporary structure and a number of single storey buildings within the western side of the recreation ground. The proposal would be sited towards the eastern boundary of the recreation ground and would not be an overly dominant structure within the recreation ground. The design of the structure is considered to be of a design that is common for this form of development.

Taking into account the above the development is considered to be acceptable in design and integrates with its surroundings. The development therefore complies policy DP3 of the NPPF, policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.

Third-party representation letters have been received objecting to the application for a number of reasons, these include that the proposal would block views of existing greenery. Whilst this is noted the proposal is of a relatively modest scale and the greenery within the surrounding area would remain visible.

Impact on Amenities of Residents

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 greater weight 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.'*

Policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan requires that development does not cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenities and as such it is considered to be in consistent with the NPPF.

The proposed development is relatively modest in its nature and there is significant boundary treatment surrounding the site. The Council's Environmental Protection team have commented on the application and raised no objection subject to the imposition of conditions to secure recommendations within the submitted noise impact assessment and the hours of use. The proposal is set some 3.4 metres away from the boundary of the recreation ground.

Taking into account the above the development is considered to not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents. The development is thereby considered to comply with policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy 9 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and policies L2 and P3 of the NPPF.

Third-party representation letters have been received objecting to the application for a number of reasons, these include that the proposal would encourage anti-social behaviour. No evidence has been provided to substantiate this claim, and it is not considered to be a material planning consideration.

Impact on Trees

Policy DP37 of the District Plan relates to trees, woodland and hedgerows. However, it is considered that this policy has very limited weight as it is materially inconsistent with the NPPF, and greater weight should be given to Policy N6 of the NPPF.

Policy N6 of the NPPF relates to areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity. Within this there is a requirement that proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

The development does not include the removal of any existing trees on the site however it would be located within 15 metres of a number of trees. The Council's Tree Officer has raised no objection to the proposal subject to securing the protection measures within the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Given the above assessment the development is considered to be acceptable in respect of impact on trees. Considering, the above it is considered to comply with the above-mentioned part of policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy N6 of the NPPF.

Ecology

Policy DP38 of the District Plan relates to biodiversity. However, this policy is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight. Greater weight should be given to policy N2 of the NPPF.

Policy N2 of the NPPF seeks to improve the natural environment. Part 1f of this policy requires proposals to minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Part 2 of this policy sets out that *'if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.'*

The Council's Ecologist has commented on the application and advised that due to the nature and siting of the proposal any impacts to protected and priority habitats and species can be suitably avoided. Also, they have advised that sufficient information has been submitted in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

The development is considered to be acceptable in respect of the impact on ecology. Considering, the above it is considered to comply with policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy N2 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DP41 of the District Plan relates to flood risk and drainage. However, this policy is materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight. Greater weight should be given to policies F4 and F7 of the NPPF.

Policy F4 requires site specific flood risk assessments be appropriate to the development proposed and policy F7 requires development not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users, or visitors, and should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, is at very low fluvial flood risk and low to very low risk of surface water flooding. The Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer have raised no objection to the development and as such the application is considered to comply with policies F4 and F7 of the NPPF and policy DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Archaeology

Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan takes into account a range of heritage assets, including archaeology, in a manner appropriate to their significance. However, this policy is materially inconsistent

with national decision-making policies and should be given very limited weight. Greater weight should be given to policies HE5 and HE6 of the NPPF.

Policies HE5 and HE6 of the NPPF require the impact on a heritage asset with archaeological interest be suitably assessed and that substantial weight be given to the asset's conservation.

The application site is located in an a WSCC Archaeological Notification Area for a section of the Hardham to Barcombe Mill Roman Road. Due to the relatively modest nature of the proposed development it is not considered there would be an adverse impact on this heritage asset and the Council's Archaeological consultant has raised no objection subject to the imposition of a discovery condition to ensure that if any remains are discovered appropriate action would be undertaken. As such it is considered that the proposal would comply with policies HE5 and HE6 of the NPPF and policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

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)'.

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 proposal is for the provision of a new community/leisure facility and would be sited within a sustainable location, It would also be in accordance with the strategic aims of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy for Mid Sussex and protect the existing open space.

Taking into account the design, location and scale of the development the proposal would integrate with the surrounding area and it would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of existing residents. The impact on existing trees, ecology, heritage assets and flood risk and drainage is also considered to be acceptable. The development is subject to the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain.

For the above reasons, the application is deemed to comply with policies DP6, DP24, DP26, DP34, DP37, DP38 and DP41 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policies 9, 10 and 12 of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD and policies HC4, DP3, L2, P3, N2, N6, F4, F7, HE5 and HE6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Hamish Evans