

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/26/1549	Case Officer:	Susan Dubberley
Application Type:	Removal/Variation of Condition		
Proposal:	Removal of condition no 3 relating to planning application DM/16/3532 - to permit the continued operation of the established glamping site 12 months of the year.		
Site:	Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6QG, ,		
Validation Date	22 Jun 2026	Overall Expiry Date:	14 Jul 2026
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	16 Jul 2026
Target Date:	17 Aug 2026	Recommending Officer Signature:	<i>Susan Dubberley</i>

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

Signed and Agreed By:	<i>Steven King</i>	Date:	17 Jul 2026
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/26/1549

**Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6QG,
Removal of condition no 3 relating to planning application DM/16/3532 - to permit the continued
operation of the established glamping site 12 months of the year.
Mr And Mrs Whittingham**

LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION

None received

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Environmental health

I have no objection to this application. The site is already established, and there have been no complaints relating to noise that have been received by the Council.

WSCC Highways: No objection

PARISH COUNCIL

Welcome the extension of the enterprise in the village and have no objections to the proposal.

INTRODUCTION

This application seeks to remove a planning condition (condition 3) attached to a previous planning permission.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DM/23/0273 - permission for existing glamping site to host weddings within the existing boundary. Approved 20.04.2023.

DM/21/0240 - Permission to add two camping pods to the existing private camping facility. Approved 11.08.2021.

DM/19/0140 - To erect a third tent at existing private camping site for use 6 months of the year which is within the curtilage of Worth Lodge Cottage. Withdrawn.

DM/16/3532 - Change of use of part of the land within the curtilage of Worth Lodge Cottage to enable the provision of a private camping facility for six months of the year. Approved 03.11.2016.

11/02089/FUL - Relocation of vehicle access and drive off a public highway. Approved 14/09/2011.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is located on the south side of the High Street Balcombe. Worth Lodge Cottage existing building is an attractive Victoria style cottage in an isolated location set within large grounds that is well screened from the road by a combination of mature vegetation including trees and hedges and a high boundary wall at the entrance to the site.

The site glamping site lies to the south east of Worth Lodge Cottage and contains two safari tents granted permission in 2016. A further consent for two camping pods were granted in 2021, this permission has been implemented with one of the pods constructed on the site and available to rent.

The application site is designated within the Mid Sussex District Plan as being within the Countryside and is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Most of the southern area of the site is also designated as Ancient woodland.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Condition No.3 of planning permission ref: DM/16/3532 states:

No tents shall be on the site between 1st October in any one year and 31st March in the succeeding year.

Reason: To use of the site for all year round use would conflict with Development Plan policies for the countryside including Policy C1 and C4 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan.

Since the 2016 approval the Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted in 2018 and policy DP12 has replaced C1 of the Mid Sussex Local which relates to the protection of the countryside. While policy C4 which relates to the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB has been replaced by policy DP16.

A statement submitted in support of the application sets out that the proposal is not looking to increase the scale of the approved plans, but to extend the months of the year that the glamping site can be used. Currently the 6-month restriction reduces the off-season potential, particularly around the October school half-term and the Christmas holiday period.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Mid Sussex District Plan

The District Plan was adopted at Full Council on 28th March 2018.

Relevant policies:

DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

DP14: Sustainable rural development and the rural economy

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP19: Sustainable Tourism

DP21: Transport

DP26 - Character and Design

Site Allocations DPD

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

There are no relevant policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan, made on 22 September 2016, full weight.

Relevant policies:

Policy 3

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 hearings were concluded on the 19th March 2026. 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:

DPB1 - Character and Design

DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

DPE8: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy

DPN7: Noise Impacts

DPT3: Active and Sustainable Travel

Mid Sussex Design Guide 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)

National Planning Policy Guidance

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024

ASSESSMENT

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."

Section 73(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states *"On such an application the local planning authority shall consider only the question of the conditions subject to which planning permission should be granted, and—*

- (a) if they decide that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions differing from those subject to which the previous permission was granted, or that it should be granted unconditionally, they shall grant planning permission accordingly, and*
- (b) if they decide that planning permission should be granted subject to the same conditions as those subject to which the previous permission was granted, they shall refuse the application."*

As such it is only necessary to consider the specific changes that are proposed to the previously approved development. This application seeks to remove condition 3 to allow the two safari tents to remain on the site all year round.

As such the main issues are design and impact on the character of the area, countryside as well as the AONB, traffic and residential amenity.

Design and impact on the character of the area and the AONB

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 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 incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed; (see Policy DP29);'

While Policy DP12 states that: 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

The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, also known as National Landscapes. The legal framework for AONBs, (also known as National Landscapes) in England and Wales is provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000 which at Section 82 reaffirms the primary purpose of AONBs: to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Section 84 of the CRoW requires Local Planning Authorities to *'take all such action as appears to them expedient for accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB'*. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) amended section 85 of the CRoW Act, to create a new duty on relevant authorities to *'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area' when discharging their functions in AONBs'*. A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the AONB.

Policy 16 of the District Plan requires proposals in the AONB to conserve or enhance natural beauty.

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF is also relevant. This states:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'

A similar ethos is found within the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

The proposal would not involve any physical changes to the campsite. The tents are located within the grounds of the cottage in a small clearing surrounded by trees and the site would not be visible from the main road. In view of the small scale nature of the proposal and the fact that the tents have previously been found to be acceptable in terms of their visual impact, there is no objection to the tents being on the site all year round.

It is thereby considered that the proposal would conserve the natural character of the site, the surrounding countryside and AONB. that the proposal complies with policies, DP12, DP16 and DP26 of the District Plan, Policy 3 of the neighbourhood plan, The High Weald AONB Management Plan and paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy DP26 of the District Plan relates to character and design of proposals. Within this there is a requirement that proposals do *'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'*.

Owing to the isolated location of the site there are no near neighbours that would be impacted upon by the intensification of the use. The Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the application and has confirmed that they have no objection to the application and that no record of any complaints relating to noise that have been received by the Council since the site came into operation. There is also a condition which restricts the number of tents to 2 with a maximum occupancy of 12 persons.

In view of the above it is considered that the proposal would not result in significant harm to amenity and would therefore comply with policy DP26 of the District Plan

Access and Parking

Policy DP21 the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development to: be sustainably located to minimise the need for travel; promote alternative means of transport to the private car, including provision of suitable facilities for secure and safe cycle parking; not cause a severe cumulative impact in terms of road safety and increased traffic congestion; be designed to adoptable standards, or other standards as agreed by the Local Planning Authority, including road widths and size of garages; and provide adequate car parking in accordance with parking standards as agreed by the Local Planning Authority or in accordance with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

The Local Highway Authority has reviewed the application, and have raised no concerns, commenting: *'The existing requirements of Condition 3 are duly noted. The variation of condition could give rise to the site generating vehicular traffic over an extended period. However, the number of movements would not be anticipated to be significant and would not be expected to exacerbate any existing issues, nor warrant an objection on the basis of safety or capacity.'*

It is therefore considered that the development would not be detrimental to the safety of the nearby highway network and the proposal would therefore comply with policy DP21 of the District Plan.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is considered that there would be no significant impact on the rural character of the area, wider countryside and AONB, or any detrimental impact upon the neighbouring residential amenities. The proposal therefore accords with policies DP12, DP16, DP21 and DP26, of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy 3 of the Balcombe Neighbourhood plan and the aims of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Susan Dubberley