



Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Our ref: 17951
Date: 26 May 2026

For the attention of: Stuart Malcolm

Application ref: DM/26/1160
Location: Land To The South Of Reeds Lane Reeds Lane Sayers Common West Sussex
Proposal/Description: Scoping Opinion for the development of up to 2,000 homes, community uses, employment, public open space and infrastructure including primary and secondary schools.

Thank you for consulting with Place Services on the above Scoping Opinion. This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site.

This review is based on a desktop study without a site visit of the above-referenced application and its submitted documents. Our Landscape comments are as follows:

1.0. Site Context

- 1.1. The is located around the village of Sayers Common, and comprises four parcels of land. Parcels C and D are located to the north-east of Sayers Common village and the A23, and are situated either side of Mill Lane. Parcels A and B are located to the south-west of Sayers Common, and are also situated between Albourne Green village and High Cross hamlet. Henfield Road B2116 separated these two parcels.
- 1.2. All parcels are largely comprising arable farmland fields and grassland fields. Herrings Stream forms the eastern site boundary of the two north-east parcels.

2.0. Baseline Information

Mid Sussex District Plan (Adopted March 2018)

- 2.1. The following policies are considered relevant to this site from a landscape perspective:
 - DP4: Housing
 - DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
 - DP13: Preventing Coalescence



- DP15: New Homes in the Countryside
- DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes
- DP26: Character and Design
- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Mid Sussex District Plan Submission Draft (Reg 19)

- 2.2. DPSC3 Land to the South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common comprises Parcels A and B. The Draft Allocation is a significant urban extension to Sayers Common. The policy requirements and infrastructure should be considered within any future proposals.

Albourne Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2016)

- 2.3. Parcels A and B are located within the plan area.
- 2.4. Landscape policies considered relevant include:
- POLICY Countryside ALC1 Conserving and enhancing character:
 - POLICY Countryside ALC3 Local Gaps and Preventing Coalescence (between Sayers Common and Albourne)

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2015)

- 2.5. Parcels C and D are located within the plan area.
- 2.6. Landscape policies considered relevant include:
- POLICY Countryside HurstC1 Conserving and enhancing character
 - POLICY Countryside HurstC3 Local Gaps and Preventing Coalescence (between Sayers Common and Albourne)

3.0. Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report:

- 3.1. Chapter 5 of the EIA Scoping Report relates to the Landscape and Visual Effects associated with the proposed development.
- 3.2. Overall, we are satisfied with the submitted methodology included within Appendix 2. We are in agreement with the significance criteria included within Table 5.1.
- 3.3. The LVIA assessment should demonstrate how landscape mitigation and green infrastructure are integrated into the scheme design to reduce the assessed effects at Year 1 and Year 15.
- 3.4. Wirelines should be submitted for viewpoint locations where the most significant effects are assessed. This should demonstrate how the mitigation contributes to reducing the effects in the surrounding landscape, particularly from more sensitive locations.

Landscape Character

- 3.5. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area LW10 Eastern Low Weald of the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics which are relevant to the Site include:
- Gently undulating low ridges and clay vales.
 - Views dominated by the steep downland scarp to the south and the High Weald fringes to the north.
 - Arable and pastoral rural landscape, a mosaic of small and larger fields, scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
 - Biodiversity in woodland, meadowland, ponds and wetland.
 - Historic village of Cowfold and suburban village development at Partridge Green, Shermanbury and Sayers Common.
 - Crossed by north-south roads with a rectilinear network of narrow rural lanes.
 - Principal visitor attraction is the Hickstead All England Equestrian Showground.
- 3.6. Relevant Landscape Character Areas (LCA) are identified within Paragraph 5.10 to 5.12. We would expect all relevant LCAs to be included as separate landscape receptors within the submitted LVIA, with individual judgements for the assessed effects.
- 3.7. We advise that the submitted LVIA assessed the effects on:
- All relevant LCAs identified in the EIA Scoping Report
 - The Site and Immediate Context (as a whole, and broken down by Parcel)
 - Wider Context
 - Individual Landscape Features
- 3.8. Given the scale of the development Site, we advise that the effects are broken down by Parcel where appropriate to provide a more accurate assessment of the more and less sensitive areas of the development.
- 3.9. Assessment of the landscape effects on the collective whole site should still be included.

Visual Amenity

- 3.10. Para 6.19 identifies that representative viewpoints should be selected for views of users on particular public rights of way (PRoW), and Para 6.21 states that viewpoints should cover the likely significant effects.
- 3.11. Figure 11 Viewpoint Locations has been submitted (Dwg no. LVIA - APPENDIX 3). We would expect a higher resolution map to be submitted in any future submissions for ease of review.
- 3.12. All viewpoint locations are situated outside of the red line boundary of the site. We would expect that viewpoint photography should be taken from various points along PRoWs within the site. This is particularly important given that PRoW Users are the most

susceptible receptor group. We therefore judge the following receptors within the red line boundary have not been accurately represented by the viewpoint photography:

- ALB-7AL
- ALB-8AL
- ALB-3-1AL

- 3.13. All viewpoint locations and views are directed towards Parcel A. At present, it is not clear the intended land use for Parcels B, C and D. We would therefore expect that viewpoint locations are selected which provide views towards all of the included Parcels, based on the lack of information. For example, PRoW ALB-10AL and Trusler's Hill Lane located in High Cross to the west of the Site has not been included as a viewpoint, despite being a near-distance receptor. There is a lack of viewpoints located generally to the west of the site. Dependent on the use of Parcels C and D, additional viewpoints may also be required in this area. We therefore judge that additional receptors and viewpoints are required.
- 3.14. Additional viewpoint photography should be undertaken in winter months when there is a reduced leaf-cover which represented the worst-case scenario. If not possible, the LVIA should acknowledge this as a constraint and then provide judgements based on potential winter views and identify where views towards the site may vary compared to the photography included.

Proposals

- 3.15. At present, details on the proposed development areas have not been included within the submission. Therefore, it is not clear which of Parcels A, B, C and D are proposed for development. We note that Parcel A is used for the ZTV, and therefore we assume that this is the main development area associated with the strategic development.
- 3.16. Any forthcoming proposals should be landscape-led and retain all key landscape features, inclusive of large trees, assorted field boundaries, woodlands, watercourses and hedgerows which provide structure and maturity to the landscape. Buffers should be provided to the PRoWs which cross through the site. Buffers are also required on the edges of the scheme to soften the proposals in the wider landscape and form a gentle transition into the countryside.
- 3.17. Development of the entire red line boundary could be perceived as physically and visually coalescing Sayers Common, Albourne and High Cross. Intervisibility between these villages as a result of development should be considered, and gaps should be maintained between individual settlements. Any forthcoming proposals should demonstrate how the effect of coalescence is reduced, addressing Policies ALC3 and HurstC3.
- 3.18. The Site is characteristically undulating, which can be more sensitive to development. Development on higher elevation areas of the site may be more sensitive if also highly visible from a wider area.

- 3.19. A Design Code should be produced to inform the development of the scheme.

Please contact us if you have any queries in relation to this advice.

Place Services – Landscape Team

Email: landscape@essex.gov.uk



Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council

Please note:

This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.

We are unable to respond directly to applicants/agents or other interested parties. Any additional information, queries or comments on this advice that the applicant/agent or other interested parties may have, must be directed to the Planning Officer at the relevant LPA, who will seek further advice from us where appropriate.