

## Recommendation Report for Planning Permission

REF NO: F/26/25/PL

LOCATION: Highway Depot  
Ford Lane  
Ford  
BN18 0DF

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing storage container and erection of single storey office and welfare facilities. This application is in CIL Zone 3 (Zero Rated) as other development.

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	This application seeks the removal of the converted container structures and their replacement with prefabricated office and welfare facilities to be used in connection with the highways depot.	
SITE AREA	283 sqm.	
TOPOGRAPHY	Predominantly flat.	
TREES	None of any significance affected by the development.	
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Security fencing.	
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site operates as a highways depot, used for the storage of materials for the maintenance of the highways.	
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The area is outside the built-up area boundary in a countryside location. However, the character is of mixed uses, including a variety of commercial uses in existing farmyards and farm buildings alongside industrial estates on Ford Lane.	

### **RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

F/7/23/PL	Change of use of land to highway depot including parking and turning areas and the erection of an office building and a salt storage building.	Approve Conditionally
		01-08-23

Noted.

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

ADC Ecologist - No objection subject to conditions.

- The Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) identified no impacts to protected species. No further surveys are required.
- The PEA dated 18/11/25 makes recommendations for ecological enhancements in section 5.

South Downs National Park - No comments to make.

**COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:**

Noted.

**CONSULTATIONS**

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:**

None.

**COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:**

Comments noted.

**POLICY CONTEXT**

Designation applicable to site:

Outside Built-up Area Boundary

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031:

CSP1	C SP1 Countryside
DDM1	D DM1 Aspects of form and design quality
DSP1	D SP1 Design
ECCSP2	ECC SP2 Energy and climate change mitigation
ENVDM5	ENV DM5 Development and biodiversity
INFSP1	INF SP1 Infrastructure provision and implementation
QESP1	QE SP1 Quality of the Environment
WDM3	W DM3 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Ford Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2041 Policy BUA1 Built Up Area (BUA) boundary

Ford Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2041 Policy EE1 Support for business

Ford Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2041 Policy EE7 Sustainable Commercial Buildings

**PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:**

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance

**POLICY COMMENTARY**

The Development Plan consists of the Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031, West Sussex County Council's Waste and Minerals Plans, The South Inshore & South Offshore Marine Plan and Made Neighbourhood Development Plans. The policies are published under Regulations 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose 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 proposal is considered to comply with relevant Development Plan policies in that the design of the development nor the character of development will harm the amenities of the area. There are no neighbouring residents, nor harm to the waste facilities.

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that

- (2) in dealing with an application for planning permission the authority shall have regard to -
  - (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
  - (aza) a post examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,
  - (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
  - (c) any other material considerations.

## OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no other material considerations to be weighed in the balance with the Development Plan.

## BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

This application not is liable for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as it is considered de minimis.

## CONCLUSIONS

### PRINCIPLE

The key policy considerations in the determination of this application are C SP1 of the Arun Local Plan (ALP) and BUA 1 of the Ford Neighbourhood Plan (FNP).

Commercial development is resisted outside of built-up area boundary (BUAB) under policy C SP1 countryside of the ALP and policy BUA 1 of the FNP, unless the proposal accords with other policies within the plans which refer to specific types of use or development.

The development accords with part 1 of policy EMP DM1 in that it would protect and enhance this employment site by offering a significant betterment to the existing facilities used by operatives on site.

The proposal complies with policy INF SP1 where the authority will support proposals which contribute to meet the needs of the occupiers. The site is currently operated by West Sussex County Council, and supports the delivery of highways maintenance necessary for the district. The proposed building better meets the needs of the users of the site over that of the existing containers.

FNP policy EE1 seeks to support the upgrade of existing employment sites provided the impact on the amenities of surrounding properties is acceptable and subject to the other policies in this Plan.

The development is therefore acceptable in principle. The impact on other matters such as amenity will be discussed below.

## CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

It is proposed to remove 3 converted storage containers and replace these with a purpose built prefabricated office building.

The building will be single storey, with a flat roof. The external appearance will be simplistic, with grey clad elevations. The building will consist of office accommodation, meeting rooms and welfare facilities for the employees using the site. The building will extend 2.5m further to the south over that of the existing containers, otherwise the building will sit across a similar area. Overall the footprint of the building measures 150sqm, over that of the existing which measures 74sqm.

The existing containers are used for a similar purpose, however the proposed building offers far superior office accommodation. The continued use of the site, supports the existing commercial use of the site and will not harm the character of the area.

The prefabricated building, although not of any architectural merit, is an appropriate form of development, and is visually more appealing than the container structures. The site is not highly visible from the highway due to mature planting to street facing boundaries. The proposal complies with ALP policy D DM1 in that the character and appearance of the development are acceptable.

## RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The site is not directly adjacent to residential property, approx. 150m away.

There will be no negative impact from the use of the proposed building on the residential amenity of local residents. The proposal complies with ALP policy D DM1 in this respect.

## HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Policy T SP1 seeks to ensure that development provides safe access on to the highway network, contributes to highway improvements and promotes sustainable transport.

Given this development results in no additional employees, and retains the existing number of parking spaces; the development would not result in a material increase in traffic movements. The proposal is acceptable and complies with policy T SP1 of the ALP and EE7 of the FNP.

## ECOLOGY

The site is 100% hardstanding and the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has confirmed that the building on site have negligible/no suitable habitat to support bats, hazel dormouse, badgers, newts or reptiles. The edges of the site have moderate ability to support birds. No further surveys were recommended.

Despite the requirements of the Environment Act not being applicable to achieve a measurable 10% BNG. ALP policy ENV DM5 still requires a gain to be made. Section 5 of the PEA suggests potential mitigation, mostly to prevent harm occurring to potential wildlife at the sites boundaries. It does recommend that options are explored to site bird boxes on site and that wildflower mix could be sown to areas of grass. As the language is non-committal, a condition will be attached to any approval ensure these actions (or similar) occur.

Subject to condition to secure ecological enhancements, the proposal accords with ALP policy ENV DM5.

## WASTE

Policy W2 of the WSCC Waste Local Plan seeks to prevent development that would prejudice the use of

existing waste management sites or infrastructure. The site is adjacent to Wicks Farm, a recognised waste management facility. The continued operation of the Highways Depot does not prejudice the operation of this site. As the proposal relates to the redevelopment of an existing facility on the site, this position would not change.

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE**

ALP policy ECC SP2 expects new commercial development to be energy efficient and demonstrate how they will; be energy efficient to current standards, use the design to promote energy efficiency and, incorporate decentralised and low carbon energy supply systems.

The Design and Access statement indicates pre-fabricated buildings use 67% less energy compare to traditional buildings techniques. The building manufacturers are committed to using materials from sustainable sources. Overall the thermal efficiency of the building will be significantly better than the existing containers.

The proposal complies with the aims of policy ECC SP2 of the ALP.

#### **SUMMARY**

The proposal complies with the development plan, as such it is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions and informatives.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

The Council in making a decision should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as Arun District Council to act in a manner, which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Consideration has been specifically given to Article 8 (right to respect private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). It is not considered that the recommendation for approval of the grant of permission in this case interferes unreasonably with any local residents' right to respect for their private and family life and home, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation for approval is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

#### **DUTY UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010**

Duty under the Equalities Act 2010

In assessing this proposal the following impacts have been identified upon those people with the following protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics.

#### **CIL DETAILS**

This application is not CIL liable as other development.

## RECOMMENDATION

## APPROVE CONDITIONALLY

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

1. Location Plan PTK-A1-00-D-A-180 P01
2. Proposed Ground Floor Plan PTK-A1-00-D-A-1001 P01
3. Proposed Site Plan PTK-A1-00-D-A-1803 P01
4. Proposed Elevations PTK-A1-00-D-A-2001 P01

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of amenity and the environment in accordance with Arun Local Plan policy D DM1.

3 Prior to any development above damp-proof course (DPC) level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Layout, providing the finalised details and locations of the enhancement measures contained within the Preliminary Ecological Assessment Rev 01 by Kier, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The enhancement measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first use of any part of the development and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance protected and priority species and habitats in accordance with Arun Local Plan policies ENV SP1 and ENV DM5 and allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the NPPF and s40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Priority habitats and species).

4 INFORMATIVE: Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the NPPF.