



# **ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **DESIGN BULLETIN NO.2**

### **Development Involving Horses in the Countryside**



**ADUR DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

**January 2019**

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### I. Introduction

#### *Purpose of this Design Bulletin*

- 1.1 The purposes of this bulletin, approved by the Planning and Development Services Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1994 (and updated in September 1994, April 1996, January 2019), is to set out the criteria which the Council will use to determine applications for planning permission.

#### *Adur Local Plan Policies*

- 1.2 The South Downs National Park was designated in 2009. Much of Adur's countryside was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), but the AONB designation has now been removed and the majority of what was once AONB has now become part of the National Park as of April 2010. The South Downs National Park Authority took on full powers from April 2011. Over half of Adur District lies within the National Park and the National Park Authority is producing its own Local Development Framework and Local Plan which will set planning policy for all areas within the South Downs National Park boundary. As a consequence, the following policies contained in the Adur Local Plan 2017 only cover those parts of Adur District which lie outside the National Park:

#### **POLICY 13: ADUR'S COUNTRYSIDE & COAST**

**Outside of the built Up Area Boundary (as shown on the Policies Map), development will only be permitted where the need for a countryside location is essential; it is for quiet informal recreation or the essential needs of agriculture or horticulture, flood management, or is otherwise consistent with this Local Plan (or subsequent DPD's). Improvements to green infrastructure, including enhanced pedestrian, cycle, and equestrian access (where appropriate), and better access for those with mobility difficulties will be supported. The extension of isolated groups of buildings or the consolidation of linear or sporadic development will not be permitted.**

**Any development in the countryside should not result in a level of activity which has an adverse impact on the character of the area.**

**Future development at the site currently occupied by Ricardo will be supported subject to there being no adverse impact on the setting and function of the countryside and the Lancing-Shoreham-by-Sea Local Green Gap.**

**The landscape character of Adur and other areas of countryside, the coast, river and settlement pattern will be protected and where possible enhanced. Any development or activities within the countryside must respect and where appropriate reinforce the**

setting, distinctiveness and sense of place of the above areas, taking into account the various elements which contribute to their distinctiveness such as geology and landform, biodiversity, scenic quality, strategic views, tree cover, settlement patterns, heritage and local vernacular, and land use. The setting of the South Downs National park must also be respected.

The appropriate change of use or conversion of existing buildings in the countryside will be permitted providing that:

- They are structurally sound and of permanent construction;
- They are in keeping with their surroundings in terms of form, bulk, design and materials;
- The proposals do not involve the erection of substantial extensions or the substantial demolition and rebuilding of existing buildings, and
- The proposals for conversion or change of use would conserve the character, fabric and setting of the building; and
- There is no adverse impact on biodiversity that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level.

In the case of residential buildings, any extensions should be subservient to the existing building.

Opportunities to improve access to the South Downs National Park will be sought through joint working with the South Downs National Park Authority and West Sussex County Council.

Proposals for equestrian development in the countryside will normally be granted where existing buildings are utilised. New buildings or associated development for such uses will only be permitted if they are well-sited in the landscape, and do not result in sporadic development that erodes the open character of the landscape.

Development to support informal recreation uses on the coast will normally be permitted subject to:

- (i) Built facilities being located within the adjacent built Up Area.
- (ii) The need to maintain and improve sea defences

Best practice guidance published by the Government, the council and other bodies will be used when assessing applications.

- 1.3 Paragraph 3.52 of the Local Plan makes specific reference to this Design Bulletin.

## **POLICY 14: LOCAL GREEN GAPS**

**Local Green Gaps between the settlements of Lancing/Sompting-Worthing, and Lancing-Shoreham-by-Sea, (as shown on the Policies Map), will be protected in order to retain the separate identities and avoid coalescence of these settlements. Within these areas any development permitted must be consistent with other policies of this plan, and must not (individually or cumulatively) lead to the coalescence of settlements.**

## **2. Supplementary information on granting planning permission**

- 2.1 The majority of the countryside within Adur is subject to special protection as it is also “Local Green Gap” Much of this countryside also constitutes “urban fringe” land that is particularly vulnerable to subdivision and fragmentation of land holdings and to a proliferation of sporadic buildings on individual fields and smallholdings. Such fragmented farmholdings are incapable of providing an agricultural livelihood and in many cases are used, at least in part, for keeping horses. The latter are recreational in character and rarely agricultural. The cumulative effect of a number of small developments may well cause as much damage to the landscape as a larger development and have the effect of destroying the open character of an area. In the case of keeping horses, rarely will the recreational benefit of itself be likely to justify permission for new buildings. Justification, in the interests of animal welfare, to provide shelter in adverse weather during the winter for horses kept at grass or to provide protection for feedstuffs necessary to supplement grazing from grass, is more compelling. However, this argument will not necessarily be sufficient to constitute a compelling need in all circumstances; in some cases, concerns about damage to the landscape and the cumulative effect of a proliferation of sporadic development may be over-riding. In order to retain planning control, any permissions granted because of welfare needs of the horses will be subject to a condition restricting the use of the building to stabling/shelter of horses, ponies and donkeys. Storage of carts and other forms of vehicle will not normally be regarded as compelling. Temporary Conditions will normally also be imposed (requiring future removal of the building unless permission is renewed), partly to deal with circumstances where the original need no longer exists and partly to deal with physical deterioration of typical timber buildings. This will retain planning control and enable future re-assessment.
- 2.2 In judging whether, in principle, the need for a horse shelter/stable/feedstore in the countryside is compelling, regard will be paid to the following considerations:

- The size of the landholding concerned; horse shelters/stables/feedstores will not normally be permitted where the holding is very small (e.g. insufficient to support a horse) and/or comprise only a single field and the undesirable fragmentation of a larger farmholding would be encouraged or consolidated. Exceptions may be made where the proposed building would be sited adjacent to an existing group of buildings or would be concealed from view. The number of horses involved will, of itself, not be regarded as a determining factor in favour of a proposal as the council does not wish to encourage the degeneration of land by over-grazing or the provision of feedstores where grazing from grass is wholly inadequate.

(Advice on minimum land requirements for keeping horses can be found on the British Horse Society website: <http://www.bhs.org.uk/welfare-and-care/free-leaflets>)

- The degree of exposure of the holding concerned; in some cases, natural shelter provided by trees and hedges may be sufficient to avoid the need for any buildings but, in other cases, the erection of 1.8m high screens can provide adequate open windbreak shelter without the need for a roof (unless the horses concerned are thoroughbreds, Arab or Hunter-type horses or in regular work, or include donkeys). General advice about keeping horses can be found on the RSPCA website: <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/horses>

2.3 In judging whether, in detail, a horse shelter/stable/feedstore in the countryside is acceptable, the following will be relevant factors:

- Whether it is located to cause minimal harm to the landscape, by either being sited within or adjacent to existing groups of buildings or adjacent to hedges or other screening features;
- Whether its size is the minimum that is necessary. A store for feed or essential small items of tack should be no more than a small incidental addition to a stable or shelter;
- Whether its design and construction is of a high standard and blends with the rural character of the locality; brown-stained timber or timber –faced wall construction (with a roof of dark mineral felt-covering) is normally most appropriate; flint or appropriate brick-faced walls and a tiled roof would be acceptable also but only if the need for the building is long term; unfaced blockwork is unacceptable visually; in many cases, the type of building construction involved and the fact that the need for the building may not be permanent will mean that any permissions granted will be for a temporary period only, in order to retain planning control;
- Whether it is located to avoid detriment to the amenities of any nearby residential properties, for example, through smell or flies.

2.4 With regard to development involving horse riding in the countryside, reasonable access to existing bridleways is necessary. Where dangerous road would have to be negotiated and problems cannot be overcome, permission is likely to be refused.



- 2.5 With regard to larger developments involving livery stables, riding schools or equestrian centres, the above factors will all be relevant. Regard will be paid to whether there is a need for farm diversification but the scale of some developments, together with ancillary facilities, including access and parking provision, and the level of activity may well cause excessive harm to the landscape or the objectives of the local green gaps and countryside in general and, therefore, be unacceptable. A further important consideration will be to ensure that the site has safe and adequate access to the public highway and adequate on-site parking facilities for the amount of traffic likely to be attracted.

### ***Guidance for planning permission***

- 2.6 In certain instances, the erection of stables (subject to certain limitations) is “permitted development” that does not require specific planning permission (e.g. where the horses are kept for agricultural rather than recreational purposes provided the holding concerned is used for an agricultural business, or where the stable is within the curtilage of a dwelling provided it is not a listed building or a Conservation Area). Mobile field shelters may also not require planning permission depending on their size, construction, physical attachment to the ground and degree of permanence.
- 2.7 Specific permission from the Council is normally required for the use of land for keeping horses for non-agricultural purposes and for associated stables or other structures. The use of land solely for “grazing” as opposed to “keeping” horses, however, does not need planning permission provided the horses are fed primarily by grazing the grass on the land concerned and not brought in foodstuffs. It will be advisable in all cases to discuss proposals with the Development Management Section of the Council to ascertain whether a planning application will be required as it is impractical to set out all the relevant requirements for permission not to be required within the scope of this leaflet.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR ADVICE PLEASE CONTACT THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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