

20220470 White Horse Farm Equestrian Centre

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit 10 May 2022

Thank you for consulting the AONB Unit on the above application.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit is currently experiencing unprecedented levels of major planning related work and is therefore unable to provide a detailed response on the application. This does not indicate that the AONB Unit considers the proposal would not impact on the statutory purposes of AONB designation and it is the responsibility of the Council to decide whether the application meets legislative and policy requirements in respect of AONBs.

The local planning authority has a legal duty to take account of the purposes of AONB designation in determining the application i.e. the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty. In addition to consideration of the proposal against the local authority's development plan, account should be taken of paragraphs 176 and 177 of the NPPF and the principles and objectives of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, Third Revision 2021 to 2026. The Management Plan is adopted by all the local authorities in Kent as their policy for the management of the AONB and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it. The national PPG confirms that AONB Management Plans can be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The caravan is well related to the existing buildings and the yard which helps to minimise landscape and visual impacts. Nevertheless, the nature of mobile homes/caravans is such that they rarely meet the key test of conserving and enhancing the scenic and landscape beauty of the AONB. The photographs submitted with the application show that the external materials/colour of the caravan is a pale cream. Should the Council be minded to grant permission, we would welcome consideration of a requirement to paint the caravan an appropriate darker, neutral colour, particularly in view of the proposed permanent stationing of the caravan. (Such a requirement was attached by condition to seasonal workers caravans at Mansfield Farm, Bridge, Canterbury – condition 03 of permission CA/20/02170 – 'Within four months from commencement of the development, the caravans shall be painted dark green (S 7020- G50Y) or dark brown (S 8010-Y10R) and maintained as such'). The application submission also fails to address the policy implications of the proposal on the AONB. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF requires the AONB to be enhanced as well as conserved. Should the Council be minded to approve the application, we would therefore also request that consideration be given to requiring landscape enhancements across the wider site.

I hope this is of assistance to you. I would be happy to discuss further if this would be helpful.