

Planning Committee



Application Address	Land at Willett Road Poole Wimborne BH21 3DH
Proposal	Variation of Condition 4 of planning permission APP/10/01025/C (Change of use from agricultural land to the keeping of horses and erect stables) to allow the stables to be used as riding stables, providing facilities to teach SEND children riding, teamwork and social skills.
Application Number	P/26/02509/CONDR
Applicant	ROSE A YOUNG
Agent	Mr Hugo Van-Manen
Ward and Ward Member(s)	Bearwood & Merley Cllr Marcus Andrews, Cllr David Brown, Cllr Richard Burton
Report status	Public
Meeting date	10 September 2026
Summary of Recommendation	To refuse on grounds of highway safety
Reason for Referral to Planning Committee	Over 20 representations received contrary to the recommendation
Case Officer	Carolyn Goddard
Is the Proposal EIA Development?	No

Description of Proposal

1. Variation of Condition 4 of planning permission APP/10/01025/C (Change of use from agricultural land to the keeping of horses and erect stables) to allow the stables to be used as riding stables, providing facilities to teach SEND children riding, teamwork and social skills. The application form states that the use began in November 2025 and therefore the proposal is retrospective.

Description of Site and Surroundings

2. The application site is located to the north of the A31 and is accessed from a bridleway at the end of Willett Road. A footpath links the end of Willett Road to Oakley Hill. There is a vehicular access in the north west corner with a gate. There is a single storey stable block on the site built following grant of planning permission in 2010. The stable block is small in

relation to the size of the site and located centrally (on a line from east to west). It accommodates 4 horses.

3. The application site is on land above the A31 and is well screened from it. There are views into the land from the bridleway, although there is a screen of landscaping along the northern boundary. Dwellings along Merley Ways back onto the bridleway with most dwellings more than 20 metres from the boundary.

Relevant Planning History

4. Planning permission was granted subject to conditions on 26 October 2010 for the change of use from agricultural land to the keeping of horses and erect stables (ref: APP/10/01025/C). Conditions 2, 3, 5 and 7 required details to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement (condition 2) and prior to commencement (conditions 3, 5 and 7). Conditions 2 and 5 were discharged on 15 February 2012; condition 3 was discharged on 14 March 2022 and condition 7 was discharged on 20 March 2012.

5. Condition 4 states:

The stables shall be used for the keeping of horses for social and domestic use only and shall not be used for commercial gain in association with any business.

Reason: To prevent intensification of the use on the site, the character and openness of the Green Belt and in accordance with Policy PCS23 of the Poole Core Strategy and Policy NE1 of the Poole Local Plan First Alteration Adopted 2004 (as amended by the Secretary of State Direction September 2007).

Agricultural Land, Merley Hall Farm, Wimborne

6. Retrospective change of use from agricultural land to dog training facility including: Lay a 5m x 3m strip of temporary hardstanding to be used for parking within the field boundary; Lay a gravel driveway to allow vehicle access to the field from Willet Road. Ref: APP/20/01470/F. Granted.

Constraints

- Green belt
- TPO Ref: 10/00025Area

Public Sector Equalities Duty

7. In accordance with section 149 Equality Act 2010, in considering this proposal due regard has been had to the need to —
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Other relevant duties

8. For the purposes of this report regard has been had to the Human Rights Act 1998, the Human Rights Convention and relevant related issues of proportionality.

Consultations

9. **BCP Highways** – object
- Poole Town Council** - None received
- BCP Education** - None received
- BCP Rights of Way** - None received

Representations

10. 91 representations have been received objecting to the development on the grounds summarised below:
- Danger to pedestrians and cyclists using the public footpath from increased traffic in the lane
 - Increased traffic in Merley Ways
 - Increase in cars using the bridleway
 - Impact on local farming operations
 - Erode the peaceful rural character of the area
 - Loss of privacy to properties in Merley Ways due to riders being above the height of the boundary fence
 - Parking pressure
 - Not in keeping with the local plan
 - Land is not suitable for commercial stables
 - Danger to dogs and livestock from increased traffic in the lane
 - Bridleways strictly forbid use of cars
 - Not suitable site as a facility for SEND children due to traffic hazards
 - Concerns about impact on green space
11. 45 representations have been received supporting the development on the grounds summarised below:
- Good use of the land
 - Offers local employment and volunteering opportunities
 - Provides recreation for SEND pupils in a safe environment
 - Stables are well maintained
 - Cars are already safely accessing the site
 - SEND children really benefit
 - Small scale development will not generate much traffic
 - Provides significant therapeutic, educational, social and emotional benefits for SEND children
 - There are limited opportunities for recreational facilities for SEND children

- Can be accessed on foot and the benefits would outweigh the negatives

Key Issue(s)

12. The key issue(s) involved with this proposal are:
- Principle of development
 - Impact on the character and appearance of the area including the Green Belt
 - Highway safety
13. These issues will be considered along with other matters relevant to this proposal below.

Policy Context

14. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan for an area, except where material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan in this case comprises the following:

The Poole Local Plan (Adopted November 2018)

PP01 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 PP26 Sports, recreation and community facilities
 PP27 Design
 PP33 Biodiversity and geodiversity
 PP34 Transport strategy
 PP35 A safe, connected and accessible transport network

Supplementary Planning Documents

SPD7 Parking Standards SPD (adopted January 2021)

15. National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) ("NPPF" / "Framework")

Including in particular the following policies:

Policy S3 states that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay.

Policy S4 states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework

Planning Assessment

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

16. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. NPPF paragraph 11 states that in the case of decision making, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless policies in the Framework that protect areas of assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposals or any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
17. The Poole Local Plan sets out a spatial planning framework to meet objectively assessed needs to 2033. In accordance with Policy PP1, the Council will take a positive approach when considering development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.

Land Use

18. Chapter 7 (Building a strong, effective economy) of the NPPF has the objective to enable businesses to invest, expand and adapt in a way that reflects the opportunities, challenges and characteristics of different areas, and supports long-term economic growth both locally and nationally.
19. Policy E2(a) states that “To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area..”.
20. Policy PP26 states that the Council supports proposals for new sports, recreation and community facilities or the enhancement/expansion of existing facilities if they are located in areas that are easily accessible by the local community through public transport and/or safe and convenient walking and cycling routes.
21. Para 8.15 of the justification for this policy states that community facilities make an important contribution to people’s quality of life and general well-being. They provide for the health, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. In addition, such facilities help to create vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods.
22. The lawful use of the land is for the keeping of horses for exercise and recreation in a private capacity. The proposal would provide a new community facility as a riding stable for SEND (special educational needs) children. The proposed hours of use are:
 - Tuesday – Sunday (inclusive), from 09:00am until 16:00pm.
23. It is acknowledged that this use provides a valuable community facility, as demonstrated by the number of comments received in support of the application. However, for the business and proposed community facility to be supported the site would need to be easily accessible by the local community through public transport and/or safe and convenient walking and cycling routes. In this case the site is accessed via a Public Bridleway and the proposal will result in the intensification of vehicle movements along a Public Bridleway that would increase the risk of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists using the Public Bridleway. This is set out in detail in the Highways Impact section of this report. For these reasons the proposal fails to comply with PP26 of the Poole Local Plan.

Character and appearance including impact upon the Green Belt

24. Policy GB6(1) of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7. GB6(2) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposed development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In making this assessment, substantial weight should be given to the harm to the Green Belt which would be caused, including harm to its openness.
25. Policy GB7 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate subject to certain exemptions including:
- f.iii Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation; and
 - f.iv The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation.
26. Policy PP27 of the Poole Local Plan requires that proposal for development should exhibit a good standard of design and complement or enhance Poole's character. Development should adhere to the character and design principles of respecting the setting and character of the site, surrounding area and adjoining buildings of virtue of function, siting, landscaping and amenity space, scale, density, massing, height, design details, materials, and appearance.
27. In this case no operational development is proposed. The application seeks use of the stables built following grant of planning permission in 2010. The application form states that there will be an increase of vehicle parking on site (from 2 cars as existing to 5 cars) plus 2 disabled car parking spaces. However, the cars would be parked on an area of the field which does not involve any physical alterations to the land. As such the proposal would not cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt or harm to the character and appearance of the area, in compliance with the provisions of the NPPF and Policy PP27 of the Poole Local Plan.

Highways Impacts

28. Policy TR4 of the NPPF states that development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.
29. PP27(f) of the Poole Local Plan states that development will be permitted provided that, where relevant, it provides an attractive public realm and a well-connected network of streets and spaces that considers the needs of all transport users prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users before private cars.
30. PP35 of the Poole Local Plan states that proposals for new development will be required to:
- (a) maximise the use of sustainable forms of travel;

- (b) provide safe access to the highway;
 - (c) contribute positively to the retention and creation of:
 - (i) attractive, safe and accessible places; and
 - (ii) safe, convenient pedestrian and cycling routes; and
 - (d) improve safety and convenience of travel, including improved access to local services and facilities by foot, cycle and public transport;
31. Section 1.2.3 of the BCP Parking Standards SPD sets out other aims of the SPD, including to balance the needs of different users on transport networks, protect amenity, improve accessibility and highway safety, encourage more travel on foot, by bicycle, by public transport or using low emissions vehicles to reduce CO2 emissions and benefit air quality and to minimise conflict between pedestrian, cyclists and vehicles with safe, convenient and useable parking provision.
 32. Section 5.9.9 states of the BCP Parking Standards SPD states that the safety and convenient movement of pedestrians should be a priority in new developments.
 33. BCP Highways have been consulted. They state that the site is accessed from a Public Bridleway (113) along Willett Road, with the Bridleway continuing and linking with a footpath at the end of Willett Road, which leads onto Oakley Hill. The footpath onto Oakley Hill has bollards at either end to prevent vehicle access.
 34. Public Bridleways are restricted for use for riding/leading horses, pedestrians and cyclists, with vehicle access restricted, although with this Public Bridleway the owners/leaseholders of land off the bridleway may have some limited access rights. The first section of this Public Bridleway also forms part of the Stour Valley Way, so has a promoted status, which the Local Authority has a duty to protect as per the adopted BCP Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
 35. In addition, within BCPs Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), adopted March 2022, Willett Road and this bridleway is defined as part of the Secondary cycle network (and links to the Primary Cycle Network along Oakley Hill – B3703. Therefore, this route provides an important link for cyclists to the primary cycle network.
 36. The Highway Authority would have concerns with any proposal that would intensify vehicle movements along an existing Bridleway, due to the potential conflict between vehicles and legitimate users of the Bridleway. The Bridleway in question, whilst relatively wide at sections, has some bends with limited visibility, no dedicated footpath and areas where two vehicle movements may be restricted, and whilst vehicles may be driving at low speeds, the above issues raise concerns and would increase highway safety risks.
 37. In addition, there is no lighting along the Bridleway, and therefore at times, especially during inclement weather, visibility would be further restricted, which would increase the risk of conflict. Therefore, the Highway Authority would have concerns with vehicle intensification of this Public Bridleway.
 38. The operator (HD Horsemanship) has been made aware of the highway issues and has advised of the measures being taken to reduce traffic along the bridleway including the following:
 - *“We no longer permit clients to drive down the bridleway to our yard. Clients are instructed to park on surrounding roads if Oakley Hill and walk to our premises.*

- *We have opened our rear gate for able-bodied clients to use. This gate is situated immediately adjacent to the entrance of the bridleway from Oakley Hill, providing a much shorter and more convenient walking route while eliminating the need for clients to travel further down the bridleway.*
- *We have communicated these changes directly to all new and existing clients, please see attached website and booking confirmation details which outline this.*
- *Our sessions are pre-booked and carefully staggered to avoid multiple arrivals and departures at the same time.*
- *The majority of our work is delivered on-site with horses, meaning there is no continual vehicle movement throughout the day.*
- *Staff vehicle numbers are kept to an absolute minimum, which right now is two cars daily, myself and my yard manager.*
- *We continue to review our operations and remain willing to implement any further reasonable measures where appropriate”.*

39. It is acknowledged that these measures, in particular, advising clients not to drive to the site but to park nearby and walk to the site via the footpath along Oakley Hill, do seek to reduce traffic along the bridleway. However, the behaviour of the clients outside of the site cannot be controlled by the operator, especially during periods of inclement weather, clients running late or for general convenience, where clients and employees would look to drive directly to the site.

40. Although the proposal is relatively small in scale it is considered that it will result in the intensification of vehicle movements along a Public Bridleway (113) and increases the risk of conflict between vehicles and legitimate users of the Public Bridleway. As a result, the proposal increases highway safety dangers and does not meet the aims of delivering safe and sustainable development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies PP27 and PP35 of the Poole Local Plan 2018 and the BCP Parking Standards SPD.

Residential Amenity

41. Policy PP27 of the Poole Local Plan (2018) outlines that development should not result in a harmful impact upon amenity for the local residents or future occupiers considering levels of sunlight and daylight, privacy, noise and vibration, emissions, artificial light intrusion and whether the development is overbearing or oppressive.

42. The proposal does not involve any operational development but uses the existing stable block on the site. The application site has been used for the keeping of horses for private leisure use since 2010 for the same number of horses. The nearest residential properties are in Merley Ways and are at least 20 metres away from the rear of most of the dwellings and are separated by vegetation along both sides of the bridleway. As such the proposal would not cause harm to occupants of neighbouring residential properties including in terms of noise or loss of privacy. The proposed development would preserve the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties in accordance with PP27 of the Poole Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

43. The NPPF at chapter 15 ‘conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ sets out government views on minimising the impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains where

possible and contributing to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. The Local Plan Policy PP33 – biodiversity and geodiversity, sets out policy requirements for the protection and where possible, a net gain in biodiversity.

44. In addition, a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) is required as per the Environment Act 2021 though exemptions apply. This proposal is exempt as it is a Section 73 application to vary a condition of a permission that was granted prior to the introduction of BNG. In addition, the proposal is for a change of use with no operational development proposed.

Planning Balance / Conclusion

45. The proposal provides a new community facility, it would preserve the openness of the green belt, the character of the area and the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties. However, the proposal would result in the intensification of vehicle movements along a Public Bridleway and increases the risk of conflict between vehicles and legitimate users of the Public Bridleway. The Public Bridleway, which is part of the Stour Valley Way and secondary cycle network, contains bends with limited visibility and areas where two vehicle movements may be restricted; it has no dedicated footpath and no lighting. The proposal would endanger highway users and does not meet the aims of delivering safe and sustainable development.
46. It is considered that the community benefits would be outweighed by the harm to highway safety.

Recommendation

47. Refuse planning permission for the following reason;
- 1) The proposal increases highway safety dangers and does not meet the aims of delivering safe and sustainable development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies PP27 and PP35 of the Poole Local Plan 2018 and the BCP Parking Standards SPD.

Background Documents:

P/26/02509/CONDR

Documents uploaded to that part of the Council's website that is publicly accessible and specifically relates to the application the subject of this report including all related consultation responses, representations and documents submitted by the applicant in respect of the application.

Notes.

This excludes all documents which are considered to contain exempt information for the purposes of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972.

Reference to published works is not included.

Case Officer Report Completed:
Officer: Carolyn Goddard
Date: 19/08/2026

Agreed by: Katie Herrington
Date: 27/08/2026
Comment: