

Gazegill – Highways Response and Clarification Note (including Decision Support Note)

Application: 3/2025/0970

Site: Eight at Gazegill Organics, Dancer Lane, Rimington

Highways Response and Clarification

Introduction

This note responds to the comments of the Local Highway Authority dated 12 March 2026 and should be read alongside the revised Dancer Lane drawing package (P103 series). The purpose is to provide clarification and set out the mitigation proposed in a clear and proportionate manner.

Rural Context

Dancer Lane is a private rural access track and Public Right of Way. Its characteristics, including single track width, absence of footways and lack of lighting, are typical of the local rural network. It is therefore appropriate to consider whether the route can operate safely with proportionate rural mitigation, rather than against urban highway standards.

Further Information

The revised drawings provide defined carriageway widening, vegetation clearance to improve visibility, identified passing opportunities and marked road edges with reflector posts. These measures are site-specific and respond directly to the points raised by the Local Highway Authority.

Passing and Lane Operation

The scheme introduces a continuous and coherent approach along the lane, including localised widening and improved visibility. Occasional vehicle interaction is a normal characteristic of rural lanes of this type and does not in itself indicate that the route operates unsafely.

Traffic and Use Pattern

The lawful fallback position allows a tearoom operating seven days per week without booking control. The current proposal operates on a reduced number of days with timed, booking-led arrivals. This results in a more managed and predictable pattern of movement rather than an unrestricted flow of traffic.

Evening Use

Evening movements are limited to specific days and occur at relatively low levels. Such movements are typical of rural activity and are not unusual for similar uses in comparable locations.

Safety Record

The site has operated for a sustained period without any recorded collisions associated with the use or known pedestrian safety incidents. This provides practical evidence that the access arrangement functions safely in use.

Conclusion

Having regard to the nature of the route, the established use, and the mitigation now proposed, it is considered that the development would not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network.

Optional Strengthening

The identified mitigation works fall within land under the applicant's ownership or long-established maintenance control and can therefore be secured and maintained in the long term.

Constructive Position

Without prejudice to the above, the applicant is willing to accept reasonable and proportionate conditions relating to the maintenance of passing areas, ongoing vegetation management and the installation of signage or edge markers where appropriate.

Decision Support Note

Purpose

This note is intended to assist the Local Planning Authority in reaching a balanced planning judgement where highway concerns have been raised.

Key Policy Test

The relevant policy test is whether the development would result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network. This is a high threshold and requires more than the presence of some level of interaction or inconvenience.

Application to the Proposal

The proposal relates to a managed, booking-led rural use operating on a reduced number of days when compared to the lawful fallback position. This results in a more controlled and predictable pattern of vehicle movements.

Mitigation

A defined package of mitigation is now provided, including localised carriageway widening, visibility improvements and identifiable passing opportunities. These measures are proportionate to the rural context.

Planning Balance

The assessment appears to apply standards more typically associated with urban environments. In this rural context, the relevant consideration is whether the route can operate safely with proportionate mitigation. The available evidence indicates that it can.

Suggested Conclusion

The proposal would not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the local highway network. The access arrangements, when considered in the context of the rural lane and the mitigation proposed, are considered acceptable, with any residual impacts capable of being managed through condition.

Without Prejudice

The applicant has confirmed a willingness to accept proportionate conditions relating to maintenance, vegetation management and edge marking.

Final Conclusion

The proposal complies with national policy and should not be refused on highway grounds.