

The Chief Planning Officer
Planning Services
Adur District Council

Sent by e-mail only.

28th April 2026

Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Planning application - Temporary change of use of land at Apron Community Farm

This letter is submitted in support of the accompanying planning application on behalf of Apron Community Farm for a temporary change of use of land at the former Riverside Equestrian Centre Old Salts Farm Road Lancing, comprising a former equestrian yard and associated grazing land.

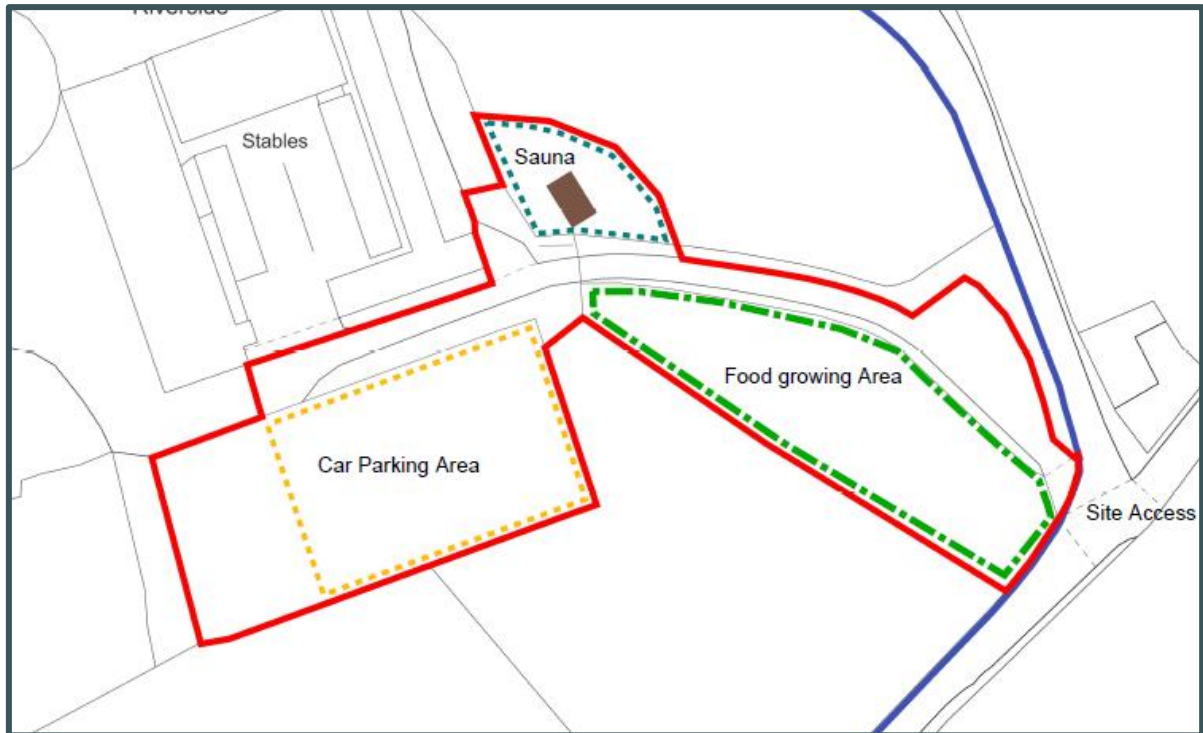
Planning permission is sought for a five-year temporary (meanwhile) use, enabling early community-led activity on part of the site while wider and longer-term plans for the development of Apron Community Farm are brought forward.



Above: Extract of site location plan.

The Proposed Development

The application proposes two complementary and low-impact uses:



Above: Extract of block plan.

1. Mobile Community Sauna

Part of the former equestrian yard is proposed to change use from equestrian stables and grazing to accommodate a temporary, mobile community sauna.

- The sauna unit is entirely mobile and requires no connection to power or water.
- No permanent buildings, structures, or hardstanding are proposed.
- The proposal therefore relates solely to a change of use of the land and is fully reversible at the end of the temporary period.



Above: Image of the proposed mobile sauna.

2. Community Food Growing and Horticulture

A further area of land currently used for equestrian grazing is proposed to change use to community food growing and horticulture, supporting local food production, learning, and community participation.



Above: Example image of community food growing in small, raised beds.

Planning Considerations

By utilising the top two paddocks while the wider site plans are developed, this proposal enables meaningful community engagement, wellbeing, and environmental benefit through:

- Small-scale community food growing space; and
- The use of a temporary, mobile, community sauna.

The areas of the site used in the proposal are safe and accessible, enabling inclusive community engagement and supporting the development of community partnerships, further co-creation of the project with residents, and the early establishment of community food growing.

The community sauna will support income generation for the project and enable subsidised, nature-based wellbeing opportunities for residents, improving access to health and wellbeing activities within a rural setting.

As an environmental community project, the proposal will support both the local community and the natural environment. Building on the recent successful planting of over 400 hedgerow saplings, the temporary use will enable the following activities to take place:

- Small-group construction of raised beds (including participation from *Men in Sheds*, *Adur Voluntary Action*, and *Lancing Community Gardeners*);
- Small-group seed sowing and planting sessions (including *Seaside Primary School* and *ESY*);
- Biodiversity and ecological skills sharing, including nature surveys and wildflower planting;
- Small-group wellbeing activities, including community sauna sessions.

These activities are modest in scale, carefully managed, and aligned with the community-led ethos of Apron Community Farm.

Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been assessed against the **Adur Local Plan 2017 (adopted)** and is considered to align with the following policies:

Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The proposal makes effective use of previously developed equestrian land to deliver social, health, wellbeing and environmental benefits, with minimal physical intervention and a strong emphasis on sustainability.

Policy 13 – Adur’s Countryside and Coast

The aims of Policy 13 are to protect the character and activity of the countryside by minimising development and re-using existing structures where possible. The policy clarifies that development should be for quiet informal recreation or the essential needs of agriculture or horticulture, flood management or is otherwise consistent with the Local Plan. Development.

The proposed uses are low-intensity, rural in character, and involve no permanent development. They preserve the openness and character of the countryside and are appropriate for a temporary period. The proposal is to create a community farm, in line with longer term proposals that include a wetland and heritage craft centre. For these reasons, the proposed development meets the test set out in Policy 13.

Policy 15 – Quality of the Built Environment and Public Realm

As no permanent structures are proposed, the scheme avoids adverse visual or landscape impacts and maintains the existing character of the site.

Policy 18 – Sustainable Design

The use of a mobile sauna and community horticulture reflects sustainable, adaptable and reversible development, consistent with good environmental practice.

Policy 4 – Planning for Economic Growth

The proposal supports small-scale, community-based economic activity and rural diversification, contributing to local resilience while remaining proportionate to the site.

Policy 33 – Planning for Sustainable Growth

The proposal aligns with the Local Plan's objectives to improve social and community facilities and support healthier lifestyles.

Its horticultural elements are well suited to the countryside setting, and the scheme will deliver substantial benefits through community health and wellbeing opportunities, additional planting, and enhanced biodiversity.

Temporary Nature

The application is explicitly made on a temporary five-year basis, allowing:

- The testing of community-focused uses;
- Immediate social and environmental benefits to be delivered; and
- The land to be returned to equestrian use or integrated into future development proposals once agreed.

This approach ensures flexibility while enabling positive interim use of the land. Longer term plans are being developed for the comprehensive use of the wider site to provide a Regenerative Community Farm. This project is supported by the District Council who have granted a licence for the uses proposed by this application, in advance of a formal lease agreement which is currently being prepared and finalised.

Conclusion

The proposed temporary change of use:

- Is compliant with the relevant policies of the Adur Local Plan;
- Preserves the rural character and openness of the site;
- Delivers clear, demonstrable community and wellbeing benefits; and
- Involves no permanent development, ensuring full reversibility.

It is therefore respectfully requested that Adur District Council grants planning permission for the proposed development.

Yours faithfully,

Toby Deacon (AssocRTPI)

Planning Consultant

Lewis & Co Planning