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**Our Ref:** PPS1058  
**Your Ref:** 17/0427

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**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018

Mr Duncan Carty  
 Surrey Heath Borough Council  
 Planning Department  
 Surrey Heath House  
 Knoll Road  
 Camberley  
 Surrey  
 GU15 3HD

Dear Mr Carty

**Planning Application Ref 17/0427: Outdoor Play Equipment at Chobham Adventure Farm**

I write following our meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June, with yourself, Jonathan Partington and Julia Greenfield, at which we discussed the Committee Report for the above planning application.

We discussed the Council's concerns with the application and how we might overcome these concerns. In summary, the Council's main concerns were:

1. The extent of educational content within the 'Reception' building;
2. The 'imbalance' between animals and play across the outdoor areas; and
3. Concern about the height of the 'astroturf slide'.

Mr Partington suggested that, if we are to overcome these concerns, the applicant should consider providing the following:

- A written explanation that will enable officers and members to fully understand the **education** provision across the site as a whole, and why that is more appropriate than simply having an agricultural display area in the Reception Building.
- Demonstrate how we can achieve the same **proportion of animal areas** on the site as shown in the Landscaping Plan approved under Condition 3 of Permission 14/1033, which was agreed at the meeting to be the 'baseline' situation.
- Reduce or remove the **Astroturf slide**.

We deal with each of these in turn below.

1) Education

As discussed at the meeting, our original proposals for education provision in the Reception building, which was the provision of an agricultural display area within the building, has changed. Initially, these areas were to be for the display of animals, but it was found that this would not comply with the 2012 Code of Practice ('Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions' – since updated in 2015) that was issued at the time the original planning application was being considered by the Council. We then looked at other



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options such as an agricultural display area, and this was incorporated into the application for the Reception Building. What we are now looking at is an improved, site-wide education offer.

Starting with the Reception Building, in conjunction with the leading indoor play companies, who work closely with children's educational officers and child psychologists, the operators have provided the correct educational content for the relevant age group. The agricultural and animal themed play areas are interactive and allow the children to learn subliminally through play.

The dedicated eating rooms on the mezzanine inside the main play barn will be used during the week for the school visits, and provide private educational space. This can spill out onto the mezzanine area, and this entire first floor area is earmarked for schools and education on weekdays during school term time. This provision was not planned when the Reception Building application was submitted and has been proposed following consultation with the schools.

In the animal barn, which is nearing completion, we will provide a classroom on the mezzanine floor which will be used for school visits. We have liaised with local schools to confirm the best days on which to attend, and a School's Educational Liaison Officer will agree the content of the day in order to reach certain aspects of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 during the year's curriculum. This person will be employed by the Adventure Farm.

Inside the animal barn there will be large farmyard animals – cows, sheep, pigs, goats and horses. There will be smaller animals to pet and hold – rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, etc.

Attached to the main barn there will be a display area to show off the animals, and to demonstrate agricultural activities – e.g. milking a cow.

The animal barn is effectively complete and we expect the animals on site later in the summer. We are waiting on accommodation and the appointment of a Livestock Manager and the completion of the build.

## 2) Paddock

Outside, we had planning permission for both animals and play equipment. On the approved Landscape Plan, we originally had the animal paddocks on the far side (west) of the site and the play areas closer to the barn. The abovementioned Code of Practice has directed us to move this around so that paddock is closer to the barn and NOT in and around the play areas on the west of the site.

We have moved the same area of paddock from one side of the site to the other – but more importantly, we now wish to incorporate a new animal display area to the south of the barn, in addition to the paddock and the animal back of house holding area. This will have the effect of increasing the "animal area" to 36%, which is more than the baseline position in the Landscape Plan.

The animal back of house area will remain to the west of the barn for food storage / tractor storage etc with limited access to the public – potentially for walkabout visits. Until the Livestock Manager is appointed, we cannot comment further on how the "back of house" operation will operate.



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We have shown these areas on an amended version of the Proposed Layout Plan (Drawing Q045/03 REV B). We request that this amended drawing formally replaces the current Proposed Layout Plan.

### 3) Astroturf Slide

Outdoor play is an integral part, and one of the primary components of any Farm Park. Planning permission was originally granted for the Farm Park on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013 (Permission 12/0385). This granted permission for the use of land as a farm park (sui generis use). A 'farm park' use typically includes animals, indoor play and outdoor play. There are a large number of farm parks in the UK, many of which (including Chobham Adventure Farm) are members of the trade association (National Farm Attractions Network), and in previous correspondence we provided the proportions of animals/play at farm parks in the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The Landscape Plan approved under Condition 3 of Planning Permission SU/14/1033 shows a number of areas of play (Small Outdoor Play, Trampoline Area, Sand Play Area, as well as an 'Amenity Lawn'), with animal areas to the west of the site. As stated above, we now propose to relocate, and extend, the animal areas so that the southern part of the site is a secure animal zone, that complies with the Code of Practice. The Amenity Lawn area has been replaced by the proposed play equipment, as this area was providing no specific experience for visitors.

We understand from the meeting that the structure which concerns officers is the Astroturf slide, and Mr Partington asked the applicant to consider either reducing or removing this slide.

We understand that the 2m fence on the slide has been considered too high and unneighbourly. Although we felt the introduction of the fence was a positive, we will happily remove it and replace it with a railing with stock-proof wire. This reduces the height of the structure to 5m. We have spoken with the manufacturer and by changing the angle and start of the drop we can reduce the height further to 3m, and still have sufficient fall to operate as a slide. So the removal of the fence and the reduction in the height of the slide structure reduces the overall height from 7m to 3m, a 57% reduction in height.

As has already been shown, there is plenty of natural screening – the oak trees are 12m and the conifers are 16m – they both hugely dwarf this 3m slide. This screening also blocks any view of the neighbour – as has been shown on the photographs tabled at the meeting that you took away with you. The reduction in height will mean that this is still not an issue, and the structure would also not have a material impact on openness. The structure would have the appearance of a grass slope (as can be seen in the photographs previously supplied), as well as have cedar cladding at the tallest area (to match the barns) and have planting in keeping with the rest of the planting schemes on site.

We enclose an amended drawing showing the slide. This includes dimensions and also identified the materials to be used.

We trust that the additional information and amendments correctly reflect Mr Partington's request, and that officers will therefore be able to positively support this application at Committee. I also understand from the meeting that you will need to reconsult on the amended slide details and that this will necessitate the application being removed from the Planning Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> June to enable the reconsultation to be undertaken.



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Yours sincerely  
For RPS

**Nick Laister**  
Operational Director

Enc. Updated Proposed Layout Plan (Drawing Q045/03 REV B)  
Updated Details of Proposed Astroturf Slide


cc. Jonathan Partington, SHBC





Site Address: CHUBBSHAM ADVENTURE FARM	Description REVISED PROPOSED LAYOUT PLAN
Drawing No: Q045/03 REV B	
Date: JUNE 2018	Scale: 1/50 @ A1
Status: DESIGN	
Designer: LANDFORM	
Client: BEAN CHAPMAN	
<b>LANDFORM CONSULTANTS LTD</b> The Nursery, Baginbun Road, Chawton, GU24 8DE tel: 01276 856 145 email: enquiries@landformconsultants.co.uk website: www.landformconsultants.co.uk	
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