

Our Ref: CP-0052
12 September 2025

Charlotte Glancy
Programme Officer
C/O Banks Solutions
80 Lavinia Way
East Preston
West Sussex
BN16 1DD

Dear Ms Glancy,

Statement on Stage 2, Matter 10 (Employment and Horse Racing) for Woodcote Stud Farm, Wilmerhatch Lane, Epsom KT18 7EU

Further to our representations in February 2025 on the Proposed Submission Epsom and Ewell Local Plan (Regulation 19) - (REP150) - we wish to submit a statement on behalf of our client, Woodcote Stud Limited, in advance of the hearing session for Stage 2, Matter 10: Employment and Horse Racing (Policies S9, DM7, DM8) scheduled for Wednesday 08 October 2025.

Question 12.11 of the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions has requested justification and an evidence base from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for the inclusion of Woodcote Stud Farm within the Racehorse Training Zone as defined by draft Local Plan Policy DM8. This question directly aligns with the concerns raised in our representations on the Local Plan that the evidence base behind the application of the new 'Racehorse Training Zone' designation in Policy DM6 is inadequate and unsound and has the potential to unreasonably stymie opportunities for alternative use at the Woodcote Stud Farm site.

One of the primary objectives of Policy DM8 (Racehorse Training Industry) is clearly to protect against the potentially harmful loss of racehorse training facilities / stable complexes in the Borough to the ongoing viability of the Epsom Downs as a racehorse training centre. It has been detailed within our representations that Woodcote Stud Farm has only ever been used as a thoroughbred stud farm and is not an important or sustainable location for racehorse training facilities in the Borough. It is instead available and potentially suitable to meaningfully contribute to other key objectives of the Local Plan.

To further support this view in advance of the hearing session, an assessment of the site's potential attractiveness to the open market as a racehorse training establishment has been undertaken by recognised local industry experts Windsor Clive International. As set out in their enclosed letter, they have formed the strong view that Woodcote Stud farm is not suited to use as a racehorse training yard as it is too far from the gallops at Epsom



Downs, with a route via roads that is too busy to be used by highly strung thoroughbreds. On-site living accommodation is also highlighted as a pre-requisite for racehorse training and the absence of this would prevent a training licence from being granted.

In contrast, other local training yards all have direct access to local inter-crossing bridleways, footways and public hack routes that allow for safe passage for horses to the training areas without conflicting with these roadways or requiring motorised transport.

It is on this basis that Windsor Clive International have advised that undertaking a marketing exercise, as required by draft Policy DM8 for all lands subject to the Racehorse Training Zone designation, would be "*a very protracted and somewhat wasted exercise*". They have noted that the market for racehorse training is extremely thin and the clear deficiencies of the site mean that they would not expect there to be any meaningful interest in the use of the site as a racehorse training yard.

This view is supported by the fact that there has been no market interest or support for future investment in the application site as a location for any form of equestrian use since the closure of the stud farm in 2021, despite the Applicant informally approaching a number of potential trainers.

Given the closure of the stud farm over 4 years ago due to significant operational debt, and the industry advice provided by local experts, there is little or no chance of Woodcote Stud Farm ever returning to use as a racehorse breeding facility, or reverting to use as a racehorse training yard. The use on the site is therefore considered to have reached the end of its useful economic life and there is considered to be no alternative but to find a suitable and viable alternative use.

In conclusion, the proposals are not considered to conflict with the underlying objectives of draft Policy DM8 in that the loss of the remaining redundant equestrian facilities on the site would not compromise the continued successful operation of Epsom Downs Racecourse and the local racehorse training industry. Our position is therefore that the Woodcote Stud Farm should no longer form part of the designated Racehorse Training Zone within the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Dunphy

On behalf of Causeway Planning



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GFWC/SAN



Woodcote Stud Ltd
Wilmerhatch Lane
Epsom, Surrey
KT18 7EU

08 May 2025

Dear

Racehorse Training Potential at Woodcote Stud, Wilmerhatch Lane, Epsom KT18 7EU

You have asked me to provide preliminary advice in respect of the above site at Woodcote Stud in Epsom and its attraction to the open market as a racehorse training establishment.

Qualifications and Expertise

As this letter may be referred to by other consultants, I take this opportunity to set out my qualifications and expertise:

- I am a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Registered Valuer. I have specialised in the sale, purchase, letting and valuation of stud farms, training yards and equestrian centres since 1987;
- In Epsom I have marketed for sale or rent the following training yards and stud farms: Woodruffe House, Loretta Lodge, Thirty Acre Barn, South Hatch, The Durdans and Saddlecombe Stud.

Woodcote Stud

Location

Woodcote Stud is in Wilmerhatch Lane, approximately 1½ miles from the Epsom Downs Gallops via Headley Road and Langley Vale Road. It is nearly a mile further from the gallops than Woodruffe Stables, which is no longer a racehorse training yard.

The Stud Farm

Until its closure in 2021, Woodcote was used as a thoroughbred stud. I understand that the business model was to sell the progeny as yearlings at Tattersalls Auctioneers at Newmarket.

Both residential dwellings on the site (known as Woodcote House and Woodcote Lodge) and the adjacent former foaling stables have been refurbished and are now in lawful use as Supported Living Accommodation (Use Class C2).

The remainder of the site consists of a vacant stud farm complex comprising approximately 70 boxes; an indoor school; covered horse walker; lunge ring; ancillary stores; and railed paddocks. There are about 70 acres in all, mostly in railed paddocks.

Woodcote Stud as a Training Yard

A stud farm, used for the breeding and raising of horses, is not the same type of property as a racehorse training yard. A stud farm has stables and extensive paddocks. It is likely to require an element of domestic accommodation for staff. The amount of paddock land required per stable varies from 1 to 3 acres per box.

A racehorse training yard needs boxes, some staff accommodation for supervision, a small amount of paddocks for turn out (a significant proportion of training yards with perhaps up to 100 boxes are in sites of 5 acres or less) and ancillary buildings. The crucial requirement is access to its own or public gallops. This access to gallops must be within an economic distance and also be safe. Based on my experience with other training yards in the Epsom area, I am strongly of the opinion that Woodcote Stud is too far from the gallops at Epsom Downs, and the route is via roads that are too busy to be used by highly strung thoroughbreds.

The nearest operating training yard is Cedar Lodge Stables (owned by Brett Johnson). It is located on Headley Road only 0.8 of a mile from the nearest entrance to the gallops (in contrast the main entrance to Woodcote Stud from Wilmerhatch Lane is over 1.5 miles away). Furthermore, unlike Woodcote Stud, this yard can easily access the gallops via dedicated horse walks, without the need to use busy roads.

When we were marketing Woodruffe Stables as a racehorse training yard for the late John Sutcliffe in 1993 to 1994 we were repeatedly told by prospective purchasers that the route to the gallops was unsatisfactory to operate a training yard on an economic basis. Woodruffe Stables is well over half a mile closer to the gallops. The property was then sold to be a livery yard a year later.

In addition to the above, the British Horseracing Authority requires a responsible person to reside at the training yard. The houses at Woodcote Stud are now Supported Living Accommodation, so they are no longer available at Woodcote Stud, which would currently prevent a training licence from being granted.

Marketing

If you want like us to provide detailed recommendations for a marketing exercise, we would be pleased to do so if required. However, as a word of caution, the market for racehorse training yards is extremely thin, in that there are only a few buyers at any one time.

For the reasons outlined in this letter, we don't expect there to be any meaningful interest in the use of the Woodcote Stud as a racehorse training facility and feel that a marketing exercise would be a very protracted and somewhat wasted exercise. It may therefore be more appropriate for you to consider alternative uses that would present a more favourable outlook for the future active use of the site.

I hope that this advice is a help.



GEORGE WINDSOR CLIVE MRICS

Woodcote Stud Pictures May 25

