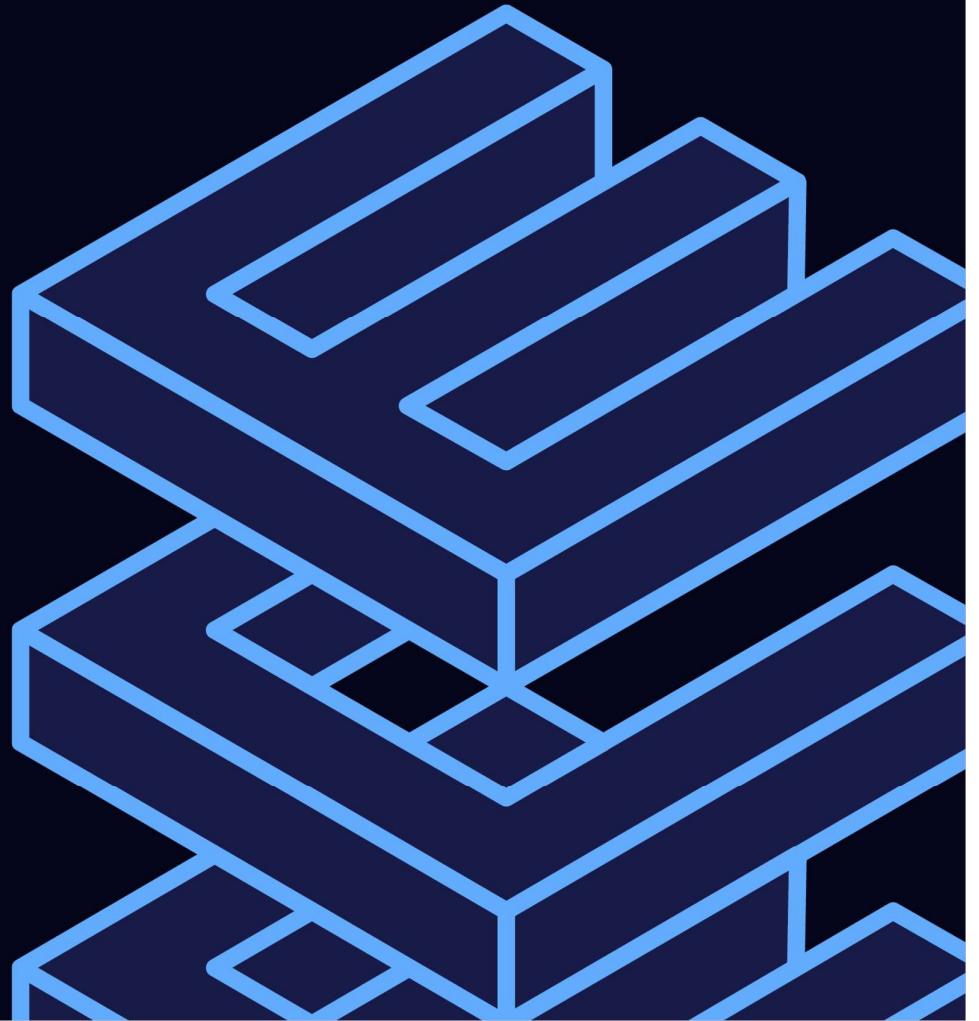


ECE Planning

EIA Statement of Conformity

Land South And West Of
Imberhorne Upper School,
Imberhorne Lane

January 2026



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. This Statement of Conformity is prepared on behalf of Vistry Homes Ltd and David Wilson Homes Southern (on behalf of BDW Trading Ltd) in support of a Reserved Matters Application for the development of 550no. new residential units at Land South and West of Imberhorne Upper School, Imberhorne Lane.

1.1.2. The reserved matters relate to Hybrid Application under reference DM/23/2699, which was validated on 8 November 2023. The development description of this Hybrid Application is outlined as follows:

Hybrid planning application seeking 1) outline planning permission for a mixed use development comprising up to 550 dwellings (Use Class C3), a care village of up to 150 dwellings (Use Class 2), land for a 2 form entry primary school (including early years provision and special needs education provision), mixed use neighbourhood centre, allotments, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage; and 2) full planning permission for playing fields, new sports pavilion, and running track associated with Imberhorne Secondary School, a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated car park, access from Imberhorne Lane, internal road to the SANG, pedestrian/cycle link from Imberhorne Lane and associated landscaping and infrastructure. (Additional/amended information and plans received 22nd May 2024)

1.1.3. This Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) to confirm that the Reserved Matters Application for delivery of 550 homes only, remains within the parameters and conclusions of the approved Hybrid Application's Environmental Statement (ES).

1.2. EIA Context

1.2.1. In line with Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA), an Environmental Statement (ES) was submitted in support of the Hybrid Application (reference DM/23/2699). This Statement of Conformity evaluates the consistency of the Reserved Matters submission with that Environmental Statement, in line with the requirements of EIA Regulations.

1.2.2. The original scoping report confirmed the following topics to be within the scope of the Environmental Statement:

- Socio-Economics and Health
- Transport and Highways
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Cultural Heritage
- Ecology and Biodiversity

1.2.3. These were fully assessed within the ES, and all residual effects were concluded to be acceptable.

1.3. Methodology

- 1.3.1. This Statement of Conformity has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) to confirm that the Reserved Matters Application remains within the parameters and conclusions of the approved Hybrid Application's Environmental Statement (ES).
- 1.3.2. To assess that the conclusions of the original Environmental Statement remain valid, this Statement of Conformity seeks to confirm that the original findings and scope remain sound, and that all changes or further details to the Hybrid Application are within the parameters assessed under the Hybrid Application's ES, to ensure compliance with the environmental impact assessments and confirm that no new significant effects would arise.
- 1.3.3. The assessment reviews the key design parameters established at outline stage and the findings of the original Scoping Opinion to ensure these remain valid. Each environmental topic identified in the original ES is then revisited to summarise the baseline conditions, assessed residual effects, and secured mitigation measures.
- 1.3.4. The Reserved Matters proposals are assessed against these parameters, identifying any design evolution or modification and determining whether such changes remain consistent with the quantum, layout, and assumptions tested in the ES. Each topic is then reviewed to confirm that the Reserved Matters Application would not give rise to new or more significant environmental effects and that all relevant mitigation continues to be secured through existing conditions and obligations.
- 1.3.5. The methodology provides a proportionate framework to confirm that the proposals within the Reserved Matters Application remain in conformity with the Hybrid Application ES and that no further environmental assessment is required.

2. Environmental Context

- 2.1.1. The following section reviews the original Environmental Statement and associated Scoping Report to establish the environmental parameters that underpin the approved Hybrid Application. The 2021 Scoping Report prepared by DMH Stallard is then assessed for its continued validity, confirming that the topics for assessment are still appropriate.
- 2.1.2. The previous findings of each topic are then examined in turn, identifying the baseline conditions and the predicted residual effects following mitigation.
- 2.1.3. These findings establish the reference point against which the Reserved Matters Application is assessed for conformity with the findings of the Hybrid Application ES.

2.2. Hybrid Application Main Parameters

- 2.2.1. The parameters established for the sake of the Hybrid Application and its associated Environmental Statement were identified as follows:

Outline Element

- Up to 550 dwellings, including up to 165 affordable homes (use class C3);
- A care village of up to 150 dwellings (use class C2);
- Land for a 2-form entry primary school (including early years provision);
- Mixed use neighbourhood centre (of up to 500 square metres ('sqm') of retail use and up to a further 429sqm of healthcare (Use Class E(a) and C2) and community use (Use Class F2) provision); and
- Associated landscaping (including public open space and allotments), drainage and infrastructure.

Detailed Element

- Strategic 38.67ha area of SANG and associated 44-space car park;
- Sports facilities associated with Imberhorne Secondary School to comprise a 400-metre running track, sports pavilion with changing rooms, showers and toilets, bleacher seating overlooking the running track, a 40-space car park, 2 coach bays and multi-use sports pitches suitable for football, rugby, cricket, and cricket nets;
- Vehicular Access from Imberhorne Lane;
- Primary circulation from Imberhorne Lane to the SANG car park;
- Associated landscaping, drainage and infrastructure.

2.3. Assessment Scoping Opinion

- 2.3.1. For the purposes of the previous Environmental Statement, the 2021 Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion from Mid Sussex District Council confirmed the following topics were identified as having significant effect and therefore were required for inclusion within the Environmental Statement:

- Socio-Economics and Health
- Transport and Highways
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Cultural Heritage
- Ecology and Biodiversity

- 2.3.2. All other topics were scoped out due to their effects being identified as non-significant.
- 2.3.3. A review has been undertaken, and it is asserted that the original scoping opinion remains valid for the purposes of this Statement of Conformity.

2.4. Construction Methodology and Phasing

- 2.4.1. The original Environmental Statement (ES) identified several potential impacts associated with the construction phase, primarily relating to noise, dust, and construction traffic. To mitigate these effects, the ES proposed a comprehensive suite of management measures aimed at minimizing disruption to the surrounding environment and local community.
- 2.4.2. With respect to construction traffic, it was concluded that vehicle movements should be strategically managed to reduce impacts on the local road network. HGVs should be scheduled to avoid peak traffic periods, and all unloading operations should take place within the site boundary to prevent interference with public highways and adjacent properties. A detailed construction traffic management plan (CTMP) was identified as necessary, to be developed in consultation with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). This would have to outline designated construction routes and access points to ensure minimal disruption to the local infrastructure.
- 2.4.3. Environmental impacts such as noise and dust were also considered significant. The need for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) was identified, incorporating controls to restrict noisy operations to agreed working hours and specific areas within the site. Additional measures would include dust suppression techniques and a mechanism for public complaints, ensuring a responsive approach to any issues arising during construction.
- 2.4.4. These conclusions, as set out in the original Environmental Statement, provide a basis for assessing the Reserved Matters application. The proposed construction methodology and phasing will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the original findings and to confirm that the impacts identified in the ES are similarly mitigated in the updated scheme.

2.5. Population and Human Health

- 2.5.1. Population and human health were scoped into the original ES and assessed on the basis of the likely significant effects of development on the environment, taking into consideration the effects of the development on housing delivery, household expenditure, employment generation and the population's health and wellbeing. It also considered the additional demand created by the development's new residential population for community infrastructure and therefore considers the effects of the development on education (early years, primary and secondary phase), primary healthcare (General Practitioner ('GP') provision) and open/play space.
- 2.5.2. The ES concluded that the development will have a range of impacts during both the construction and operational phases. During construction, it will generate an average of 179 direct jobs per month and 174 indirect jobs, creating a temporary, minor beneficial effect on employment at the district level. Human health impacts during construction are expected to be negligible, with mitigation measures in place for noise and air quality through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 2.5.3. In the operational phase, the development will provide up to 550 homes, including 30% affordable housing, contributing to 5.2% of the district's housing target. Additionally, it will offer a care home for older residents, having a moderate beneficial effect on housing availability. The development will also generate £20.3 million in annual local expenditure, benefitting the local economy with a minor increase in spending. However, the development will generate additional demand for education places, creating a minor adverse impact on local schools, though a new primary school will help address this need. Similarly, the development will put pressure on local GP services, requiring mitigation.

- 2.5.4. The development will also have significant benefits in terms of open and play space, exceeding the required amount with 13.19 hectares of public space, including areas for sports and recreation. This will have a major positive effect on the local availability of open space. The development will create 63 on-site jobs, contributing to local employment, though this impact is considered negligible at the district level. Overall, the development's positive impacts on housing, local expenditure, and open space are clear, but it will require mitigation for education and healthcare services.
- 2.5.5. The overall residual effects were concluded across the potential effects and ranged between negligible and major beneficial with recommendations for mitigation/enhancement measures. Appropriate mitigation was secured by the Hybrid application in the form of a combination of financial contributions, land for a new school and a neighbourhood centre with potential for healthcare facility to address demands on health and education.

2.6. Cultural Heritage

Archaeology

- 2.6.1. The Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Orion 2023) concluded:

Based on the East Sussex HER data, the site has a generalised potential for prehistoric, Roman and Medieval remains. However, the geophysical surveys of the site do not indicate the presence of archaeological remains of significance. Geophysical survey does not reveal all archaeological features and consequently, there could as yet be unrecorded remains present. However, based on the available evidence, any such remains are unlikely to be of more than local significance.

Should as yet unrecorded remains be present within the site, the proposed development would impact upon them. However, it is clear from the available evidence, including that from archaeological surveys of the study site and the surrounding area, that any remains likely to be present within the study site would not be of such significance as to preclude development. It is recognised that these remains are likely to be of some interest, however their loss could be mitigated, provided suitable steps are taken to determine the nature and significance of any remains present, and mitigate any impacts as appropriate. This could be achieved by a programme of archaeological investigation and recording work as a condition of outline planning permission.

Built Heritage

- 5.2 It was established that although there are no designated built heritage assets within the Site area, there are three listed buildings within its vicinity:

- Gullege Farmhouse (Grade II* listed, National Heritage List for England (NHLE) ref.1248946
- 1-3 Imberhorne Farm Cottages (Grade II* listed, NHLE ref. 1392066) and
- Imberhorne Farmhouse (Grade II listed, NHLE ref. 1277678). The Farm Courtyard is considered by Mid Sussex District Council to be curtilage listed.

There would be no direct (physical) impact on any of these built heritage assets; however there may be some indirect impact, that is to their respective settings. Built Heritage was thus scoped into the EIA.

It was assessed that the proposed development will result in a change within the setting of the built heritage assets outlined above and therefore have the potential to affect their heritage significance. However, it was concluded that this would not be significant in respect of all the relevant built heritage assets.

2.7. Biodiversity

- 2.7.1. Biodiversity and Ecology was scoped-in to the original Environmental Statement due to the potential for effects on habitats and protected species during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.
- 2.7.2. The ES concluded that the Site is dominated by arable land of limited ecological value, which is common and widespread in the local area and not considered significant in ecological terms. The loss of arable land was therefore not treated as a significant effect within the assessment.
- 2.7.3. The ES identified that more ecologically valuable habitats within the Site include areas of ancient woodland associated with the Worth Way Local Wildlife Site, lowland deciduous woodland, mature tree lines, hedgerows, scrub, and localised grassland habitats. The assessment concluded that the majority of these higher-value habitats would be retained within the proposed development.
- 2.7.4. Where limited losses of hedgerows, tree lines, and grassland were required to facilitate access and development, the ES concluded that these would be appropriately compensated through habitat creation and enhancement. This included new hedgerow and tree planting, grassland creation, scrub and edge planting, community orchards, allotments, and street trees, all to be secured and managed through a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.
- 2.7.5. It was identified that the creation of an extensive Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace as a significant positive element of the scheme. The Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace would deliver species-rich grassland, woodland, scrub, and wetland habitats on land currently under arable use, providing long-term ecological benefits for a range of protected species while mitigating recreational pressure on surrounding designated sites.
- 2.7.6. The ES concluded that, following the implementation of appropriate buffers and mitigation, no significant effects would arise in relation to designated sites, including Ashdown Forest SPA, SAC and SSSI, Hedgecourt SSSI, and locally designated sites.
- 2.7.7. In relation to protected species, the ES concluded that the Site supports a range of species including bats, Great Crested Newts, reptiles, badgers, nesting birds, and other mammals. With the exception of Skylark, residual effects on protected species were concluded to be neutral and not significant, subject to mitigation.
- 2.7.8. It was identified that there was an unavoidable Minor Adverse residual effect on Skylark resulting from the permanent loss of arable nesting habitat. This effect was accepted as not significant in EIA terms, given the delivery of the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and the creation of higher-value habitats benefiting other bird species.
- 2.7.9. The ES concluded that potential effects on bats would be appropriately mitigated through habitat retention, the provision of dark corridors, sensitive lighting design secured by condition, and the creation of new roosting opportunities, resulting in no significant residual effects.
- 2.7.10. Overall, the Environmental Statement concluded that, subject to the implementation of the identified mitigation and enhancement measures and long-term management arrangements, the proposed development would not give rise to any significant residual effects on biodiversity and ecology in EIA terms, with the exception of a Minor Adverse residual effect on Skylark.

2.8. Transport and Access

- 2.8.1. Transport and Access was scoped-in to the 2023 ES chapter, on the basis that the proposed development could potentially result in significant effects on the transport and access conditions within the local and wider area. This approach followed the proposed methodology set out within the 2021 EIA Scoping Report.
- 2.8.2. The Transport and Access approach utilised a baseline of 2021, based on 24h Average Annual Daily Traffic figures for a series of road links surrounding the site. A future baseline year of 2032 was considered within the ES chapter, both without the proposed development (the 'Do Minimum' scenario) and with the proposed development (the 'Do Something' Scenario).
- 2.8.3. The Transport and Access aspects of the development in the Construction and Operational phases were assessed based on the criteria set out in the 2023 IEMA guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement.
- 2.8.4. The residual effects for the Construction Phase of the development, taking into account proposed mitigation measures, were predicted to be negligible in all IEMA areas excluding Non-Motorised User Amenity, where the effect was predicted to be Minor Adverse.
- 2.8.5. The residual effects of the Operational Phase of the development, taking into account the cumulative effect of the development and proposed mitigation measures, were predicted to be negligible in all IEMA areas excluding Severance and Pedestrian Delay, where the effects were found to be Minor Adverse.

2.9. Noise and Vibration

- 2.9.1. The potential effects of Noise and Vibration were scoped-in to the Hybrid Planning Application ES due to the existing environment on the Proposed Development and the effects of the Proposed Development on existing receptors.
- 2.9.2. It was noted that noise from existing commercial operations and plant at the Birches Industrial Estate, noise from activities at Imberhorne School and noise due to road traffic noise on Imberhorne Lane would potentially have effects at the Proposed Development.
- 2.9.3. It was also noted that commercial noise from the local centre and plant associated with the proposed school and care home, noise from vehicles associated with the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development, and noise from activities at the proposed school and local centre had the potential to affect existing and proposed dwellings. Therefore Noise and Vibration was scoped into the EIA Assessment.
- 2.9.4. Environmental Health Officers generally agreed with the approach and methodology for the assessment of Noise and Vibration set out in the EIA Scoping Report, and noted that consideration should be given to noise levels at the proposed school in accordance with BB93 and good acoustic design should influence the layout of dwellings to reduce the reliance on façade mitigation measures to control noise.
- 2.9.5. An ES Noise and Vibration Chapter was produced in October 2023, which was supported by baseline noise surveys were undertaken between the 21st to 31st October and 1st to 3rd November 2021. The survey demonstrated that noise from road traffic on Imberhorne Lane was dominant at the Site.
- 2.9.6. The ES Noise and Vibration Chapter set out that the residual effects (including consideration of cumulative effects) were as follows:

- **Noise and vibration effects from construction activities** – Negligible, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in a CEMP and CTMP.

- Noise effects from construction traffic – Negligible, subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in a CTMP.
- Noise effects on the operation Development generated traffic – Minor adverse.
- Noise effects on the Development's future dwellings and school buildings – Minor adverse, subject to the specification of suitable mitigation measures as part of the detailed design of the site.
- Noise effects on the external amenity spaces and school playgrounds – Negligible.
- Noise effects from fixed mechanical plant – Negligible, subject to the detailed design of plant.

2.9.7. The ES Noise and Vibration Chapter demonstrated that Noise and Vibration effects at the Proposed Development due to existing noise sources and at existing dwellings due to the Proposed Development would not be significant in EIA terms.

2.10. Air Quality

2.10.1. Air Quality was scoped into the original ES, and considered air quality impacts during both the construction and operational phases of the Development. The methodology section details the consultations that were undertaken with MSDC, which noted that

- the relevant IAQM guidance and 'Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex' (2021) should be followed when assessing the Development's impacts on air quality;
- The EIA Scoping Opinion also emphasised MSDC's air quality concerns along London Road, where a candidate AQMA was under consideration

2.10.2. Annual mean background concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, in the vicinity of the Site between 2019 and 2024, were predicted to be well below their respective AQS. The Air Quality assessment utilised a pre-COVID 2019 baseline to ensure a conservative approach.

2.10.3. Between 2018 and 2021, annual mean concentrations of NO₂ were reported to be generally below the AQS in the vicinity of the Site. Additionally, for those diffusion tubes with multiple years of data, an overall declining trend in concentrations was observed.

2.10.4. The highest recorded concentration was at MSAQ29, in 2019, with 44.1 µg/m³. This diffusion tube, located on a regularly congested stretch of the A22 London Road, recorded the only exceedance of the annual mean AQS within 5km of the Site.

2.10.5. The construction phase assessment concluded a High Risk of impacts in the absence of mitigation, which is the highest risk category. By adopting the appropriate mitigation measures, including the measures to be incorporated into the CEMP to reduce emissions and their potential impacts, the chapter stated there should be no significant residual effects.

2.10.6. Regarding the operational phase, a detailed dispersion modelling assessment was undertaken to assesses the Development's impact on, and sensitivity to, local air quality. The Development was predicted to have a Negligible impact on local annual mean concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at local sensitive receptors. Additionally, no sensitive receptors within the Development were assessed to be exposed to concentrations exceeding the relevant AQSs. Therefore, the operational phase was concluded to have a Negligible residual effect on air quality, which was not significant.

2.10.7. In February 2025, a Statement of Conformity was prepared to assess the implications of an additional committed development: Land South of Crawley Down Road (DM/23/0810) and it was confirmed that this scheme would not alter the conclusions of the original ES.

- 2.10.8. Finally, while detailed assessment of impacts and effects at the Ashdown Forest were not directly scoped into the original ES air quality chapter, the committee report noted at section 12.310 that:

"The proposed development was modelled in the Mid Sussex Transport Study as a committed development such that its potential effects are incorporated into the overall results of the transport model, which indicates there would not be an overall impact on Ashdown Forest. This means that there is not considered to be a significant in combination effect on the Ashdown Forest SAC by this development proposal."

- 2.10.9. It also noted at section 13.18 that:

"The development has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment that has concluded, with the provision of an on-site SANG, that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SPA and would not have a likely significant effect, alone or in combination, on the Ashdown Forest".

3. The Reserved Matters

- 3.1. The Reserved Matters Application seeks to approve details approved within the parameters of the Outline Planning Permission within the prior Hybrid Application. Details of how the design and details have been progressed are outlined below.

3.2. Design Evolution

- 3.2.1. The design of the proposed development has undergone a comprehensive review process, with key modifications made to address site-specific constraints and opportunities. The initial illustrative masterplan laid the groundwork for the development, but subsequent input from Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Officers, the client and design team led to several refinements. Notably, the primary school area was reconfigured to improve functionality and enhance its integration with surrounding open space. Additionally, the development blocks were carefully tested to ensure that sufficient space was available for 550 dwellings, whilst maximising space for suitable for communal areas and utility provision.
- 3.2.2. Further design revisions were driven by feedback from the Design Review Panel and detailed technical assessments. Key adjustments included the optimisation of drainage and attenuation features, as well as refinements to the primary school layout. The design was also enhanced by incorporating green infrastructure elements, such as the retention of hedgerows previously removed under the Outline layout proposal and the creation of green corridors, in line with biodiversity and sustainability objectives.
- 3.2.3. Throughout the design evolution, the team worked closely with local authorities to ensure that the proposal met community needs and environmental goals. This collaborative approach resulted in a refined layout that balances the requirements of the site with the surrounding context, ensuring the development is both sustainable and responsive to the needs of its future residents.

3.3. Summary of Modifications

- 3.3.1. All changes made as compared to the Hybrid Application scheme are detailed as below:
- Primary school area reshaped for improved usability and increased frontage onto open space.
 - Development blocks adjusted to accommodate 550 dwellings, ensuring sufficient space for communal areas and utilities.
 - Drainage strategy modified for more efficient SuDS layout and optimised drainage features.
 - Existing hedgerow to the west retained to create a green corridor and support biodiversity net gain.
 - Additional focal spaces introduced to provide varied character and respond to local context.
 - Play strategy recalibrated, including Super LEAP at the heart of the development, respecting nearby listed buildings.
 - Green infrastructure enhanced with more green corridors and landscaping for improved ecological value.
 - School layout revised for better access and more prominent frontage along northern and eastern boundaries.
 - Affordable housing mix adjusted to include more smaller dwellings and revised housing clusters.
 - Utility needs assessed and integrated into layout, with sub-stations strategically placed.

- Public open space layout refined to improve accessibility and vary play provision.
- Layout changes to enhance permeability and connectivity within development.
- Road layout amended to introduce traffic calming measures, including Copenhagen crossings and material changes, to control vehicle speeds.

3.3.2. Alignment with Original Parameters

- 3.3.3. It should be noted that the Reserved Matters (RM) Application to which this Statement of Conformity relates only to certain features of the approved Hybrid Application. As such, the identified parameters of this proposal will not be identical to those of the Hybrid Application.
- 3.3.4. For the purposes of clarity, it is asserted that the care village, primary school, and neighbourhood centre are to follow in subsequent phases of the development. These elements do not form part of the current RM proposal.
- 3.3.5. The parameters of this Reserved Matters application are therefore identified as follows:
- Up to 550 dwellings, including up to 165 affordable homes (use class C3);
 - Associated landscaping (including public open space and allotments), drainage and infrastructure.
- 3.3.6. These are considered to fully align with the relevant portions of the Hybrid Application, therefore enabling a direct comparison for the purposes of EIA conformity.
- 3.3.7. All modifications of the scheme identified above still fall fully within these parameters.

4. Screening the Assessment Topics

- 4.1. To ensure consistency with the conclusions of the original Environmental Statement, each of the identified screening topics is reviewed in relation to the proposed Reserved Matters scheme. This screening process seeks to confirm that the development results in equal or lesser impacts, demonstrating conformity with the findings of the original Environmental Statement with respect to construction phase, operational phase, cumulative, and residual effects. The construction methodology has also been re-assessed,

4.2. Construction Methodology and Phasing

- 4.2.1. In relation to population and human health construction of the development will have a positive effect through creation of a significant number of jobs over the construction period in relation to construction management and supply chains. The wider human health effects during construction would be negligible and effectively managed by the Construction Environmental Management Plan secured by condition on the Outline.
- 4.2.2. In relation to heritage, the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Orion 2023) concluded that the development site had a generalised potential for archaeological remains of several different historic periods: Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval. There would be direct impacts on those undesignated heritage assets during the construction phase of the proposed development. A programme of archaeological investigation and recording work could mitigate any impacts upon the archaeological remains as part of a planning condition. It is anticipated that any archaeological remains encountered would be of local to regional significance.
- 4.2.3. Any direct impacts to built heritage assets during the construction phase of the proposed development would be in the form of temporary dust, noise and vibration. These elements would be mitigated against by strategies outlined in a compliant Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). In respect of vibration, this effect has also been mitigated against within the proposed embedded design of the scheme – that is that there are substantial buffers already in place between these heritage assets and the proposed development in order to reduce this type of temporary impact. The construction phase of the Development would have a less than substantial, negligible impact on the setting of built heritage assets. Therefore the conclusions of the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter in relation to noise and vibration due to construction activities and traffic associated with the Proposed Development remain unchanged.
- 4.2.4. In relation to ecology, in-line with the original ES, a CEMP will be secured by planning condition, which will include methods for reptile translocation, habitat enhancement, sensitive clearance works, and timings of works, therefore it is considered that there will be no residual effects resulting from the development's construction phase.
- 4.2.5. With regard to the construction phase assessment on air quality, there was an IAQM guidance update in 2024¹. The January 2024 guidance revises dust emission magnitude thresholds and sensitivity criteria. However, the Development was previously assessed to be High Risk in the original ES and this remains the case when accounting for this guidance updated, in the absence of mitigation. Mitigation measures for High Risk sites will be incorporated into the CEMP during the construction phase on this basis.
- 4.2.6. As per the 2023 ES Chapter, the revised construction traffic numbers have been compared to the 2021 baseline. As reported in the 2023 ES chapter, Imberhome Lane North of Heathcote had 6822 daily two-way vehicle movements in the 2021 base. An increase of 624 daily vehicular movements equates to a 9.1% increase in daily vehicle movements, which

¹ <https://iaqm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Construction-Dust-Guidance-Jan-2024.pdf>

falls below the IEMA threshold of a 30% increase for detailed assessment. As such, it is concluded that the 2023 ES Chapter construction phase assessment remains valid and that the Reserved Matters application is in conformity with this element of the 2023 ES Chapter.

4.3. Population and Human Health

- 4.3.1. The RM application relates only to the delivery of the 550 homes, associate landscaping and drainage with the mixed use, C2 care community and school being delivered subsequently and in line with the Section 106 Legal Agreement. The development is expected to continue to have beneficial effects in terms of housing, local expenditure, and open/play space.
- 4.3.2. As per the original ES it is identified that it will require mitigation for GP services and education due to increased demand; this effect is mitigated through the provision of a combination of financial contributions and provision of land towards delivery of a new Primary School on site and/ or a new healthcare provision. The employment impact is considered negligible, and the overall effects on human health are expected to be positive due to improved community facilities and open space.
- 4.3.3. On this basis in relation to population and human health effects associated with the development, the conclusions in the original ES are considered to remain valid and the RM application is in conformity with this element of the original ES Chapter. No new likely significant effects have been identified.

4.4. Cultural Heritage

Archaeology

- 4.4.1. The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Orion 2023) concluded that the development site had a generalised potential for prehistoric, Roman and Medieval archaeological remains and that a programme of archaeological investigation and recording work could mitigate any impacts upon the archaeological remains by the development as part of a planning condition.
- 4.4.2. Given that the development area remains unchanged, there is no potential to result in new impacts or to alter previously assessed impacts. It is considered that the original findings and scope of the Desk Based Assessment remain sound and the conformity with the original ES findings can be confirmed.

Built Heritage

- 4.4.3. It was assessed that the proposed development will result in a change within the setting of the built heritage assets outlined above and therefore have the potential to affect their heritage significance. However, it was concluded that this would not be significant in respect of all the relevant built heritage assets.
- 4.4.4. The development remains unchanged; however further mitigation measures have been proposed in order to provide further mitigation to the respective relevant built heritage assets, building on feedback during and following the outline planning application. Any harm to the setting of these built heritage assets would fall within the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, with the greater part of their significance (vested in their built forms and immediate respective settings) being preserved.

It is therefore considered that there is conformity with the original ES findings with respect to Cultural Heritage.

4.5. Biodiversity

Baseline and design overview

- 4.5.1. Baseline ecological data was obtained from desk study and field surveys in 2016–2021 across habitats and key species groups (PEA, bats, dormouse, GCN, reptiles, birds, badger), with updates in 2021–2022.
- 4.5.2. It was identified the site was dominated by arable land with grassland, boundary hedgerows, tree lines, ditches and blocks of ancient/deciduous woodland. Worth Way LWS borders the site to the south, with other designated sites including Ashdown Forest SPA SAC SSSI, Hedgecourt SSSI and Lobbs Wood & Furnace Pond LWS.
- 4.5.3. Updated survey work carried out in 2024-2025 was conducted on the same species groups and identified similar potential impacts on protected species and nearby designated sites resulting from the development.

Designated Sites

- 4.5.4. Due to the distance and lack of connectivity to internationally/nationally designated sites, no significant effects are predicted to occur as a result of activities carried out during the construction phase of the Development. This is inclusive of the Ashdown Forest SPA, SAC and SSSI and Hedgecourt SSSI.
- 4.5.5. In conformity with the original ES, areas of ancient woodland located to the northeast, southwest and west of the site will all be retained and buffered from any development. No loss of habitat is predicted during the construction phase of the Development. However, construction activities could impact upon root protection zones in the ancient woodland and result in pollution events dust and lighting.

Habitats

- 4.5.6. The majority of habitats on site are considered to be of site value only and therefore of negligible sensitivity.
- 4.5.7. Tree lines and hedgerows are of local value for the connectivity provide. Habitats of local value and above are to be mostly retained excluding small sections of hedgerow removal to facilitate access and the road network around the site.
- 4.5.8. In accordance with the original submission, hedgerows to be retained construction activities may be impacted by pollution, dust and lighting impact

Species

- 4.5.9. The original ES identified potential impacts to bats, great crested newts, badgers, nesting birds and reptiles (Slow Worms, Common Lizard and Grass Snakes) primarily due to disturbance and mortality during the construction phase. In accordance with the previous ES, predicted construction-phase effects are considered mostly minor and not significant across all ecological receptors, however bats will experience neutral adverse impacts (non-significant), due to limited habitat value and impacts from lighting.
- 4.5.10. An additional impact pathway was identified as Dormice. One Dormouse nest was recorded within a Dormouse tube in the hedgerow located between the boundary of the SANG and residential parcels. Presence is highly likely to have been established within all areas of suitable habitat on site as well as within all connecting suitable habitat in the local area, therefore in the absence of mitigation habitat loss and fragmentation may result in a moderate adverse, non-significant effect on Dormouse populations.

Mitigation, enhancement and secured measures

- 4.5.11. Previously identified mitigation measures include a 15m ancient woodland buffer, SANG creation, sensitive lighting design, sensitive habitat clearance and protection of retained

habitats. Species-specific mitigation and enhancements include a reptile translocation, GCN licensing, bird and bat boxes, hedgehog highways and log piles/hibernacula.

- 4.5.12. Proposed mitigation measures are in-line with those previously recommended with the addition of District Level Licensing for GCN, which has been secured, EPS licensing for Dormice and 30m buffers for the Badger setts on the west and east of the site.

Residual Effects

Construction Phase

- 4.5.13. In-line with the original ES, a CEMP will be secured by planning condition, which will include methods for reptile translocation, habitat enhancement, sensitive clearance works, and timings of works, therefore it is considered that there will be no residual effects resulting from the development's construction phase.

Operational Phase

- 4.5.14. The identified residual effects during the operational phase account for on-site habitat management, enhancement and SANG creation. As such, no residual effects are expected from the operational phase, except for residual effects on skylark as detailed below.
- 4.5.15. There is a permanent loss of arable land and therefore a permanent loss of skylark habitat. This is not being replaced under current proposals and ground nesting habitat has not been provided. The habitat provided in the SANG will support foraging skylark, including winter foraging habitat. As such, whilst an increase in the existing habitat provision is provided as part of the development, nesting habitat has been reduced. This loss of the nesting habitat is therefore results in a minor adverse residual effect on skylark.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.5.16. The original ES included a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for the entire hybrid scheme, inclusive of the SANG, school, sports pitches and care village. The assessment demonstrated that the development would deliver a net gain in biodiversity of +11.33% across the site, with the SANG and associated green infrastructure forming key components of the uplift.
- 4.5.17. For the current submission, an updated Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation demonstrates a net gain of +11.35% for habitats and +281.92% for hedgerows, excluding the SANG, school, sports pitches and care village.
- 4.5.18. The current calculation considers a smaller extent of on-site habitats than the original BNG, as it omits the SANG, sports pitches and other elements included previously. Despite this reduced habitat baseline, the current submission delivers a greater net gain, indicating the reserved matters scheme exceeds the biodiversity outcomes established in the initial BNG assessment.

Summary

- 4.5.19. Overall, the updated submission remains consistent with the conclusions of the previous ES, with the only new impact pathways identified as Dormice which were recorded on site in 2024. Residual effects on habitats, designated sites and most species remain neutral and not significant once mitigation is applied.
- 4.5.20. The same core sensitive receptors are still relevant and largely mitigated for in the same manner, albeit now supplemented by measures such as District Level Licensing for GCN, EPS licensing for dormice and increased buffers to badger setts.

- 4.5.21. A key positive distinction is the updated BNG assessment which, even on a reduced habitat baseline, delivers a slightly higher habitat net gain (+11.35% vs +11.33%) and a substantial uplift for hedgerows.

4.6. Transport and Access

- 4.6.1. The primary potential effect of the development on environmental conditions is the quantum and distribution of additional vehicular traffic on the road network.
- 4.6.2. As detailed in Section 3.0, the proposed development does not differ significantly in the quantum of development compared to the 2023 ES chapter.
- 4.6.3. In terms of the construction effect of the development, further detail has been provided on the expected construction vehicle traffic and routeing. In the 2023 ES chapter, a total of 50 construction traffic vehicles (comprising 10 HGVs and 40 construction worker vehicles) would visit the site every day, for a total of 100 daily two-way vehicular movements. These vehicles were expected to travel on Imberhorne Lane both north and south of Heathcote Drive.
- 4.6.4. New information provided suggests a total of 312 construction vehicles (comprising 110 HGVs and 202 construction worker vehicles) are expected to visit the site daily during the peak construction period, for a total of 624 daily two-way vehicular movements. Routeing has now been confirmed to be exclusively to and from the A22 via Imberhorne Road. This results in all vehicles utilising exclusively Imberhorne Road north of Heathcote Drive.
- 4.6.5. As per the 2023 ES Chapter, the revised construction traffic numbers have been compared to the 2021 baseline. As reported in the 2023 ES chapter, Imberhorne Lane North of Heathcote had 6822 daily two-way vehicle movements in the 2021 base. An increase of 624 daily vehicular movements equates to a 9.1% increase in daily vehicle movements, which falls below the IEMA threshold of a 30% increase for detailed assessment. As such, it is concluded that the 2023 ES Chapter construction phase assessment remains valid and that the Reserved Matters application is in conformity with this element of the 2023 ES Chapter.
- 4.6.6. In terms of the Operational effect, the development retains the vehicular access strategy and active travel provision included at outline stage as well as the commitment to the implementation of a Travel Plan and the measures to reduce vehicular travel contained therein.
- 4.6.7. The Reserved Matters application is therefore not expected to result in an increase in vehicular trips, or a change in vehicular routing above the development assessed at Outline application stage.
- 4.6.8. Similarly, the future year of 2032 utilised within the 2023 ES remains valid based on the forecasted construction programme for the development.
- 4.6.9. Therefore, it is concluded that the Reserved Matters application is in full conformity with the 2023 ES chapter from a Transport and Access perspective.

4.7. Noise and Vibration

- 4.7.1. A baseline noise survey has been undertaken between the 10th and 14th November 2022. There have been no significant changes to the noise environment at the Site and therefore the survey remains valid. When compared to the baseline noise survey which was undertaken in 2021 to support the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter, there has been an uplift in noise levels at one measurement position where noise levels are quietest across the site.
- 4.7.2. Based on a detailed analysis of the noise data and a review of the London Gatwick Airport ECRD Report (2022), there has been an uplift in the number of aircraft passing over the site.

At all other measurement positions, noise levels show good agreement with the noise survey data undertaken as part of the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter, with noise levels varying by no more than 2-3dB.

- 4.7.3. As part of the Reserved Matters Planning Application the location of dwellings, the local centre, the school, and the care community area in relation to existing receptors either remains unchanged or includes a further setback when compared to the Hybrid Planning Application. The routing and number of vehicles associated with the construction of the Proposed Development also remains unchanged. The areas where construction activities will occur will be no closer to existing dwellings than set out in the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter.
- 4.7.4. Therefore the conclusions of the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter in relation to noise and vibration due to construction activities and traffic associated with the Proposed Development remain unchanged.
- 4.7.5. The number of dwellings proposed as part of the Reserved Matters Planning Application remains unchanged when compared to the Hybrid Planning Application. The traffic flows generated by the operational Development therefore remain unchanged from the traffic flows shown in the ES Transport and Access Chapter and the conclusions of the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter remain valid in relation to noise due to operational Development generated traffic.
- 4.7.6. The Concept Masterplan which was submitted as part of the Hybrid Planning Application set out areas where proposed residential dwellings, the proposed local centre, the proposed school, and the proposed care community would be located. As part of the Reserved Matters Planning Application, proposed dwellings to the east of the Site have been relocated so that they are setback from Imberhorne Lane.
- 4.7.7. The location of the proposed local centre and school are in similar proximity to the Development spine road, and are setback further from Imberhorne Lane than shown in the Concept Masterplan. The location of the care community area remains in the same location.
- 4.7.8. The increase in passing aircraft associated with London Gatwick Airport does not lead to a significant change in noise levels which would affect the conclusions of the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter in terms of the effects of the existing and future noise environment on proposed dwellings.
- 4.7.9. Therefore the conclusions of the assessment of the suitability of the Site for development in relation to internal and external noise levels set out in the ES Noise and Vibration Chapter remain unchanged.
- 4.7.10. Details of the baseline noise survey undertaken in 2022 and an assessment of the mitigation measures to provide suitable internal noise levels to proposed dwellings are shown in the Noise Assessment which supports the discharge of Condition 24 (report reference: 2206781_A-ACE-XX-00-RP-C-0601).

4.8. Air Quality

- 4.8.1. New baseline data published by MSDC in 2025² provides annual mean NO₂ concentrations up to 2024. Between 2021 and 2024, all previously reported monitoring locations with available data recorded annual mean NO₂ concentrations below the Air Quality Standards

² <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/xy3apcda/air-quality-annual-status-report-2025.pdf>

(AQ5). The declining trend observed in the original ES has continued across the study area. Therefore, baseline air quality conditions have improved since the original ES was prepared.

4.8.2. It is also noteworthy that:

- the candidate AQMA on London Road has not, to date, been declared, and;
- the original ES reported MSDC had declared one AQMA within its administrative boundary, at the Stonepound Crossroads in Hassocks, approximately 23km to the south of the Site. Though not within the study area, MSDC revoked this AQMA in December 2024.

4.8.3. As such, there are currently no AQMAs declared by MSDC³ reflecting the improved baseline air quality environment.

4.8.4. With regard to the construction phase assessment, there was an IAQM guidance update in 2024⁴. The January 2024 guidance revises dust emission magnitude thresholds and sensitivity criteria. However, the Development was previously assessed to be High Risk in the original ES and this remains the case when accounting for this guidance updated, in the absence of mitigation. Mitigation measures for High Risk sites will be incorporated into the CEMP during the construction phase on this basis.

4.8.5. With regard to the operational phase assessment, EFT v13.1 was published in 2025⁵. Updated fleet assumptions and emission factors indicate lower NO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions compared to EFT v11 used in the original ES. Furthermore, the Development does not differ significantly in the quantum of development compared to the original ES chapter. This supports the conservative nature of the original assessment and the conclusion of negligible operational impacts. A conservative approach was previously taken whereby 2019 background concentrations were assumed for all future year scenarios, despite predicted improvements in air quality over time.

4.8.6. No assessment was previously made against the annual mean concentration targets for PM_{2.5} introduced by the Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023⁶. However, while the original ES reported concentrations above marginally above the target value of 10 µg/m³ (which is not applicable until 2040) in the 2032 With Development scenario, it is noted that conservative assumptions on background conditions were applied by assuming no improvements beyond 2019. Application of 2032 background concentrations would reasonably be expected to reduce modelled concentrations to below the relevant future targets, and Defra's interim guidance⁷ places the emphasis on mitigation measures as opposed to assigning significance to changes in this context.

4.8.7. In accordance with Sussex-Air guidance 2021⁸, a proportionate suite of mitigation measures will be secured which will contribute to NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} reductions from the Development. This is being dealt with separately by conditions and falls out of the remaining scope of this chapter.

4.8.8. No additional committed developments have been identified and it has been confirmed by the transport consultants that traffic data used in the original ES remain representative and on this basis, no change to the assessment of cumulative impacts has been undertaken.

3 https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/local-authorities?la_id=163

4 <https://iaqm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Construction-Dust-Guidance-Jan-2024.pdf>

5 <https://iaqm.defra.gov.uk/air-quality/air-quality-assessment/emissions-factors-toolkit/>

6 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/96/contents/made>

7 <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/pm25targets/planning>

8 <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/5608/sussex-aq-guidance-2021.pdf>

- 4.8.9. Finally, while detailed assessment of impacts and effects at the Ashdown Forest were not directly scoped into the original ES air quality chapter itself, a conclusion of no likely significant effects was reached within the Development's Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) alone or in-combination with regard to atmospheric pollution. While Natural England's guidance was updated in October 2025, it applies to proposals expected to have a likely significant effect, which is not assessed to be the case for this Development on the basis of the previous conclusions. Therefore, in accordance with IAQM guidance⁹, deferring further assessment to the HRA is appropriate and no further assessment has been undertaken.
- 4.8.10. On the basis of the above, the air quality assessment and conclusions in the original ES are considered to remain valid and the Reserved Matters application is in conformity with this element of the original ES Chapter. No new likely significant effects have been identified.

⁹ <https://iaqm.co.uk/text/guidance/air-quality-impacts-on-nature-sites-2020.pdf>

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. This Statement sets out how the Reserved Matters Application for the development of 550 residential units at Land South and West of Imberhorne Upper School aligns with the parameters and conclusions outlined in the approved Environmental Statement (ES) for the Hybrid Application DM/23/2699. The design evolution and subsequent modifications made to the proposal, including the reshaping of the primary school, adjustments to the development blocks, and improvements in the drainage strategy, have been carefully considered to ensure compliance with the original environmental impact assessments. These revisions maintain consistency with the key environmental objectives outlined in the Hybrid Application, ensuring that no new significant effects arise from the revised design.
- 5.2. As confirmed the relevant environmental topics and associated impacts have been reassessed and the development remains within the parameters of the original ES and continues to meet the mitigation requirements identified. In conclusion, the Reserved Matters Application is found to be in full conformity with the Hybrid Application's ES, demonstrating that the environmental effects of the proposed development have been adequately mitigated. With no new significant environmental impacts identified, the development continues to provide benefits, including housing, local economic stimulation, and biodiversity improvements, while ensuring the protection of the local community and environment.

