

Planning Statement

Erection of a bungalow, alterations to existing access,
partial removal of existing hardstanding, creation of a
driveway with associated hard and soft landscaping

at

Former fishery car park
Lake View Road
Furnace Wood Estate
Felbridge
RH19 2QD

On Behalf of

White Oak Developments Ltd

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 3

2 APPLICATION SITE..... 5

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND 9

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT16

5 APPRAISAL19

6 SUMMARY.....29

Appendix A – Pre-Application Advice

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of proposals for the erection of a single detached bungalow on land at the former fishery car park within the Furnace Wood Estate, Felbridge. The site comprises previously developed land with an established access and a clear physical and functional relationship with the surrounding residential development. The proposal is considered to represent an efficient and sustainable use of underutilised brownfield land within an established residential environment.
- 1.2 The proposals have been the subject of a pre-application enquiry (ref. DM/26/0188), advice from which was provided in March 2026 and a copy is appended to this report.
- 1.3 The purpose of this statement is to describe the site and its context, outline the proposed development, and provide an appraisal of the proposal against the relevant development plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 The site lies outside defined settlement boundaries and in proximity to environmental and heritage assets, including ancient woodland and the Warren Furnace Scheduled Monument. As such, the principle of residential development, the appropriateness of infill development in this location, and the design response to site-specific constraints are key matters for consideration. The proposals have therefore been developed with particular regard to landscape, biodiversity, heritage setting and residential amenity, alongside highway safety and sustainability.
- 1.5 In the context of an adopted development plan that is more than five years old and the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development is a relevant material consideration. This statement therefore also seeks to explain how the proposal represents a sustainable and proportionate form of development, making effective use of underutilised previously developed land to deliver a modest contribution to local housing supply without giving rise to unacceptable impacts.
- 1.6 The application is supported by the following documents:
- Design and Access Statement
 - Heritage Impact Assessment
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 - Preliminary Ecology Appraisal

- eDNA Survey Results Letter
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report, Condition Assessments and Statutory Metric
- Drg No. A101 – Site Location and Block Plan (Existing)
- Drg No. A102 – Site Plan (Existing)
- Drg No. A103 – Site Location and Block Plan (Proposed)
- Drg No. A104 – Site Plan (Proposed)
- Drg No. A105 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Drg No. A106 – Proposed Roof Plan
- Drg No. A107 – Proposed Front and Side Elevations
- Drg No. A108 – Proposed Rear and Side Elevations
- Application and Ownership Forms

2 APPLICATION SITE

2.1 Site

- 2.1.1 The application site covers approximately 0.19ha within the Furnace Wood Estate, accessed from Lake View Road off Copthorne Road (A264). The land comprises the former car park to Furnace Pond, previously associated with recreational fishing until its cessation, and an adjoining grassed area that is currently maintained but unused.

Figure 2.1 – Site Location Plan



- 2.1.2 The site contains established trees and hedgerows along its boundaries, with an area of hardstanding near the site entrance and open grassland beyond. It is bordered by two residential properties, Vulcan Springs and Furnace, and a public right of way (WOR/49W) runs along the southern boundary with independent access from Lake View Road.

Figure 2.2 – Aerial Image



Figure 2.3 – Site Photographs

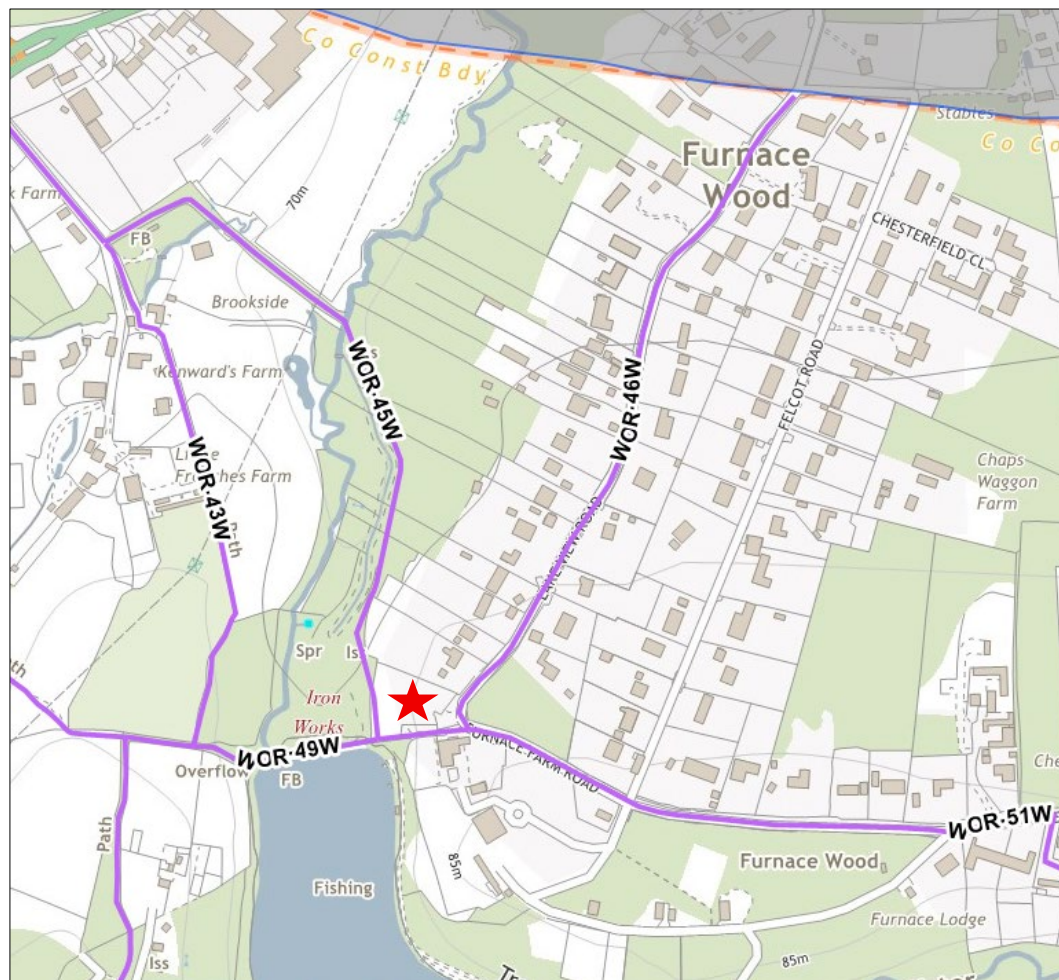


- 2.1.3 To the west lies ancient woodland and the Warren Furnace Scheduled Monument, both entirely outside the site boundary. The land is situated within a residential area comprising approximately 90 dwellings spread across the parishes of Horne and Worth.

2.2 Accessibility

- 2.2.1 The site has an existing access off Lake View Road which is currently gated to prevent unauthorised use. Footpath WOR49W provides pedestrian connections toward Felbridge, Snow Hill and Crawley Down. Bus services on Copthorne Road offer regular services to East Grinstead, Gatwick and Crawley, with the nearest stops approximately 200m from the estate entrance.

Figure 2.4 – Public Footpath network (Extract from WSCC Definitive Map)



- 2.2.2 Metrobus services operate regular services along the Copthorne Road to East Grinstead, Gatwick and Crawley. Bus stops are close to the estate's junction with Copthorne Road and can be accessed on foot from the site and are approximately 1km away.

2.3 Environmental Constraints

- 2.3.1 The site is not subject to any designations. As mentioned previously, land to the west is ancient woodland and also features a scheduled monument but these lie entirely outside of the site.
- 2.3.2 The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is at the lowest risk of surface water flooding.

Figure 2.5 – Flood Map for Planning



2.4 Planning History

- 2.4.1 The site has not been the subject of any previous planning applications.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Planning Policy

3.1.1 Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan (adopted 2018) and Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (made 2016).

3.1.2 Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

3.2 Development Plan

3.2.1 The relevant local-level policies are considered to be as follows:

Mid Sussex District Plan

3.2.2 DP4: Housing sets the overall housing provision for Mid Sussex and supports the delivery of new homes to meet identified needs over the plan period. It promotes a sustainable distribution of housing across the district, ensuring development is directed to appropriate locations and contributes to the maintenance of a balanced housing supply.

3.2.3 DP6: Settlement Hierarchy directs development to the most sustainable settlements. Larger towns and villages are the focus for growth, while smaller or more rural settlements should only accommodate limited development in keeping with their size, character and infrastructure capacity. Development outside defined settlement boundaries is generally restricted unless supported by specific policies.

3.2.4 DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Development in rural areas must be strictly controlled and only permitted where it maintains or enhances the landscape, supports rural enterprises, or is otherwise justified by specific circumstances. Proposals must respect landscape features, views and rural setting.

3.2.5 DP13: Preventing Coalescence aims to maintain the separate identity of settlements by preventing development that would lead to coalescence. Proposals must not reduce the open land gaps between settlements or harm their individual character. The policy emphasises the importance of retaining open countryside that forms part of settlement separation.

3.2.6 DP15: New Homes in the Countryside restricts new isolated homes in the countryside unless special circumstances apply. These may include essential housing for rural workers,

optimal viable use of heritage assets, exceptional design of the highest quality, or reuse of redundant buildings.

- 3.2.7 DP21: Transport requires development to promote sustainable travel, reduce reliance on the private car and minimise traffic impacts. Proposals must demonstrate safe and suitable access, sufficient parking, and measures to mitigate impacts on the local highway network.
- 3.2.8 DP26: Character and Design seeks high-quality design that respects local character, landscape, heritage and context. Developments should create attractive, well-functioning places through appropriate scale, form, materials and layout. Proposals must protect amenity, reinforce local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the built and natural environment.
- 3.2.9 DP27: Dwelling Space Standards requires all new homes to meet nationally described space standards.
- 3.2.10 DP28: Accessibility promotes accessible and inclusive design.
- 3.2.11 DP30: Housing Mix requires a balanced mix of dwelling sizes and types to meet local needs, including smaller units, family homes, and specialist accommodation. Housing proposals must demonstrate how they address district-wide and local demographic requirements, reflecting evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 3.2.12 DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets protects heritage assets and their settings. Development affecting such assets must conserve or enhance their significance. Proposals that would harm heritage assets will only be permitted where clear public benefits outweigh the harm, subject to national policy tests.
- 3.2.13 DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows safeguards important trees, hedgerows and ancient woodland.
- 3.2.14 DP38: Biodiversity requires development to conserve and enhance biodiversity, avoid harm to protected species and habitats, and deliver net ecological gain where possible.
- 3.2.15 DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction promotes energy-efficient, low-carbon development. Proposals must incorporate sustainable construction measures, reduce energy use, encourage renewable energy installation, and achieve high water efficiency.
- 3.2.16 DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage requires development to be located in areas at the lowest risk of flooding and to avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan 2014 - 2031

- 3.2.17 CDNP 01: Securing Sustainable Local Infrastructure seeks to ensure that new development is supported by the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure required to serve both the development and the wider community. Proposals must demonstrate that sufficient capacity exists in local services or that contributions will be made to deliver new infrastructure in a timely manner. The policy aims to ensure that growth in Crawley Down occurs in a sustainable way, without placing undue pressure on existing facilities or diminishing the quality of life for residents.

- 3.2.18 CDNP 02: Retention & Enhancement of Recreational / Local Green / Open Spaces protects key green spaces within and around Crawley Down, recognising their importance for recreation, biodiversity, visual amenity and local character. Development that would result in the loss of these spaces is resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that significant community benefits outweigh the harm. The policy also encourages enhancements to existing open spaces, hedgerows, streams and woodland edges, strengthening green infrastructure and ecological networks throughout the village.

- 3.2.19 CDNP 04.2: Infill Housing supports infill housing where it respects the settlement pattern, maintains appropriate spacing and does not erode the low-density village character. The delivery of accessible and single-level homes to better meet the needs of older residents and those with limited mobility is also supported.

- 3.2.20 CDNP 05: Control of New Developments is a general design policy which requires all new development to be sensitively integrated into its surroundings. Proposals must respect local character in terms of scale, height, density, layout and materials, and should not adversely affect neighbouring properties through overlooking, overshadowing or loss of amenity. The policy strongly encourages the retention and enhancement of natural features such as mature trees, hedgerows and landscape boundaries, and expects high-quality landscaping to form part of development schemes.

- 3.2.21 CDNP 06: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) promotes the use of SuDS in all new development to manage surface water in an environmentally responsible way.

- 3.2.22 CDNP 08: Prevention of Coalescence seeks to protect the physical and visual separation between Crawley Down and neighbouring settlements. Development that would diminish these separation gaps, extend the settlement in ways that risk coalescence, or erode the rural landscape setting will not be supported. The policy also protects key landscape features such as woodland, hedgerows and open fields that contribute to settlement identity and maintain Crawley Down's distinct character.

3.2.23 CDNP 09: Protect & Enhance Biodiversity requires development to conserve and, where possible, enhance existing biodiversity assets. Proposals must demonstrate that ecological features will be retained or improved, and that any impacts will be appropriately mitigated. The plan emphasises the importance of buffer zones around trees and natural habitats and encourages biodiversity net gain through new planting, habitat creation and ecological enhancements.

3.2.24 CDNP 10: Promoting Sustainable Transport encourages development that supports sustainable travel choices such as walking, cycling and public transport.

3.3 **Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework

3.3.1 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 11).

3.3.2 There are three dimensions to sustainable development: social, economic and environmental (paragraph 8). Residential developments play an important role in the provision of sustainable development with the delivery of high-quality homes in the right location contributing towards the social, economic and environmental health of the district.

3.3.3 Paragraph 11c states that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

3.3.4 Footnote 7 of the NPPF confirms that protected areas or assets include habitats sites and or sites designated as SSSIs, Green Belt, Local Green Space, National Landscapes, a designated heritage asset and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

3.3.5 The above presumption applies in this case as the Mid Sussex District Plan is more than five years old and the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In such an instance, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with a neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits but only where the plan was made five years ago and contains policies and allocations to meet

its identified housing requirement. The neighbourhood plan was made more than five years (in 2016) ago and therefore the presumption continues to apply.

- 3.3.6 In terms of decision-making, the NPPF states at paragraph 39 that 'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'.
- 3.3.7 Paragraph 61 states 'To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay'.
- 3.3.8 Paragraph 73 sets out that 'Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly'.
- 3.3.9 Paragraph 78 requires strategic planning policies to include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. It states that 'Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old'.
- 3.3.10 Paragraph 83 states 'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'.
- 3.3.11 Paragraph 84 states that 'Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:
 - a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
 - b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would

be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area’.

3.3.12 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered at the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals.

3.3.13 Paragraph 110 acknowledges that ‘opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making’.

3.3.14 Paragraph 116 makes it clear that ‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe’.

3.3.15 Paragraph 124 states that ‘Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions’.

3.3.16 Paragraph 125 encourages multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes.

3.3.17 Paragraph 125 confirms that planning policies and decisions should (inter alia) ‘promote and support development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.

3.3.18 Paragraph 128 states that ‘Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help meet identified development needs’.

- 3.3.19 In relation to design, Section 12 seeks to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places, acknowledging that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 3.3.20 Paragraph 135 further states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Development should also be sympathetic to local character and history and should be designed with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 3.3.21 Paragraph 139 states that 'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.' Conversely, significant weight should be given to:
- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes: and/or
 - b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings'.
- 3.3.22 Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by (inter alia) 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside....'.
- 3.3.23 Paragraph 192 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposal comprises the partial removal of existing hardstanding and the erection of a detached two bedroom bungalow. The existing access will be slightly altered and the proposal incorporates hard and soft landscaping to create a small parking area and garden.

Figure 4.1 – Proposed Site Plan



- 4.2 The bungalow has been designed to provide a modest, single-storey form of residential development that responds appropriately to the scale and character of the surrounding area which features a varied mix of house styles.

Figure 4.2 – Proposed Front and Side Elevations



- 4.3 The proposed materials include Sussex flint to walls and slate or clay roof tiles. The dwelling would feature a small porch and chimney which are features of the local area.
- 4.4 The remainder of the plot would remain largely as it currently exists, although the rear portion of the site will be used for delivering biodiversity net gain.

- 4.5 The proposed site layout provides two off-street parking spaces together with adequate turning space to enable vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. This level of provision accords with the West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments (2020) and is considered proportionate to the scale of development proposed. The existing access would be altered and used to serve the dwelling.
- 4.6 The layout has been informed by the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, ensuring appropriate separation distances from trees and retention of important landscape features. Root Protection Areas will be safeguarded throughout construction in accordance with BS5837.
- 4.7 Biodiversity Net Gain would be delivered partly on-site within a 4 metre wide strip of land along the western edge. Within this area existing modified grassland will be improved and six trees will be planted. The remaining required net gain will be secured through the purchase of credits. Alternatively, the scheme may benefit from the forthcoming small sites exemption.
- 4.8 Other ecological enhancements include the installation of bat and bird boxes which will be installed on retained trees within the eastern part of the site. A hibernaculum and log pile will be located within this area for reptiles, amphibians and stag beetles.
- 4.9 Overall, the proposal represents a sustainable form of infill development. The site sits between existing dwellings and the proposed dwelling would be consistent with the built form character of Furnace Wood Estate. The scheme would make beneficial use of an underutilised and partly brownfield site to deliver a small residential dwelling without giving rise to unacceptable impacts on highway safety, residential amenity, or the character of the area and would not result in encroachment into the wider countryside.

5 PRE-APPLICATION

- 5.1 A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Mid Sussex District Council seeking advice on the acceptability of the proposals. A copy of the advice received in March 2026 is attached at Appendix A.

Figure 5.1 – Pre-Application Scheme



- 5.2 In summary the advice received was as follows:

- The application site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary as identified in the Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP). Policy DP12 seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside by restricting development to that which is justified by an essential need for a rural location, is supported by specific policy provisions, and maintains or enhances rural landscape character. The policy also seeks to safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land and requires proposals to be assessed against relevant landscape evidence, including the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment and associated studies.
- Policy DP15 confirms that new residential development in the countryside will only be permitted where special justification exists, such as the essential need for a rural

worker's dwelling, the delivery of rural exception affordable housing, exceptional design quality, or where development accords with Policy DP6 relating to the settlement hierarchy. Policy DP6 supports development within defined built-up area boundaries and allows limited expansion where sites are contiguous with existing settlements, are sustainable, and respond appropriately to local character and design considerations.

- The Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (CDNP) adopts a broadly consistent approach to protecting the countryside. Policy CDNP04.2 supports infill housing where proposals accord with the development plan and meet criteria relating to spacing, plot size, retention of important gaps and views, appropriate materials, suitable access and parking arrangements, protection of residential amenity, and design which reflects local character. While the site lies outside the built-up area boundary, the CDNP does not contain a policy that expressly precludes development in such locations. Subject to compliance with the criteria set out in Policy CDNP04.2, it is considered that the proposal has the potential to be regarded as acceptable infill development in principle.
- It is also material that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. In accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore engaged. Where relevant policies for the supply of housing are out of date, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole, or where specific policies in the Framework provide a clear reason for refusal. This tilted balance is addressed in the planning balance below.
- Character and Appearance- As the site is located within the countryside, the proposal must demonstrate compliance with Policy DP12, which requires development to maintain or enhance the intrinsic beauty and tranquillity of the rural area. Policy DP26 of the MSDP requires development to be of high quality design that responds positively to local character, protects important landscape features, safeguards residential amenity, and delivers a strong sense of place. Similar objectives are set out within Policies CDNP04.2, CDNP05 and CDNP08 of the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan, together with the guidance contained within the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD.
- Paragraph 180 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The proposed dwelling is of modest scale and low profile, with the use of sympathetic materials and the retention of existing vegetation proposed. Subject to detailed design and landscaping, the development is considered

capable of maintaining the quality of the rural landscape and responding appropriately to local character, in accordance with the above policies.

- High Weald National Landscape (AONB)- Policy DP16 requires development within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly AONB) to conserve and enhance natural beauty. This objective is consistent with paragraph 189 of the NPPF and the High Weald Management Plan 2024–2029. Given the modest scale of the proposed dwelling and the limited extent of physical change proposed, it is considered that the development would not materially harm the wider landscape character or scenic beauty of the designated area. [NB – the site lies over 3km outside of the National Landscape]
- Heritage Assets - An Ancient Scheduled Monument, Warren Furnace, lies to the west of the site. Policy DP34 of the MSDP seeks to ensure that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Archaeological advice may be required to confirm that the proposal would not adversely affect any heritage assets or their setting.
- Highways and Accessibility- Policy DP21 requires development proposals to provide safe and suitable access arrangements and appropriate levels of parking. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF confirms that development should only be refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The proposal would utilise an existing access, and consultation with the Highway Authority is recommended to confirm that the arrangements are acceptable and that parking provision accords with West Sussex County Council guidance.
- Residential Amenity- Policy DP26 seeks to ensure that development does not result in significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, including in relation to privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, and noise. Owing to the separation distances from surrounding properties and the single-storey form of development proposed, the scheme is unlikely to give rise to material harm to neighbouring amenity.
- Housing Standards- Policy DP27 requires new residential development to meet the nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage. Compliance with these standards would be demonstrated at application stage.
- Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows - Policy DP37 supports the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, particularly ancient woodland and veteran trees. Where development is proposed within 15 metres of existing trees, the submission of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement is likely to be required. Ancient Woodland is located to the west of the site

and the development should be positioned to ensure an appropriate buffer is retained.

- Sustainability- Policy DP39 promotes sustainable design and construction, including measures to minimise energy consumption, incorporate renewable energy where feasible, reduce waste, and address climate change resilience. A sustainability statement would be required to demonstrate how the proposal responds to these objectives.
- Biodiversity- Policy DP38 requires development to protect existing biodiversity and deliver measurable net gains where possible. The Environment Act 2021 requires most developments to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), measured using the approved Biodiversity Metric. Proposals should follow the mitigation hierarchy, prioritising avoidance of harm before mitigation or compensation, and should integrate biodiversity enhancements within the site design.
- Ashdown Forest - Residential development within 7km of Ashdown Forest is required to mitigate potential recreational impacts through contributions towards Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). These requirements would need to be addressed as part of any future application. [NB – the site is located more than 7km away from Ashdown Forest]

5.2.1 Overall, the planning authority considered the proposals to accord with the criteria for infill development set out in Policy CDNP04.2 and has the potential to maintain the character and appearance of the rural area. However, the proposal is not considered to strictly comply with Policies DP4, DP6 and DP15 of the MSDP, as it represents a new dwelling in the countryside without a specific policy justification. The site is not allocated for development and future occupiers would be likely to rely on private car travel, which weighs against the proposal in sustainability terms.

5.2.2 Notwithstanding this policy conflict, the Council noted that it is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. As such, the relevant policies for the supply of housing are considered out-of-date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. In applying the tilted balance set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the benefits of the scheme include the provision of an additional dwelling contributing to local housing supply, economic benefits associated with construction activity, and additional local expenditure and Council Tax revenue. The proposal would also make use of land located between existing residential properties and is considered to represent infill development within an established pattern of development.

- 5.2.3 When assessed as a whole, and subject to appropriate supporting information being provided in relation to matters such as highways, biodiversity, heritage and arboriculture, the planning authority considered that the planning balance weighs in favour of the grant of planning permission.
- 5.2.4 To address the matters raised, the planning application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and report, Heritage Statement, Sustainability Statement (contained within the Design and Access Statement) and Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- 5.2.5 In addition, further information is provided within section 4 of this report to address the queries raised regarding access and parking.
- 5.2.6 The scheme has been informed by technical survey work, including ecological and arboricultural assessments. The layout has been refined to ensure appropriate separation distances from trees and retained vegetation, and to maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. The quantum of development has been kept deliberately modest in order to minimise impacts on landscape character and to respond positively to the site's environmental constraints.

6 APPRAISAL

6.1 The main considerations for the proposals are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Design and Character
- Landscape, Trees and Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Highways and Access
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Sustainability and Energy

6.2 These are discussed below.

Principle of Development

6.3 The site lies within an established residential area comprising around 90 dwellings. The site contains previously developed land in the form of a former fishery car park, which is located between existing dwellings and benefits from an established vehicular access. The site has a clear functional, visual and physical relationship with the surrounding built form and is read as part of the wider Furnace Wood Estate. The proposal for a single dwelling therefore represents a small-scale infill opportunity within an existing residential environment. The development would not extend the settlement into open countryside, result in the loss of agricultural land or contribute towards settlement coalescence

6.4 Whilst the district's spatial strategy seeks to concentrate development within, or on the edge of, built-up area boundaries there are instances where dwellings outside of built-up areas can be acceptable. These include where a Local Plan is out of date and where a Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing supply, both of which are circumstances which apply within the Mid Sussex District. If Local Plan policies were strictly applied they would prevent the delivery of much needed housing in a District where there is no 5 year Housing Land Supply. Paragraph 11d of the NPPF is therefore engaged and the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development is engaged.

6.5 In terms of the suitability of the location, whilst the site is not isolated it is accepted that occupiers of the home will need to make use of a private car to access some facilities. This is not unusual in a rural area, but a good range of facilities are in any case only a relatively

short distance away. Bus services also run along Copthorne Road providing a more sustainable mode of transport.

- 6.6 The proposals would meet the principles of sustainable development. In terms of the social aspect the delivery of one new home within an area of significant housing need would be a benefit, albeit a modest one. Environmentally the scheme will be constructed from locally sourced materials to minimise delivery miles, and with much of the site being left undeveloped there is ample opportunity for ecological enhancement. The scheme would also deliver economic benefits such as providing construction jobs and patronage of local businesses.

- 6.7 Policies DP4 (Housing) and DP30 (Housing Mix) support the delivery of new homes that meet identified needs, and the proposed two-bed bungalow contributes positively to the district's housing supply by providing a smaller, accessible dwelling type consistent with local demand.

- 6.8 Whilst Policies DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) and DP15 (New Homes in the Countryside) seek to restrict new residential development outside defined settlement boundaries, material weight must be afforded to the fact that the site comprises previously developed land located between existing dwellings within an established residential enclave. The proposal would not represent sporadic or isolated development in the countryside but rather the logical infilling of a small parcel of underutilised land that is closely related to existing development. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the objectives of Policy CDNP04.2 relating to infill development and reflects the positive approach to the effective use of land promoted by the NPPF.

Design and Character

- 6.9 Policies DP26 (Character and Design) and CDNP05 (Control of New Developments) require high-quality development that responds positively to local character. Furnace Wood is characterised by generous plots, a wooded setting and predominantly detached properties. The proposed bungalow has been designed to reflect this context through a low-profile form, sympathetic materials, and retention of surrounding vegetation.

- 6.10 The layout allows for adequate separation from neighbouring dwellings, protects residential amenity and maintains the spacious character of the estate. The dwelling also complies with national space standards, as required by DP27 (Dwelling Space Standards), and is consistent with Policy DP28 (Accessibility) in terms of being a single storey house with all accommodation at ground floor level, making it suitable for occupiers with mobility issues or future changing needs.

Landscape, Trees and Biodiversity

- 6.11 The site is bordered by established trees and lies adjacent to ancient woodland to the west. Policies DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of Countryside), DP37 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows), and CDNP02 (Retention and Enhancement of Open Spaces) emphasise the need to protect landscape character and important natural features. A full Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been undertaken to ensure no encroachment into root protection areas and to secure appropriate buffers to the ancient woodland.
- 6.12 In accordance with DP38 (Biodiversity) and CDNP09 (Protect and Enhance Biodiversity), ecological surveys accompany the application and the scheme delivers enhancements such as native planting, habitat creation and biodiversity net gain. The low level nature of the house together with appropriate external lighting will also minimise light spill and disturbance to woodland habitats.
- 6.13 Neighbourhood Plan Policy CDNP08 (Prevention of Coalescence) is not adversely affected due to the site's location within an existing estate and the absence of any reduction in separation between settlements.

Heritage

- 6.14 To the west lies the Warren Furnace Scheduled Monument. Although outside the application site, Policy DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) requires demonstration that the development preserves the setting of the asset. A heritage assessment has been undertaken which confirm that the low-rise form and wooded backdrop of the site prevent any harmful impact on its significance.

Transport and Access

- 6.15 The site benefits from an existing gated access onto Lake View Road. Policy DP21 (Transport) and CDNP10 (Sustainable Transport) require safe and suitable access, sufficient parking and support for sustainable travel. The proposed dwelling can be accommodated within the existing access arrangement subject to confirmation of visibility splays. On-site parking and turning will meet local standards, avoiding pressure on the highway. There are also bus stops within 200m of the estate's entrance.
- 6.16 The adjacent public right of way can be protected throughout construction.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.17 The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, where development is deemed appropriate. In accordance with DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage) and CDNP06 (SuDS), a sustainable drainage strategy will be incorporated, managing surface water on site and ensuring no increase in runoff or impact on adjacent woodland.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

- 6.18 Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires developments to minimise carbon emissions and incorporate renewable energy. The proposed bungalow offers an opportunity to achieve a highly efficient fabric-first design, supported by low-carbon heating (such as air-source heat pump technology), and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- 6.19 Water efficiency standards will be met and opportunities for rainwater harvesting and ecological landscaping will further support compliance.
- 6.20 In relation to the sustainability of the location, the NPPF recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. In rural locations it is common for residents to rely partly on private vehicles, and this does not in itself render development unsustainable. There is ample space within the plot for a cycle store and bus stops are available within a reasonable walking distance.

Planning Balance

- 6.21 The proposal does not strictly accord with Policies DP6, DP12 and DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan insofar as it would result in the erection of a new dwelling outside of a defined built-up area boundary. This conflict is acknowledged and carries weight in the planning balance.
- 6.22 However, the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. As such, the policies most important for determining the application are considered out-of-date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged.
- 6.23 The proposal would deliver a number of benefits. These include the provision of an additional dwelling in an area experiencing significant housing need, contributing towards housing delivery at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The dwelling would comprise a modest two bedroom bungalow, providing a housing type that can assist in meeting the needs of smaller households, older residents and those seeking accessible accommodation.

- 6.24 The development would also make effective use of previously developed land in the form of a former fishery car park that no longer serves its original purpose. Paragraphs 125 and 128 of the NPPF encourage the effective use of underutilised land and support proposals for alternative uses of previously developed sites where they can assist in meeting development needs. The proposal would therefore represent a sustainable and efficient use of land.
- 6.25 Additional benefits would arise through biodiversity enhancements, including habitat creation and tree planting. Economic benefits would also arise during the construction phase through expenditure on labour, materials and local services, together with longer-term expenditure by future occupiers within the local economy.
- 6.26 Against these benefits, the proposal would result in a limited degree of conflict with countryside policies and future occupiers would be likely to rely upon private vehicles for some journeys. However, the site is not isolated and forms part of an established residential enclave. It benefits from an existing access, connections to the public rights of way network and access to public transport services on Copthorne Road.
- 6.27 The proposal has been carefully designed to avoid unacceptable impacts upon landscape character, biodiversity, heritage assets, highway safety, residential amenity or flood risk. No adverse impacts have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole.
- 6.28 It is therefore concluded that the proposal represents sustainable development and that planning permission should be granted in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

7 SUMMARY

- 7.1 The planning application seeks permission for the erection of a single bungalow on part-brownfield land at the former fishery car park within Furnace Wood Estate. The site benefits from an established access and a clear spatial and functional relationship with surrounding residential properties. The proposal therefore represents a logical and proportionate infill opportunity within an existing residential context.
- 7.2 The scheme has been carefully designed to respond to the character of the surrounding area, which is typified by detached dwellings set within generous plots and a well-vegetated landscape framework. The proposed bungalow adopts a modest scale and low profile, ensuring that it integrates sympathetically with its surroundings and avoids material harm to the character of the area or neighbouring amenity.
- 7.3 The proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land and will deliver biodiversity enhancements through native planting and habitat creation. The layout has been informed by arboricultural and ecological considerations to ensure the protection of existing landscape features, including adjacent ancient woodland. The development will also incorporate sustainable construction measures in accordance with Policy DP39.
- 7.4 Whilst the site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary, it is not isolated and forms part of an established cluster of residential development. The proposal therefore constitutes infill development that is consistent with the objectives of Neighbourhood Plan Policy CDNP04.2, subject to appropriate design considerations.
- 7.5 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, is engaged. The proposal would contribute to the supply of housing through delivery of a modest, well-designed dwelling on underutilised brownfield land, without giving rise to significant adverse impacts.
- 7.6 Overall, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development that accords with the overarching objectives of the development plan when read as a whole. The limited conflict with countryside policies is outweighed by the benefits of delivering an additional dwelling, making effective use of previously developed land, and enhancing biodiversity value. The development is therefore considered to represent an acceptable and policy-compliant form of development for which planning permission should be granted.

Appendix A

Pre-Application Advice

HE Hamish Evans <[redacted]>
To: Clare Bartlett
Fri 13/03/2026 15:22

Flagged Start by 16/03/2026. Due by 16/03/2026.

This sender Hamish.Evans@midsussex.gov.uk is from outside your organisation. [Block sender](#)

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Full Planning Application Form.... 2 MB
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You don't often get email from hamish.evans@midsussex.gov.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Clare,

Thank you for your enquiry relating to the above and apologies for the delayed response. Please find below my comments on the proposal.

The proposal is for the construction of a detached two-bedroom single storey dwelling at land to the west of Lake View Road Furnace Wood. The site is located within the countryside as defined by the Mid Sussex District Plan, to the south and east of the site is a public right of way and to the east of the site is Ancient Woodland, an Archaeological Notification Area and an Ancient Monument. The site consists of a private car park and open area of grass. The boundary treatment consists of significant tree lines, hedgerows and a post of rail fence. Lake View Road is located to the east of the site and residential properties are located to the north and south of the site.

The proposal would be assessed against the local development plan which in this area consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) and the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (CDNP). The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, West Sussex County Council's Guidance on Parking at New Developments - September 2020, The High Weald AONB Management Plan and the Technical housing standards - Nationally described space standard - March 2015 are also considered to be material planning considerations.

For assistance I have identified the relevant policies from the local development plan below:

Mid Sussex District Plan
DP4 – Housing
DP5 – Planning to Meet Future Housing Need
DP6 – Settlement Hierarchy
DP12 – Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
DP15 - New Homes in the Countryside
DP16 – High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DP17 - Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
DP21 – Transport
DP26 – Character and Design
DP27 – Dwelling Space Standards
DP28 – Accessibility
DP30 – Housing Mix
DP37 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
DP38 - Biodiversity
DP39 – Sustainable Design and Construction

Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan
CDNP04.2 - Infill Housing
CDNP05 - Control of New Developments
CDNP08 – Preventing of Coalescence
CDNP09 – Protect and Enhance Biodiversity
CDNP10 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
CDNP11 - Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Principle

The plot is situated on land located outside of the built up area, as defined by the MSDP.

Policy PD12 of the MSDP states:

‘The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or
- it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

Agricultural land of Grade 3a and above will be protected from non-agricultural development proposals. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, detailed field surveys should be undertaken and proposals should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality.

The Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the West Sussex County Council Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, the Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study and other available landscape evidence (including that gathered to support Neighbourhood Plans) will be used to assess the impact of development proposals on the quality of rural and landscape character.

Built-up area boundaries are subject to review by Neighbourhood Plans or through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council.

Economically viable mineral reserves within the district will be safeguarded.’

A similar ethos is contained within policy CDNP05 of the CDNP.

Policy DP15 of the MSDP states:

‘Provided that they would not be in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, new homes in the countryside will be permitted where special justification exists. Special justification is defined as:

- Where accommodation is essential to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full time rural workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work; or
- In the case of new isolated homes in the countryside, where the design of the dwelling is of exceptional quality and it enhances its immediate setting and is sensitive to the character of the area; or
- Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DP32: Rural Exception Sites; or
- The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy.’

Policy DP6 of the MSDP states:

‘Development will be permitted within towns and villages with defined built-up area boundaries. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale (with particular regard to DP26: Character and Design), and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement.

The growth of settlements will be supported where this meets identified local housing, employment and community needs. Outside defined built-up area boundaries, the expansion of settlements will be supported where:

1. The site is allocated in the District Plan, a Neighbourhood Plan or subsequent Development Plan Document or where the proposed development is for fewer than 10 dwellings; and
2. The site is contiguous with an existing built up area of the settlement; and
3. The development is demonstrated to be sustainable, including by reference to the settlement hierarchy.

The developer will need to satisfy the Council that:

- The proposal does not represent an underdevelopment of the site with regard to Policy DP26: Character and Design; or
- A large site is not brought forward in phases that individually meet the threshold but cumulatively does not.’

Policy CDNP04.2 of the CDNP states that:

‘Infill housing will be permitted provided it is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan and meet the following criteria: a) The spacing between buildings reflects the character of the street scene. b) The plot size is appropriate to the scale of the building. c) Gaps which provide views out of the village to surrounding countryside are maintained and materials are compatible with materials of existing/surrounding buildings d) The traditional boundary treatment of an area is retained and where feasible reinforced. e) Suitable access and on-site parking is provided without detriment to neighbouring properties. f) Amenities such as access, noise, privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded. g) The scale, height, and form of the development should be in character with the street scene. Where appropriate, special regard should be had to sustaining and enhancing the setting and features of heritage assets and the Areas of Townscape Character.’

As you can see from the above policies the threshold for new dwellings in the countryside being acceptable is a high one. It has not been demonstrated that the proposal is necessary for the purposes of agriculture or that they are to be used by an essential agricultural worker. The site is not allocated within the development plan for housing and it is not contiguous with the built-up area boundary. Notwithstanding this, policy CDNP04.2 does support the provided of infill housing where it is in accordance with the development plan and meets the criteria a-g. The CDNP does not include a policy that specifically restricts development outside the built-up area boundary and subject to the proposals compliance with the criteria within policy CDNP04.2 it is my informal opinion that the principle of development could be acceptable.

It should be noted that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites as per the requirements of paragraph 78 of the NPPF. In light of the above, this development needs to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. If a development is found to be sustainable, that would weigh heavily in favour of granting permission in the paragraph 11(d) balance. If however the development is not found to be sustainable, that is not the end of the matter; the Local Planning Authority still need to go through the weighing up process between the positive benefits of the scheme against any harm that may be caused, having particular regard for the key policies indicated in paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF. The necessary tilted balance assessment will be undertaken within the conclusion of this email.

Impact on the character of the area

As the proposed development is located within the countryside the principle of the proposal is contrary to Policy DP12 of the MSDP. The principal aim of Policy DP12 of the MSDP states: 'The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty.' The supporting text sets out the following:

'The primary objective of the District Plan with respect to the countryside is to secure its protection by minimising the amount of land taken for development and preventing development that does not need to be there. At the same time, it seeks to enhance the countryside, support the rural economy by accommodating well designed, appropriate new forms of development and changes in land use where a countryside location is required and where it does not adversely affect the rural environment. It is therefore necessary that all development in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built up area boundaries, must seek to maintain or enhance the intrinsic beauty and tranquillity of the countryside.'

Policy DP26 of the MSDP relates to character and design. It states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;
 - contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;
 - creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;
 - protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;
 - protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;
 - does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);
 - creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;
 - incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;
 - positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;
 - take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre;
- larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'

A similar ethos is contained within policies CDNP04.2, CDNP05 and CDNP08 of the CDNP. The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD also contains guidance regarding appropriate design.

Para 180 of the NPPF requires proposals to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'.

The proposed dwelling would be of a relatively modest scale with a low profile. The submitted documents states that sympathetic materials are to be used and the proposal would seek to retain the surrounding vegetation. Subject to this it is my informal opinion that the proposal is considered to maintain or enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the district and it would address the character of the surrounding landscape. As such the proposal should comply with the above policies.

High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy 16 of the District Plan requires proposals in the AONB to conserve or enhance natural beauty. A similar ethos is contained within paragraph 189 of the NPPF and the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029. The proposed development is relatively modest in its nature when compared to the wider AONB and due to its scale it would not involve significant alterations to the land and scenic beauty of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As such it is my informal opinion that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the landscape quality of the AONB.

Heritage Assets

To the west of the site is an Ancient Monument Warren Furnace. Policy DP34 of the MSDP requires heritage assets to be appropriately protected. I would recommend seeking advice from archaeological consultants to ensure that any heritage assets are suitably protected.

Highways and Accessibility

Policy DP21 of the District Plan relates to transport and requires proposals to provide adequate parking. It states:

In addition, para 115 states 'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'

The West Sussex County Council's Guidance on Parking at New Developments - September 2020 sets out parking standards and it has been advised that the proposal would utilise the existing access. I would recommend contacting WSCC Highways team for pre-application advice in this regard.

Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DP26 in part seeks to ensure that development:

'does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);'

The proposal would be a relatively significant distance from the existing residential properties within the surrounding area and it would be of a single storey nature. As such it is unlikely to cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants.

Housing Standards

Policy DP27 of the District Plan states that all new residential development should comply with minimum nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Policy DP37 of the Mid Sussex District Plan in part states:

'The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.'

Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.'

If the proposal would be located within 15 metres of existing trees then a Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement be submitted as part of the application. It should also be noted that Ancient Woodland is located to the west of the site. The proposal should be sited outside this 15 metres buffer zone of the Ancient Woodland.

Sustainability

Policy DP39 of the District Plan relates to sustainable design and construction and states that:

'All development proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and where appropriate and feasible according to the type and size of development and location should incorporate the following measures:

- o 'Minimise energy use through the design and layout of the scheme including through the use of natural lighting and ventilation;
- o Explore opportunities for efficient energy supply through the use of communal heating networks where viable and feasible;
- o Use renewable sources of energy;
- o Maximise efficient use of resources, including minimising waste and maximising recycling/ re-use of materials through both construction and occupation;
- o Limit water use to 110 litres/person/day in accordance with Policy DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment;
- o Demonstrate how the risks associated with future climate change have been planned for as part of the layout of the scheme and design of its buildings to ensure its longer term resilience.

Sustainability measures would need to be included as part of a future application and a sustainability statement should be included with the application..

Biodiversity

Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan seeks to ensure development:

‘Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances)’

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to planning and land management that leaves the natural environment in a better state than it was before. BNG will deliver measurable improvements for biodiversity by enhancing or creating new habitats in association with development. The requirement for BNG does not alter the existing legal requirements and protections for the natural environment such as protecting important habitats and species.

Biodiversity net gain is already referenced in the NPPF para 186 d) and opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of the design of the scheme especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Non-major developments for planning permission granted in England, with a few exemptions, have to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG under the Environment Act 2021. BNG is calculated using the approved Biodiversity Metric which measures the biodiversity value of habitats in ‘biodiversity units’ as a proxy for nature. The Biodiversity Metric is used to assess how a development might change the biodiversity value of a site. It can help to inform the design, layout and management of a site to support biodiversity. You are also advised to apply the mitigation hierarchy in your proposed development as set out in NPPF paragraph 186 a) and note the principle of additionality.

Below is a link to the Council’s website with advice on the BNG requirements.

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/biodiversity-net-gain/>

Ashdown Forest

All planning applications for residential development within 7km of Ashdown Forest will need to mitigate the potential impacts of the development to ensure the effects of any increase in visitors to Ashdown Forest are addressed. This usually requires payments to the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). Further information on this matter can be found through the following weblink:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/protecting-ashdown-forest/>

Conclusion

Taking into account the above assessment it is my informal opinion that the proposal would represent an infill development and in principle it would comply with criteria a-g within policy CDNP04.2. As such it is considered that the proposal could be supported within policy CDNP04.2 and it would maintain the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District.

The proposal does not comply with policies DP4, DP6 and DP15 of the MSDP. The development represents a new dwelling in the countryside that does not have a special justification as set out within the above policies. Future occupants would be highly reliant on unsustainable forms of transport and the proposal would consist of an unsustainable form of development within the countryside which is not supported by the above policies.

As a result, it is considered that the proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole. This is not the end point as planning law requires that ‘where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise’.

As the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, it follows that the relevant policies for the supply of housing from the development plan are out-of-date (footnote 8 of paragraph 11 NPPF). As such, reduced weight should be given to these policies.

In these circumstances paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole (having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination), or specific policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development.

In terms of the benefits of the proposal the proposed development would result in the creation of construction jobs during the build period. The additional, albeit limited, population could help generate more local spending in the local community, provision of infrastructure and services as well as additional Council Tax receipts. It should also be noted that the proposed development is adjoined by existing residential dwellings to the north, south and east of the site and there are several residential dwellings within the surrounding area. The proposal represents an infilling between existing residential properties and due to the existing hardstanding on the site it is also considered to be previously developed land. These are all material considerations that weigh in favour of the development. The provision of 1 new dwelling will make small but a useful contribution to the district's housing supply and would help meet the identified need for housing. There are not considered to be any environmental benefits to this proposal.

In this case substantial harm can be demonstrated as the proposed site is located within an unsustainable location which would result in a high reliance on private car use.

Limited information has been provided in regard to a number of aspects.

In weighing up these issues, when taken together, the planning balance is considered to fall in favour of granting planning permission if an application were to be submitted.

Please find below links to the relevant development plan documents and other material planning considerations:

Mid Sussex District Plan - <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3406/mid-sussex-district-plan.pdf>

Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan Neighbourhood Plan - <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2769/crawley-down-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD - <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/5611/mid-sussex-design-guide-spd.pdf>

National Planning Policy Framework - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

West Sussex County Council's Guidance on Parking at New Developments - September 2020 - https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/1847/guidance_parking_res_dev.pdf

Technical housing standards - Nationally described space standard - March 2015 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1012976/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard.pdf

The High Weald AONB Management Plan - AONB Management Plan - High Weald National Landscape

I have attached the relevant application form, guidance notes and checklist or you can apply online at the below link.

[Apply for Planning Permission - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

The above represents my informal view only based on the information contained in your enquiry and does not prejudice the council in the determination of any future application.

I hope the above is of use to you.

The information contained in this letter may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Unless the information contained is legally exempt from disclosure, we cannot guarantee that we will not provide the whole or part of this advice to a third party making a request for information about the subject matter.

Thank you,
Kind regards,

Hamish Evans
Planning Officer



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