

Planning and Affordable Housing Statement

(including Minerals Resource Assessment and Lighting Assessment)

Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield

October 2023



ECE Planning

Project Name: Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield

Location Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield

Client: Sigma Homes Ltd

File Reference: P2043

Issue	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
PL1	21.08.2023	M Smith	C Barker	Initial Draft
PL2	14.09.2023	M Smith	C Barker	Client Issue
PL3	05.10.2023	M Smith	C Barker	Planning Issue

ECE Planning

Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. The Site	6
3. Planning History	9
4. The Proposal	10
5. Policy Overview	13
5.1. Introduction	13
5.2. Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan 2022	13
5.3. Adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031	14
5.4. Saved Policies from the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004	15
5.5. Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031	15
5.6. Supplementary Planning Documents	15
5.7. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	15
5.8. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	16
6. Planning Appraisal.....	17
6.1. Introduction	17
6.2. Principle of Development	17
6.3. Landscape-Led Design	18
6.4. Landscape Visual Impact	19
6.5. Open Space and Play Space Provision	20
6.6. Design, Form and Appearance	21
6.7. Residential Amenity.....	21
6.8. Housing Mix and Affordable Housing	22
6.9. Ecology	24
6.10. Arboriculture.....	24
6.11. Access, Highways and Sustainable Transport	25
6.12. Flood Risk and Drainage	25
6.13. Air Quality	26
6.14. Noise	27
6.15. Energy and Sustainability	27
6.16. Heritage and Archaeology	28
6.17. Land Contamination.....	28
6.18. Minerals Resource Assessment	29
6.19. Lighting Assessment.....	29
7. Conclusion.....	30
Appendix A – Site Allocations DPD Policy SA23 Compliance.....	31

ECE Planning

Figures

Figure 1 - Location of Application Site.....	6
Figure 2 - Application Site in Context of Bus Stops and Services in Cuckfield.....	7
Figure 3 - Proposed Site Layout.....	10
Figure 4 - Site Allocation Map - Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD (2021)	14

Tables

Table 1 – Housing Mix and Tenure.....	11
---------------------------------------	----

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement ('Statement') has been produced on behalf of our clients, **Sigma Homes Limited** in support of a full planning application for the development of Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield, RH17 5HG (the 'Site'). The development description for the proposal ('Proposed Development') is set out as follows:

Residential development of 55 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian access; car parking; open space, play space; landscaping and all other associated works.

- 1.2. The key objective to this development is to deliver a high quality, landscape led, sustainable extension to Cuckfield which provides enhanced and accessible open space; respects the character of the village and conserves and enhances the setting of the High Weald AONB.
- 1.3. The site has been allocated for residential development within the Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document ('Site Allocations DPD') adopted on 29th June 2022, under SA 23.
- 1.4. The Site Allocations DPD alongside the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031 ('MSDP') and the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 forms the 'Development Plan' in this instance. Principles and policies established in Supplementary Planning Documents, the National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') and National Planning Policy Guidance ('NPPG') are all material considerations that have, in combination, fed into the design process of this development
- 1.5. This statement will consider the relevant background for the determination of the planning application including a description of the site and its surroundings, the planning history, relevant planning policy and an appraisal of the proposal in planning terms.
- 1.6. The application is accompanied by the following documents and drawings:

Planning Application Form, Notices and S106 Obligation Forms

Planning and Affordable Housing Statement

Statement of Community Involvement

Design and Access Statement

Architectural Drawings

Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Flood Risk Assessment

Surface Water and Foul Drainage Assessment

Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

Detailed Landscape Design Plan

Lighting Assessment

Transport Statement and Road Safety Audit

Travel Plan

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Sustainability and Energy Assessment

Acoustic Assessment

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Protected Species Report

Site Investigation - Phase I Desk Study, Site Reconnaissance & Phase II Site Investigation Report

Mineral Resource Assessment

Air Quality Assessment

2. The Site

- 2.1. The Application Site is located in a sustainable location to the northeast of the settlement of Cuckfield, east of Ardingly Road and immediately south of Hanlye Lane, shown below in Figure 1.
- 2.2. The site is located entirely within the built-up area boundary of Cuckfield by virtue of the allocation **SA 23 of the Mid Sussex Site Allocation DPD**.



Figure 1 - Location of Application Site

- 2.3. Cuckfield is categorised as a Tier Two Settlement (Larger Village) within the Mid Sussex District Plan, acting as a local service centre by providing key services in the rural area of Mid Sussex. Cuckfield Village provides a range of services and facilities including a food store, cafes, pharmacy, medical centre, post office, primary school and secondary school.
- 2.4. Cuckfield is well connected with Haywards Heath Railway Station located approx. 3km from the site. Regular rail services connect Haywards Heath to the south coast and London. Cuckfield is also served by several bus routes including the 31, 62, and 271, connecting Cuckfield to Haywards Heath, Crawley, Burgess Hill, and Brighton.

ECE Planning

- 2.1. Bus stops are located on Ardingly Road adjacent to Longacre Crescent approx. 80m walking distance from the application site. The context of bus routes relative to the site are shown below in Figure 2.

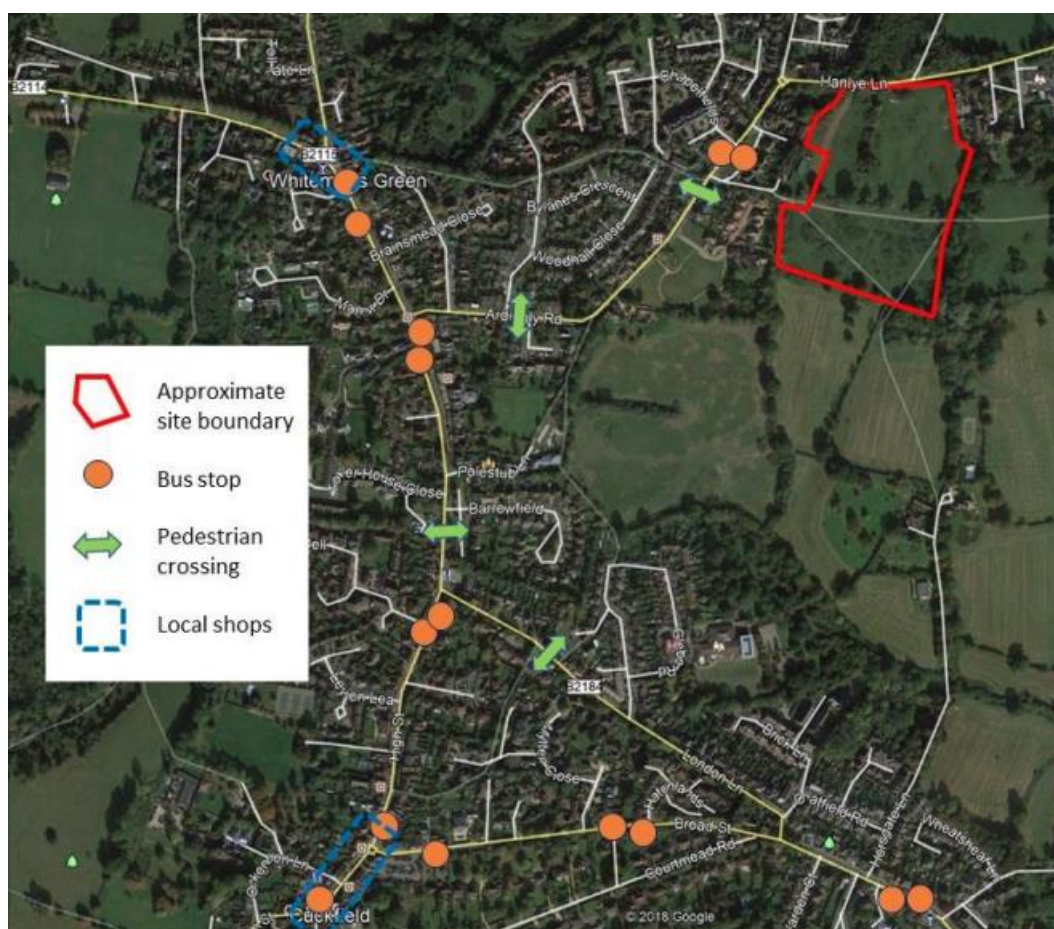


Figure 2 - Application Site in Context of Bus Stops and Services in Cuckfield

- 2.2. The application site comprises an area of approximately 5.75 hectares. The site is rectangular in shape and comprises two loosely structured fields of similar size, subdivided by a line of mature trees and other vegetation.
- 2.3. The Site is located between existing residential development on its western and north-eastern sides. Residential properties are located off Hanlye Lane, immediately adjacent to the Site's north-eastern boundary.
- 2.4. Further residential properties at Stocklands and Longacre Crescent lie adjacent to the site, along the north-western boundary, with properties along Horsefield Green located to the south-west of the site.
- 2.5. The Site itself is bounded by tall hedgerows and mature trees that form a robust vegetated boundary to the Site. The eastern boundary is formed by tall and dense linear woodland acting as a visual screen when viewed from the east.
- 2.6. A number of the trees on the Site are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), while immediately south of the site, below the southern parcel of land, there are two areas of ancient woodland: Horsgate Wood East and Horsgate Wood West.

ECE Planning

- 2.7. A pond is located beyond the north western edge of the Site, at the junction of Hanlye Lane and Ardingly Road, and a watercourse runs from this pond southwards, along the western edge of the site. The site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.8. There are three public rights of way (PRoW) located within the southern parcel of the Site:
- Footpath 19cCU - running east-west along the central spine of trees separating the northern and southern fields which comprise the Site;
 - Footpath 18dCU - aligned north-south along the eastern edge of the Site;
 - Footpath 17CU - which crosses the Site's southern field in a roughly north-west to south-east orientation.
- 2.9. The topography of the site falls away to the south with scenic views into and out of the site, and particularly south over the Low Weald towards the South Downs.
- 2.10. The boundary of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located to the north of Hanlye Lane. This comprises predominantly open countryside dissected by hedgerows, tree belts and woodlands, with the occasional scattered farm and outbuilding, and small settlements.
- 2.11. The Site is located near the crest of a sandstone ridge, in the High Weald, which is a favourable location for archaeological sites. The site does not fall within the setting of any Listed Buildings or Heritage assets.

3. Planning History

- 3.1. This section sets out the planning history relevant to the determination of this planning application. This includes details of planning applications which have recently been submitted within the locality.
- 3.2. A search of the Local Planning Authority's (LPAs) online planning register has been undertaken, which highlighted there was no relevant planning history in relation to the site.

Surrounding Area

- 3.3. The following applications relate to development within the vicinity of the application site and provide context to the wider setting of the area.
- 3.4. **12/03750/OUT** - Land Parcel East Of Ardingly Road Cuckfield West Sussex - Development to provide a mix of 14 two, three and four bedroom dwellings (Use class C3), associated infrastructure, landscaping and access. – **Approved February 2013**
- 3.5. **13/02760/REM** - Land Parcel East Of Ardingly Road Cuckfield West Sussex - Development to provide a mix of 14 two, three and four bedroom dwellings (use class C3), associated infrastructure, landscaping and access. Reserved matters approval pursuant to 12/03750/OUT for details of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of development. Amended plans received 17.10.13 Altering plot design/layout and amending mix in accordance with outline approval. – **Approved April 2014**
- 3.6. Two applications relate to Horsefield Green development located to the southwest of the application site. This has recently been built out over the past few years.
- 3.7. **DM/21/3755** - Demolition of buildings and erection of 13 dwellings along with parking and landscaping. Amended plans received 21/2/2022 showing retention of trees 6, 15, 21, 23 and 25, re-positioning of plot 9, amendments to boundary of plots 1-3, changes to internal layout of plots, relocation of home office to plot 7, amended fence line, removal of shared footpath to secondary road as well as submission of addendum to Transport Statement, updated Road Safety Audit and landscape masterplan. - **Approved June 2022**
- 3.8. This approved permission site is a Sigma Homes Ltd development located further east along Hanlye Lane for 13 dwellings, which is currently under construction. Design elements of this scheme will be reflected within the proposed scheme for continuity of character in this area of Hanlye Lane.

4. The Proposal

- 1.1. The application seeks Full Planning Permission for the erection of 55no. residential dwellings including the provision of 30% affordable dwellings at Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield. The proposed description of development is as follows:

Residential development of 55 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian access; car parking; open space, play space; landscaping and all other associated works.

- 1.2. The proposed layout for the development is shown below in Figure 3 and details the quantum of built form development contained to the northern portion of the site, providing open space, play space drainage features and landscaping to the southern portion of the site.



Figure 3 - Proposed Site Layout

ECE Planning

Density, Mix and Tenure

- 1.3. The application proposes 55 dwellings. The quantum and mix of development is set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Housing Mix and Tenure

Dwelling Size	Market Housing		Affordable Housing		Total	
	No of Units	%	No of Units	%	No of Units	%
1-Bedroom	5	13%	4	23%	9	17%
2-Bedroom	3	8%	7	42%	10	18%
3-Bedroom	22	58%	6	35%	28	51%
4-Bedroom	4	10.5%	-	-	4	7%
5-Bedroom	4	10.5%	-	-	4	7%
Total	38	70%	17	30%	55	100%

- 1.4. As displayed in Table 1, the housing mix ranges from one- and two-bedroom properties up to four and five-bedroom family homes and is generally in accordance with the housing need identified in the SHMA.
- 1.5. The application proposes 17 affordable dwellings (30%), of which 13 (75%) will be social or affordable rented homes, with the remaining 4 (25%) being intermediate homes.
- 1.6. The density of development is 9.8 dwellings per hectare, or 18.5 dwellings per hectare when excluding the open space in the southern parcel of land.
- 1.7. One of the affordable units will be provided as a wheelchair accessible dwelling (M4(3) building regulation standards). A total of 11 properties (20% of the total housing provision) will meet the M4(2) standard.

Landscaping

- 1.8. The proposed site layout has been landscape-led, with built form development confined to the northern parcel and the southern parcel of land remaining public open space.
- 1.9. A key feature of the proposed layout is the central 'Green Spine' which runs from north to south, through the northern parcel to create a well-balanced layout, with an equal mix of dwellings to the east and west.
- 1.10. Footpaths and sustainable urban drainage features such as a swale run through the central 'Green Spine' with enhanced planting to allow for a useable open space.
- 1.11. Formal play space is incorporated into the site layout, which will be from natural materials such as logs and timber to contribute to the landscape-led design.

Design, Form and Appearance

- 1.12. In terms of design, the proposed houses comprise single storey, 2, 2.5 and 3-storey detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings some of which are bungalows and maisonettes.
- 1.13. The larger three storey dwellings are located centrally within the site overlooking the Green Spine, while the 2.5 storey dwellings are located towards the south where the topography of the site has dropped away to overlook the southern parcel of land and the tree belt through the centre of the site.

ECE Planning

- 1.14. The design of the dwellings echo and compliment the surroundings styles of Cuckfield following a contemporary interpretation of traditional design.
- 1.15. Proposed materials traditionally used within the wider town-scape will be utilised and include slate roofs with a mixture of local facing bricks and timber boarding. These will be complimented by contemporary additions that include metal work on the roofs and elevations to animate the facades.
- 1.16. Key elements of detailing have been designed in order to create a cohesive design solution. These include; changes between ground and first floor materials, brick detailing with projecting flemish bond pattern that reference local brickwork design, stone surrounds to windows and the use of a bespoke colour palette used for windows, rainwater goods and fascia board.

Access and Parking

- 1.1. Access to the site will be achieved via vehicular access from Hanlye Lane, along the north of the site towards the western side. This access will be a priority junction with a bell-mouth entrance.
- 1.2. The internal road layout of the site circle three residential blocks that focus around the central Green Spine, the landscaped area running from the north to the south of the northern parcel, comprising pedestrian footpaths.
- 1.3. The proposal provides a key pedestrian link through the site, connecting the bridle way north of Hanlye Lane to the southern parcel of land and to the existing Public Rights of Way (Footpath 19cCU, Footpath 18dCU and Footpath 17CU), creating greater connectivity with Cuckfield Village and Haywards Heath.
- 1.4. The proposed development will include the provision of 121 residential car parking spaces which provides approx. 2 parking spaces per dwelling and 19 unallocated, visitor parking spaces.

5. Policy Overview

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.1.2. In this case the Development Plan for the area consists of the Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations DPD 2022, the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031, and saved policies from the Local Plan 2004.
- 5.1.3. The National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG), the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance are material considerations.

5.2. Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations Development Plan 2022

- 5.2.1. The Site Allocations DPD identifies sufficient housing sites to provide a five-year housing land supply to 2031 and also makes sure that enough land is allocated to meet identified employment needs. The document includes mainly site specific policy although it also updates the housing requirements for the District previously set out within the MSDP. As such the following policies are considered most pertinent:

SA10 Housing

SA11 Additional Housing Allocations

SA23 Land at Hanlye Lane to the east of Ardingly Road, Cuckfield

SA38 Air Quality

- 5.2.2. Policy SA23 is the site-specific policy applicable to the application site. It is a detailed criteria-based policy which sets out that any development must follow a **landscape-led approach**.
- 5.2.3. The policy describes the allocation as:

Housing allocation and formal and informal open space.

- 5.2.4. The Site is allocated for 55 new dwellings. The objective is set out as follows:

To deliver a high quality, landscape led, sustainable extension to Cuckfield, which provides enhanced and accessible open space; respects the character of the village and conserves and enhances the setting of the High Weald AONB; and which is comprehensively integrated with the settlement so residents can access existing facilities.

- 5.2.5. Figure 4 below shows the allocated site, and details the breakdown of the northern and southern portion, with the area of development contained to the northern parcel, and the southern parcel of the site to remain 'Semi-Improved Grassland'.

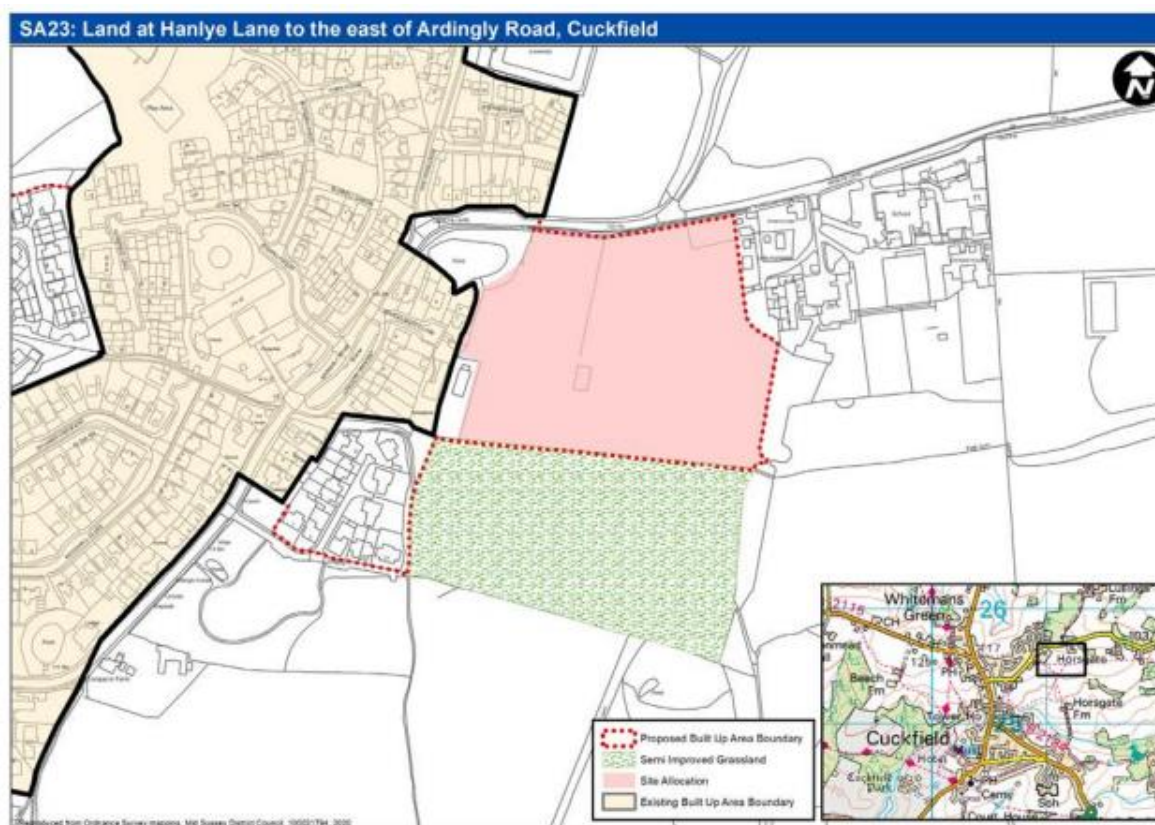


Figure 4 - Site Allocation Map - Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD (2021)

- 5.2.6. The site-specific policy is considered in greater detail within the Appraisal section of this report and Appendix A of this Statement.

5.3. Adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

- 5.3.1. The MSDP 2014-2031 was adopted in 2018. The Plan sets out a vision for Mid Sussex and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved. Relevant policies are set out below:

DP4: Housing

DP5: Planning to Meet Future Housing Need

DP6: Settlement Hierarchy

DP18: Setting of the South Downs National Park

DP20: Securing Infrastructure

DP21: Transport

DP24: Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities

DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services

DP26: Character and Design

DP27: Dwelling Space Standards

DP28: Accessibility

DP30: Housing Mix

DP31: Affordable Housing

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

ECE Planning

DP38: Biodiversity

DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction

DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

5.4. Saved Policies from the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004

- 5.4.1. The Mid Sussex Local Plan (adopted on May 27 2004) is largely replaced by the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2018, although some policies in the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 have been saved on adoption of the District Plan. Relevant policies are considered in the following chapters of this Statement.

5.5. Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031

- 5.5.1. The Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) was adopted by Cuckfield Parish Council in 2014, to guide development in the village between 2011-2031. Relevant policies are set out below:

Policy CNP 1 – Design of New Development and Conservation

Policy CNP 4 – Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

Policy CNP 5 - Protect and Enhance the Countryside

Policy CNP 7 - Housing Development within the Built Up Area Boundary

Policy CNP 8 - Affordable Housing

Policy CNP 16 – Transport Impact of Development

Policy CNP 21 - Securing Infrastructure

5.6. Supplementary Planning Documents

- 5.6.1. The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to this application:

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted 2018)

Planning Noise Advice Document: Sussex (September 2021)

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (2020)

Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD (2018)

5.7. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.7.1. Updated in July 2021, the following are considered the most relevant sections of the Framework applicable to the Proposed Development:

Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Chapter 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 11 – Making Efficient Use of Land

Chapter 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

ECE Planning

5.8. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 5.8.1. The PPG was published by the Government in March 2014 and is updated regularly. The PPG supplement those overarching objectives of The Framework. The guidance provided by the PPG has been fully considered in the creation of this application and the Proposed Development is seen to be fully compliant with it.

6. Planning Appraisal

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. The application is accompanied by the following documents and drawings:

Principle of Development

Landscape-Led Design

Landscape Visual Impact

Open Space and Play Space Provision

Design, Form and Appearance

Residential Amenity

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

Ecology

Arboriculture

Access, Highways and Sustainable Transport

Flood Risk and Drainage

Air Quality

Noise

Energy and Sustainability

Heritage and Archaeology

Land Contamination

Minerals

Lighting

6.2. Principle of Development

6.2.1. The site is allocated within the Mid-Sussex Site Allocations DPD for the development of 55 dwellings, as such the principle of development is clearly established.

6.2.2. Policy SA 23 of the DPD sets out the key criteria by which any planning application is expected to be assessed against. Appendix A to this Planning Statement provides a detailed response as to how the application addresses each part of the site-specific policy.

6.2.3. A key requirement of the policy is to ensure that the scheme delivers a landscape-led approach to development. As demonstrated below the proposals have sought to balance the protection of the most important landscape features of the site whilst respecting the character of Cuckfield and conserving and enhancing the setting of the High Weald AONB, limiting impact in landscape and visual terms whilst also delivering the on-site policy requirements of the Development Plan.

ECE Planning

- 6.2.4. Further to this, the provision of 55 residential dwellings will provide an important role in enabling the Council to deliver housing in the short term. Paragraph 60 of the Framework is clear that the Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes and paragraph 74 requires Local Authorities to identify and update a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to meet at least five years' worth of housing measured against their housing target. Delivery of housing on allocated sites such as SA 23 is therefore absolutely essential in the short term if the Council is to deliver housing aligned with their housing trajectory. Meeting housing needs also relates to affordable housing and accessible housing. The scheme in this respect will assist in ensure local needs are met.
- 6.2.5. The scheme has therefore been careful to balance numerous competing requirements. Section 7 of this statement provides a conclusion and planning balance summary which demonstrates why the proposals are acceptable in planning terms.

6.3. Landscape-Led Design

- 6.3.1. The principal objective of Policy SA23 is to deliver a development that follows a landscape-led masterplan, with the following landscape considerations to be included within the proposed design:
- *Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements in order to conserve and enhance the setting of the High Weald AONB adjacent to the north and minimise impacts on the wider countryside.*
 - *Protect the rural character of Hanlye Lane and the approach to Cuckfield village by minimising the loss of the existing hedgerow and trees along the northern boundary.*
 - *Sensitively design the layout to take account of the topography of the site, and views into and out of the site.*
 - *The site contains a number of trees many with Tree Preservation Orders. Retain and enhance existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site, and on the boundaries, and incorporate these into the landscaping structure and Green Infrastructure proposals for the site in order to minimise impacts on the wider countryside. Open space should be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure.*
 - *Protect the character and amenity of the existing public footpaths that cross the site and seek to integrate these with the Green Infrastructure proposals and the footpath to the north.*
- 6.3.2. In response to these requirements, a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the design of the site layout. This is discussed further in Section 6.4 of this report.
- 6.3.3. As demonstrated by the submitted DAS and landscaping proposals, the development is considered to be landscape-led. A key benefit of the scheme is the high-quality landscape proposals including the significant amount of public open space, along with tree and hedgerow planting.
- 6.3.4. All trees along the boundaries of the site are to be retained, with the exception of one TPO (in poor condition) and a small section of hedgerow, to allow access onto the site from Hanlye Lane.
- 6.3.5. Substantial additional planting of trees and hedgerows is proposed along the northern and eastern boundary, assisting in screening the proposed development from neighbouring residents at Horsgate Mews, whilst protecting and enhancing the rural character of the area along Hanlye Lane.

ECE Planning

- 6.3.6. In accordance with Policy SA 23, the southern parcel of the site is to remain undeveloped, open space. In addition to this, a large open space is located centrally within the site running from north to south, considered the 'Green Spine'.
- 6.3.7. The 'Green Spine' is immediately visible upon entry to the site from Hanlye Lane, and includes tree planting, natural play space and pedestrian links to the south of the site, which comprises open and equipped play space.
- 6.3.8. The central 'Green Spine' is overlooked by residential dwellings, allowing for passive surveillance of the open community area.
- 6.3.9. To the southern end of the site, the landscape proposal has followed the indicative layout of the site allocation with substantial public open space retained to the southern parcel. The central swath of woodland has also been retained and enhanced with additional planting to create a visually attractive buffer that will soften and screen the development in views from the south yet maintaining views out towards the Downs.
- 6.3.10. Existing public footpaths within the southern parcel are being maintained and enhanced to allow year round access, and additional footpaths and cycle ways are proposed to the north to link the site together and create improved connectivity across the site and within the wider setting of Cuckfield.
- 6.3.11. Three attenuation basins are proposed to the southern parcel of the site and a naturally equipped play space (timber frame structures/log seating etc). The attenuation basins have been designed to be an attractive feature in visual terms whilst also providing ecological enhancement.
- 6.3.12. Significant tree planting, including tree-lined streets, hedgerow planting, and open space is proposed on-site, alongside a new Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) all of which will provide a biodiversity net-gain, and assist with flood mitigation, carbon capture and urban cooling across the site.
- 6.3.13. The proposal is considered to deliver an exceptionally well considered scheme in landscape terms and is considered to landscape-led in line with the Policy SA23.

6.4. Landscape Visual Impact

- 6.4.1. As detailed in Section 6.3, A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is required under Policy SA23, in order to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements in order to conserve and enhance the setting of the High Weald AONB adjacent to the north and minimise impacts on the wider countryside. On this basis, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been submitted alongside this application.
- 6.4.2. An assessment of landscape effects considers the proposed change on a landscape and how it will impact on the elements that make up the landscape, its aesthetic aspects, perceptual aspects and distinctive character. In this instance, the setting of the AONB and the South Downs NP has been an important consideration in the design process.
- 6.4.3. The LVIA has considered the impacts of the proposed design from several key viewpoints that surround the site, ranging from immediately adjacent to up to 0.5kms away. The LVIA acknowledges that the proposed development will be visible from some of these viewpoints, however has assessed that the site occupies a relatively small visual envelope, as a result of the surrounding built form to the east and west, the undulating landform and topography of the site, and the mature vegetation that surrounds the site.

ECE Planning

- 6.4.4. It is acknowledged that the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan Policy CNP 5 seeks to maintain distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from a public vantage point. The Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan outlines the view from Hanlye Lane looking south towards the South Downs as one of these distinctive views.
- 6.4.5. This has been considered within the proposal and has helped inform the design of the layout, with key avenues included, from north to south to maintain these glimpse views of the Downs when travelling down Hanlye Lane.
- 6.4.6. When viewed from a distance, a key consideration of the site is the Green Spine, which runs centrally through the middle of the site. The Green Spine has incorporated substantial landscaping that when viewed from a distance will contribute to the rural landscape of the surrounding area, and help minimise the impact of the proposed development within the wider countryside setting.
- 6.4.7. Further to this, it is important to recognise that the site has been allocated for residential development, as such there will be some visual impact to the site and surrounding area however the proposed layout has been informed by the LVIA to limit the overall impact on the surrounding landscape.
- 6.4.8. The LVIA concludes that:
- The proposed development is anticipated to result in no substantial adverse impacts to the landscape baseline at a residual stage with only material change experienced from within the site boundary from nearby the proposed residential dwellings. Therefore the proposed scheme is judged to be acceptable on landscape and visual grounds.*
- 6.4.9. In landscape and visual terms, the Proposed Development is considered to follow the requirements of policy to deliver a truly landscape-led scheme. For further information, please refer to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

6.5. Open Space and Play Space Provision

- 6.5.1. Policy DP24 (Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities) and DP26 (Character and Design) of the MSDP supports the provision of community spaces and the maintenance of open spaces. DP24 of the MSDP requires the on-site provision of play areas and equipment for all new residential development.
- 6.5.2. Policy SA23, requires the proposed development to create a well-connected area of open space on the land to the south, suitable for informal and formal recreation, that enhances and sensitively integrates the existing rights of way.
- 6.5.3. As displayed within the proposed Site Layout, the southern parcel of land has remained undeveloped, 'Semi Improved Grassland' that has been enhanced through formal and informal landscaping to provide an accessible, attractive, open space as part of the proposed development.
- 6.5.4. A small portion of the open space will be formalised through the provision of a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) providing equipped play and informal recreation space for residents of the development and existing residents of Cuckfield, in line with Policy DP24 and SA23.
- 6.5.5. The LEAP is proposed to comprise natural play space, that reflects the history of the local areas such as those found in the Cuckfield recreation ground play area.

ECE Planning

6.5.6. The existing PROWs will be enhanced with natural aggregate/hoggin to allow improved access and pedestrian connectivity to and across the site, to create natural corridors and an alternative link to Haywards Heath that does not follow Hanlye Lane. The natural aggregate will allow year round use of the public rights of way, which can otherwise be boggy and water logged in the winter.

6.5.7. Additional open space and natural play space is also proposed within the northern developed parcel of land. The layout has provided generously sized open spaces across the Site, in particular the central 'Green Spine', which provides a focal point for the Proposed Development.

6.6. Design, Form and Appearance

6.6.1. Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to 'Achieving well-designed places' with paragraph 134 referring to the significant weight that should be given to Proposed Development that is reflective of local design policies and government guidance as well as design which promotes high levels of sustainability with a standard of design that fits the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

6.6.2. Policy DP26: Character and Design of the MSDP requires all development and surrounding spaces to reflect the distinctive character of towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside.

6.6.3. Policy SA23 of the Site Allocations DPD also sets out design expectations with regards to urban design principles, in terms of creating a suitable development edge while orientating development to create a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement and wider countryside.

6.6.4. The design, form and appearance of the development has been informed by the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, creating a landscape-led development, that encourages pedestrian movement into and through the Site (again as required by Policy SA23) and provides a number of open green spaces for local residents to enjoy.

6.6.5. The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (the 'Design Guide') sets out clear principles and objectives that aim to guide applicants to deliver high quality new development across Mid Sussex that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable.

6.6.6. By following the key principles of the Design Guide, the proposed dwellings are of exceptionally high-quality architectural design and have been informed by the surrounding context of the area, with an influence of both contemporary and traditional-style design.

6.6.7. The proposed dwellings are bespoke to this development, however design features from the approved scheme (DM/21/3755) further east along Hanlye Lane, have been included within the design to allow for continuity, while also allowing individuality of the dwellings.

6.6.8. This is considered in greater detail within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. Please refer to the DAS for further information.

6.6.9. In following the requirements of Policy SA23, and the guidance set out within the Design Guide, the Proposed Development is considered to be high quality in design terms.

6.7. Residential Amenity

6.7.1. Chapter 12 of the NPPF refers to the importance of achieving well-designed places. Part f of paragraph 130 sets out the importance of high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

6.7.2. The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD sets out a range of design principles for Residential Amenity within Chapter 8. The key design principles are set out as follows.

ECE Planning

- 6.7.3. Privacy is considered in principle DG42 which sets out the considerations for privacy being the design and positioning of windows and doors of buildings (as well as habitable rooms), the topography and height of adjacent buildings, the provision of good noise insulation and the relationship of the parking, gardens, front defensible space, balconies with the adjacent buildings. It is also advised that overlooking of private amenity space is avoided.
- 6.7.4. With regards to existing residents, the layout has been carefully designed to ensure an acceptable form of development that maintains the privacy of existing residents. The key areas of the Site in this regard relates to those properties on the eastern and western boundaries.
- 6.7.5. The existing neighbouring relationship with properties at Horsgate Mews, along the eastern boundary is well screened with existing trees and vegetation. This boundary will be enhanced with additional planting to further screen the proposed development from the existing rear gardens.
- 6.7.6. Stocklands Close is located to the west of the site, with two properties (9-11 Stocklands Close) having rear gardens that will back onto the western boundary of the site. To limit the impact on the existing dwellings, Units 1 to 3 of the proposed development will be bungalows to reduce overlooking and loss of light. The neighbouring relationship has been carefully considered with these existing units, and back-to-back distances are deemed appropriate. The existing hedgerows along this boundary will be enhanced to further screen the existing and proposed units from one another.
- 6.7.7. The Proposed Development has been designed to consider the privacy of future residents also. Rear gardens are proposed to be bounded by close boarded fences offering privacy to future residents. In addition, the rear to rear relationships of circa and rear to flank separation distances are considered to be entirely acceptable in planning terms.
- 6.7.8. It is considered that by virtue of the separation distances, selective building heights and the proposed screening, the privacy of future and existing residents shall be maintained as required by the Mid Sussex Design Guide principles.
- 6.7.9. In light of the Mid Sussex Design Guide design principles, the Proposed Development is considered to be acceptable in residential amenity terms.

6.8. Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

- 6.8.1. The proposed development seeks to deliver high quality homes in the form of one, two, three, four and five-bedroom dwellings to meet projected future household needs for the local area, and with particular focus on the crucial affordability need in this area. The proposed mix of dwellings is as follows:

Table 1 - Housing Mix and Tenure

Dwelling Size	Market Housing		Affordable Housing		Total	
	No of Units	%	No of Units	%	No of Units	%
1-Bedroom	5	13%	4	23%	9	17%
2-Bedroom	3	8%	7	42%	10	18%
3-Bedroom	22	58%	6	35%	28	51%
4-Bedroom	4	10.5%	-	-	4	7%
5-Bedroom	4	10.5%	-	-	4	7%
Total	38	70%	17	30%	55	100%

ECE Planning

Housing Mix

- 6.8.2. Policy DP30 of the MSDP requires that schemes provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes from new development that reflects current and future local housing needs. The policy also requires that *“evidence of housing need will be based on the best available evidence”*.
- 6.8.3. In this respect, the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2021) sets out the following mix:
- 1 bedroom – 5-10%
 - 2 bedroom – 20-25%
 - 3 bedroom – 40-45%
 - 4+ bedroom – 25-30%
- 6.8.4. As shown in Table 1 above, the proposal broadly accords with this split, with the majority of proposed dwellings being two and three-bedroom to provide family sized dwellings, with an appropriate provision of additional larger four and five-beds, to cover the needs of larger family units.
- 6.8.5. A slightly larger provision of one-bedroom dwellings has been provided on site in comparison to the SHMA, represented by a mix of housing types including apartments, maisonettes and bungalows.

Affordable Housing

- 6.8.6. Policy DP31 of the MSDP requires the provision of a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing for developments of 11 or more dwellings. This policy further stipulates that a mix of tenure of affordable housing (approximately 75% social or affordable rented homes, with the remaining 25% for intermediate homes) should be delivered unless the best available evidence supports a different mix.
- 6.8.7. The proposed development is considered to be policy compliant, providing 17 affordable dwellings which equates to 30% on site provision.
- 6.8.8. Of the 17 affordable dwellings proposed, 13 (75%) will be social or affordable rented homes, with the remaining 4 (25%) being intermediate homes/shared ownership.
- 6.8.9. The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD requires affordable housing to have the same external appearance and quality of finishes as private housing. This is demonstrated across the proposed street scenes, layout and elevations, which demonstrates a ‘tenure blind’ development with quality design and appearance across both market and affordable housing.
- 6.8.10. The Mid Sussex Affordable Housing SPD requires that development shall not be clustered by more than 10 dwellings in one area. The layout plan demonstrates two individual clusters of 9 units and 8 units, separated by a spine road. Within these clusters the tenure mix is pepper-potted with shared ownership units breaking up the clustering of affordable rent. This creates a balanced mix of communities on the site, with market housing (shared ownership/First Homes) interspersed within the social rent units.
- 6.8.11. It is also acknowledged that Affordable Housing Providers have an increased preference for larger hubs of affordable units together, with regards to on-site management.
- 6.8.12. It is considered that with regards to the affordable housing provision and housing mix, the proposed development broadly meets policy requirements.

ECE Planning

6.9. Ecology

- 6.9.1. Policy DP38 of the MSDP requires biodiversity to be protected and enhanced by ensuring that development;

'Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and

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);

- 6.9.2. Policy SA23 seeks to conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value to ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity overall, avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design, and where this is not possible, mitigate and compensate for any loss.
- 6.9.3. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Protected Species Report have been prepared and submitted in support of the application, prepared by Urban Edge.
- 6.9.4. Impacts to habitats and species are considered in detail within the PEA and Protected Species Report alongside mitigation measures, enhancement measures and potential compensation measures. Please refer to the submitted reports for more information.
- 6.9.5. Whilst the Proposed Development shall alter on-site habitats, the proposals have sought to follow the requirements set out within Policy SA23 and the Framework to avoid loss of biodiversity and where it is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss. The submitted Ecology reports set this out in detail.

6.10. Arboriculture

- 6.10.1. Policy DP37 in the MSDP relates to trees, woodland and hedgerows. It requires developments not to 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 contextual importance.
- 6.10.2. The site is well bounded by trees, and contains several TPOs with a central cluster of mature trees which runs along the centre of the site, separating the northern and southern parcel. The majority of trees on site are to be retained, with the exception of a central cluster of pine trees which will be removed.
- 6.10.3. The existing pines to be removed have a group value of category B, however several are in poor condition. The removal of the poor quality trees within the cluster will significantly reduce the overall group value. Similarly, the pines are located westwards of the Green Spine, and if they were to be included within the Green Spine would result in a westward shift, creating an in-balance in the site layout. As such the lower group value and impact on the balance of the site layout therefore justifies their removal.

ECE Planning

- 6.10.4. An area of ancient woodland is located to the south of the site, below the southern parcel of land. Policy SA23 requires a 15m buffer zone around this ancient woodland. This has been fully complied with, with no development proposed within the southern parcel of land allowing at least 125m of buffer zone between the ancient woodland and any built form development.
- 6.10.5. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment ('AIA'), prepared by MDJ Arboricultural, has been prepared in support of this application. The AIA sets out the RPAs and outlines the trees to be retained and removed on site, helping to inform the overall design of the proposed development.
- 6.10.6. As required within Policy SA23, the proposed development is to be Landscape-led. Therefore, enhanced additional planting is being incorporated into the design of the scheme, particularly within the central 'Green Spine'. The new trees will be of suitable, native species in line with Policy DP37.
- 6.10.7. It is considered therefore that the Proposed Development has sought to address the requirements of Policy SA23 and Policy DP37. Please refer to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment for further information.

6.11. Access, Highways and Sustainable Transport

- 6.11.1. Chapter 12 of the Framework refers to the importance of achieving well-designed places. The Framework establishes 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.
- 6.11.2. Policy DP21 of the MSDP seeks to promote sustainable forms of transport, promote safe transport provision and reduce traffic impacts and congestion.
- 6.11.3. Policy SA23 of the Site Allocations DPD requires a sustainable transport strategy to identify sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and how the development will integrate with the existing network, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport through the development and linking with existing networks.
- 6.11.4. The Proposed Development is supported by a Transport Statement, Travel Plan, and Road Safety Audit.
- 6.11.5. The Stage 1 Road Safety Audit submitted with the application was produced to support the allocation for the site within the Site Allocation DPD. This has been undertaken with respect to the safety of the Ardingly Road intersection, which did not highlight any material concerns, and is considered to be acceptable by WSCC Highways
- 6.11.6. The Proposed Development has been tracked to demonstrate that the layout is suitable for large vehicles including refuse vehicle, fire tender and tanker.
- 6.11.7. The traffic impact of the Proposed Development has been analysed using 2023 traffic survey data. It has been determined that the Site access would operate comfortably within capacity. It has been further demonstrated that the development traffic impact at the off-site junctions would not be 'severe' as set out in the Transport Statement.
- 6.11.8. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in highways, access and sustainable transport terms.

6.12. Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.12.1. Policy DP41 Flood Risk and Drainage of the MSDP states:

P2043 - Planning Statement – Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield

ECE Planning

Proposals for development will need to follow a sequential risk-based approach, ensure development is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. The District Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) should be used to identify areas at present and future flood risk from a range of sources including fluvial (rivers and streams), surface water (pluvial), groundwater, infrastructure and reservoirs.

- 6.12.2. Development should furthermore look to reduce run-off rates, incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and follow a drainage hierarchy that prioritises infiltration measures followed by attenuation and discharge to watercourses and failing this, discharge to surface water only sewers.
- 6.12.3. Policy SA 23 requires the development of the site to minimise surface water run-off through the incorporation of SuDS, particularly on the southern parcel of land where SuDS will form an integral part of the Green Infrastructure proposals to improve biodiversity and water quality.
- 6.12.4. The application site is located with Flood Zone 1, and is identified as being 'very low risk' of surface water flooding within the Environment Agency mapping. There are two narrow 'low risk' overland flow routes within the south of the site, which flow in a southern direction, however there is no proposed development within these areas.
- 6.12.5. A Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water and Foul Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Odyssey and submitted in support of this application.
- 6.12.6. This report details that surface water generated by the development would be attenuated on site using a series of attenuation basins within the southern parcel of land, prior to being discharged to the watercourse located along the western site boundary, in line with the allocation policy SA23.
- 6.12.7. Sustainable urban drainage features are incorporated into the landscape-led design, with a central swale running through the 'Green Spine'. This acts as a SuDS feature, helping reduce run-off rates, as well as creating an additional feature for ecology and biodiversity.
- 6.12.8. With regards to foul drainage, foul flows would be conveyed by gravity to the public Southern Water foul sewer located to the west of the site. Owing to the topography, foul flows would drain to a package pumping station, located to the south east of the site. Flows would be pumped in a northern direction and connect into the foul gravity system serving the rest of the site.
- 6.12.9. Finally, the site allocation policy SA23 details the culverted pipe outflow of the existing pond to the northwest of the site. This will be improved and enhanced as part of the proposal with a partially open and partially covered outflow to assist the existing watercourse.
- 6.12.10. In conclusion, the Proposed Development is aligned with planning policy with regards to flooding and drainage considerations which have been factored into the layout and design of the proposal from the outset.

6.13. Air Quality

- 6.13.1. Policy DP29 seeks to protect the environment and people from unacceptable levels of air pollution, by only permitting development which will not cause or be subject to poor air quality or can be mitigated to reduce exposure to poor air quality to recognised and acceptable levels.

ECE Planning

- 6.13.2. Policy SA38 of the Site Allocations DPD requires applicants to demonstrate that there is not unacceptable impact on air quality. The development should minimise any air quality impacts, including cumulative impacts from committed developments, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development, either through a redesign of the development proposal or, where this is not possible or sufficient, through appropriate mitigation.
- 6.13.3. An Air Quality Assessment, prepared by C80 Solutions, has been submitted in support of this application to identify and assess the context of existing air quality and considers the effects of the proposal during the construction and operational phase of the development.
- 6.13.4. With regards to the suitability of the Site itself for residential development, the report finds that pollutant concentrations are well within relevant health-based air quality objectives and future occupiers shall not be exposed to unacceptable air quality.
- 6.13.5. In terms of the impact of development on existing residents (predominantly resulting from traffic movements locally) the Proposed Development is found to have a 'negligible' impact.
- 6.13.6. The proposed development is entirely acceptable in air quality terms and is consistent with local and national policy.

6.14. Noise

- 6.14.1. Policy DP29 seeks to protect the environment and people's lives from unacceptable levels of noise. Noise sensitive development, such as residential, will not be permitted in close proximity to existing or proposed development generating high levels of noise unless adequate sound insulation measures, as supported by a noise assessment are incorporated within the development.
- 6.14.2. The application is supported by a Noise Assessment prepared by Acoustics SE which considers the site in the context of surrounding uses. The assessment noted the main noise source would relate to road traffic noise from Hanlye Lane to the north of the site.
- 6.14.3. Noise levels associated with these sources were considered to represent a low to medium risk to future occupiers and the report outlines that the scheme demonstrates good acoustic design principles in terms of controlling noise to both internal and external amenity space.
- 6.14.4. On this basis, noise levels were found to be acceptable for residential development at the site and the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regards to Local Plan and national policy.

6.15. Energy and Sustainability

- 6.15.1. Policy DP39 of the MSDP sets out the requirements for 'Sustainable Design and Construction'. All development proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and where appropriate and feasible minimise energy use through design and layout. The incorporation of renewable energy into development proposals is also sought in order to provide climate change mitigation measures at all stages of development.
- 6.15.2. The Mid Sussex Design Guide (MSDG) (2020) also refers to energy efficiency throughout the document. Principle DG37 specifically requires applicants to demonstrate how sustainability considerations have informed their design. It sets out numerous considerations which have been taken into account during the design process (measures and design principles adopted are set out within the DAS).
- 6.15.3. The application is supported by an Energy and Sustainability Assessment prepared by C80 Solutions, which demonstrates the sustainability strategy of the proposed development.

ECE Planning

- 6.15.4. The proposed dwellings will be fitted with Air Source Heat Pumps and PV panels, and will be built in line with Part L 2021 requirements.
- 6.15.5. In line with West Sussex County Council Standards all proposed plots will have active EV charging points.
- 6.15.6. Please refer to the Design and Access Statement and the Energy Statement for further details however development is considered to be acceptable in sustainability terms going beyond policy requirements.

6.16. Heritage and Archaeology

- 6.16.1. Policy DP34 relates to the protection of listed buildings and heritage assets, and outlines how development will protect and enhance their settings.
- 6.16.2. In support of this application a Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Assessment has been produced by RPS. The Report relates to built-heritage designated and non-designated heritage assets, and their settings in relation to the site, along with its archaeological potential.
- 6.16.3. The Assessment outlines that the site is not located within the setting of any listed buildings or heritage assets. Within a 500m radius there are only six listed buildings and these are associated with three sites: Cuckfield Hospital, Horsgate Farmhouse and Hanlye House. The Assessment concludes that the proposal does not represent 'harm' to any built heritage assets, as set out in the classification established by paragraphs 200-202 of the NPPF.
- 6.16.4. With regards to archaeology, it is acknowledged that the site is located near to the crest of a sandstone ridge, a setting recognised as a favoured location for prehistoric archaeological sites in Mid Sussex. This is also outlined with the allocation policy SA 23.
- 6.16.5. Similarly, the topographic setting of the site is of interest with regard to the pattern of prehistoric activity mapped across the High Weald. The assessment identifies the site with 'Unknown' potential for the survival of archaeological deposits of prehistoric date, and a Low archaeological potential for all other periods of human settlement.
- 6.16.6. In summary, the proposed development does not represent harm to heritage assets and is entirely acceptable in heritage terms. With regards to archaeological potential, future survey work and mitigation measures can be secured via a suitably worded condition following the grant of planning permission.
- 6.16.7. Please refer to the Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for further information.

6.17. Land Contamination

- 6.17.1. The MSDP does not contain any specific contamination policy in relation to greenfield sites. The Local Plan policy CS20 (Derelict and Contaminated Land) requires an assessment to be carried out on land that 'may be contaminated'.
- 6.17.2. Chapter 15, paragraph 183 of the Framework sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that Proposed Developments should consider the ground conditions and risks associated with instability or contamination and any proposals for mitigation including any potential land remediation impacts.

ECE Planning

- 6.17.3. In addition, the NPPG sets out guidance for 'Land affected by Contamination' referring to what is required as part of a risk assessment which should be undertaken as follows: 'to determine the existence or otherwise of contamination, its nature and extent, the risks it may pose and to whom/what (the 'receptors') so that these risks can be assessed and satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level.'
- 6.17.4. A Phase I Desk Study, Site Reconnaissance & Phase II Site Investigation Report has been prepared by Leap Environmental and submitted in support of this application.
- 6.17.5. The report outlines recommendations for the sustainable development of the site, and outlines that the proposal is acceptable with regards to ground contamination. Please refer to Site Investigation Report for further information.

6.18. Minerals Resource Assessment

- 6.18.1. Policy SA23 requires that consideration of the potential for mineral sterilisation should be considered in accordance with policy M9 of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and the associated Safeguarding Guidance.
- 6.18.2. Policy M9 of the Minerals Local Plan states:
- 6.18.3. Safeguarded Areas (as shown on maps in Appendix E) will not be permitted unless:
 - (i) Mineral sterilisation will not occur; or
 - (ii) it is appropriate and practicable to extract the mineral prior to the development taking place, having regards to the other policies in this Plan; or
 - (iii) the overriding need for the development outweighs the safeguarding of the mineral and it has been demonstrated that prior extraction is not practicable or environmentally feasible.
- 6.18.4. Under criterion i) while the site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area in relation to building stone, given the size and nature of the site, any sterilisation of the mineral is not considered to have a likely significant effect on its availability across the County. In this respect the loss of the site on wider building stone supplies would be inconsequential.
- 6.18.5. With regards to criterion ii) clearly the development of up to 55 dwellings is of strategic importance for housing delivery for Mid Sussex District Council and ensuring that the Council can demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing. This need would in our view override the safeguarding of building stone.
- 6.18.6. On this basis, the delivery of a landscape-led development would carry greater weight in the decision-making process when considered against Policy M9 of the Minerals Local Plan.
- 6.18.7. In minerals extraction terms the scheme is considered acceptable.

6.19. Lighting Assessment

- 6.19.1. It is unlikely that any of the roads within the development will be adopted by the Highways Authority. As such, low level bollard lighting is likely to be proposed.
- 6.19.2. External lighting for properties can be controlled via a suitably worded condition following the granting of planning permission.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This Planning Statement has been produced on behalf of our clients, **Sigma Homes Limited** in support of a full planning application for the development of Land at Hanlye Lane, Cuckfield, RH17 5HG. The development description for the proposal is set out as follows:

Residential development of 55 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian access; car parking; open space, play space; landscaping and all other associated works.

- 7.2. The principle of residential development is established on-site by virtue of the allocation of the Site under Policy SA23 of the adopted Site Allocations DPD.
- 7.3. The proposed development is set to deliver a high quality, landscape-led scheme which has been informed by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The proposed layout, by virtue of the landscape-led design helps to conserve and enhance the setting of the wider countryside and not expose the proposed development to scenic views to and from the AONB and the South Downs.
- 7.4. In landscape and visual terms, the proposal would provide a well contained, sustainable extension to Cuckfield, set within an established landscape framework of mature trees and densely vegetated boundaries. The Site has been shown that it is capable of accommodating development in line with that shown on the Site Layout, without resulting in significant harm to the surrounding local landscape character, or views from the surrounding area.
- 7.5. In ecological terms, the proposals have demonstrated how every effort has been made to protect the most important habitats and species and avoid impact where possible. Where this has not been possible, the proposals set out how it is intended to mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss.
- 7.6. In all other respects the Proposed Development is considered to be acceptable. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.7. It is considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy SA23 alongside complying with relevant policies of the Development Plan when read as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate that permission should not be granted for any reason.
- 7.8. It is clear that the benefits of the Proposed Development outweigh the potential impacts, which will be mitigated as part of planning permission. We respectfully request therefore that permission is granted.

Appendix A – Site Allocations DPD Policy SA23 Compliance

Introduction

- 1.1. This Appendix demonstrates how the Proposed Development complies with Policy SA23 of the Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD. Clearly any proposal must also comply with the Development Plan when read as a whole and the Planning Statement Appraisal Section and Conclusion considers SA23 alongside other policy requirements in this respect.

SA23: Objectives

- 1.2. The objective for SA23 is set out as follows:

To deliver a high quality, landscape led, sustainable extension to Cuckfield, which provides enhanced and accessible open space; respects the character of the village and conserves and enhances the setting of the High Weald AONB; and which is comprehensively integrated with the settlement so residents can access existing facilities.

- 1.3. The text below sets out how this objective is achieved.

SA23: Urban Design Principles

Provide development on the northern part of the site, creating a suitable development edge and transition with the open space that is to be retained to the south. As shown on the policy map, no development is to be provided on the southern field, south of the row of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders, which is unsuitable for development as it is more exposed to views from the south, contributes to settlement separation and is crossed by rights of way providing scenic views towards the South Downs.

- 1.4. The site layout clearly demonstrates the creation of a suitable development edge, defined by the row of protected trees that divides the built form contained to the northern parcel, from the open space and semi-improved grassland of southern parcel. The southern parcel of land remain open space, maintaining the existing scenic views towards the South Downs and enhancing the existing rights of way across the site.

Enhance the connectivity of the site with Cuckfield village by providing pedestrian and/or cycle links to Ardingly Road, Longacre Crescent and adjacent existing networks.

- 1.5. The existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to the southern parcel of the site, adjoining Longacre Crescent and Ardingly Road will be maintained and enhanced to enable year round access to and from the site with natural aggregate. Pedestrian footways are included around the site connecting to these existing PRoWs, enhancing connectivity within the site, the wider village and the local countryside.

Orientate development to have a positive active frontage in relation to the existing settlement and the wider countryside through careful master planning.

- 1.6. The site layout has been carefully master planned to orientate development to create active frontages along the key linear spaces of the development, to reflect the existing settlement and the wider countryside.

ECE Planning

- 1.7. These key avenues include, the frontage along Hanlye Lane, the southern road overlooking the southern parcel of land, and the three key vistas running from north to south; the central Green Spine and the eastern and western edges.
- 1.8. The dwellings have been orientated towards these key hubs in the layout, to create positive, active frontages with tree lined streets and well-spaced dwellings. The dwellings are of high architectural quality to reflect both contemporary and traditional build, orientated towards these key avenues to allow passive surveillance and a community feel.

SA23: Landscape Considerations

Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements in order to conserve and enhance the setting of the High Weald AONB adjacent to the north and minimise impacts on the wider countryside.

- 1.9. A LVIA has been undertaken, which has informed, alongside updated ecological evidence, the site layout and capacity. The LVIA has ensured that impacts from the most visible parts of the site on the countryside and setting of / views from the SDNP have been minimised through careful layout design.
- 1.10. The LVIA has fully informed the layout, resulting in the consideration of the Green Spine, which runs centrally through the middle of the site. The Green Spine has incorporated substantial landscaping that when viewed from a distance will contribute to the rural landscape of the surrounding area, and help minimise the impact of the proposed development within the wider countryside setting.
- 1.11. Alongside the Green Spine, the LVIA and the site layout have considered the undulating topography of the site and the dropping of level of north to south. In response to this, the taller 2.5-storey dwellings are located along the southern end of the development, with smaller 2-storey dwellings located to the north, with some 3-storey features included to draw attention to the opening of the Green Spine. Single-storey bungalows are located at the western boundary to limit impacts on the immediate neighbours to the west of the site.

Protect the rural character of Hanlye Lane and the approach to Cuckfield village by minimising the loss of the existing hedgerow and trees along the northern boundary.

- 1.12. The majority of existing hedgerows and trees along the northern boundary are to be retained, aside from a single tree towards the centre of the Hanlye Lane and an area of hedgerow to allow the access onto the site. Where the trees is to be removed due to poor health, enhanced planting has been included along the boundary to retain the rural character of Hanlye Lane.

Sensitively design the layout to take account of the topography of the site, and views into and out of the site.

- 1.13. The site layout has been carefully master planned, responding to the topography of the site as it drops towards the south. The larger three-storey and two-and-half storey dwellings, are located to the south of the site to not limit views from Hanlye Lane.
- 1.14. The site layout has been careful to orientate the dwellings towards key avenues through the large open centre of the site, running north to south. These dwellings are setback from the road to create open views towards the south, as the topography of the site drops down, allowing scenic views south upon turning into the entrance of the site.

ECE Planning

- 1.15. A key feature of the development is the central Green Spine, which is a landscaped, public space running directly through the centre of the site allowing scenic views from the north when walking towards the south.
- 1.16. The southern parcel of the site remains open and undeveloped to maintain the most open scenic views towards the South Downs, where the land drops away at the steepest point.

The site contains a number of trees many with Tree Preservation Orders. Retain and enhance existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site, and on the boundaries, and incorporate these into the landscaping structure and Green Infrastructure proposals for the site in order to minimise impacts on the wider countryside. Open space should be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure.

- 1.17. As demonstrated throughout the site layout, the majority of trees across the boundaries of the site, and running centrally between the northern and southern parcel, have been retained.
- 1.18. Further to this, the northern boundary and eastern boundaries will contain enhanced planting to contribute towards screening from Hanlye Road and Horsgate Mews.
- 1.19. The design has been landscape-led in line with the allocation policy, and includes the central Green Spine as an integral part of the Green Infrastructure within the proposal. The concept of the Green Spine is to incorporate the countryside into the development, maintaining landscaped green space through the centre of the site and orientating the development around this open space.
- 1.20. Some trees are to be removed, following an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. The existing pines to be removed have a group value of category B, however several are in poor condition or dying. The removal of the dying trees within the cluster will significantly reduce the overall group value. Similarly, the pines are located westwards of the Green Spine, and if they were to be included within the Green Spine would result in a westward shift, creating an in-balance in the site layout. As such the lower group value and impact on the balance of the site layout therefore justifies their removal.
- 1.21. Substantial open space is provided as part of the development, with the entire southern parcel retained as open space, along with the enhanced green spine through the centre of the site.

Protect the character and amenity of the existing public footpaths that cross the site and seek to integrate these with the Green Infrastructure proposals and the footpath to the north.

- 1.22. As detailed above, the public rights of way across the southern portion of the site are to be maintained and enhanced to be useable year-round with a natural aggregate. Desire paths and natural routes are utilised from the northern parcel to the southern parcel of the site with a new footpath proposed through the central Green Spine, connecting an existing bridleway north of Hanlye Lane with the existing PRoW to the southern parcel of the site.

SA23: Social and Community

Create a well-connected area of open space on the land to the south, suitable for informal and formal recreation, that enhances and sensitively integrates the existing rights of way.

- 1.23. As detailed above, the public rights of way across the southern portion of the site are to be maintained and enhanced to be useable year-round with a natural aggregate that sensibly integrates with the surrounding open space.

ECE Planning

- 1.24. The southern parcel of land will be landscaped and managed to allow for informal and formal play space that is well connected to the village of Cuckfield and the northern parcel of the site.

SA23: Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

The site is located near the crest of a sandstone ridge, in the High Weald a favourable location for archaeological sites. Carry out Archaeological assessment and appropriate mitigation arising from the results.

- 1.25. The application is supported by Desk Based Assessment which identifies an 'Unknown' potential for the survival of archaeological deposits of prehistoric date, and a Low archaeological potential for all other periods of human settlement. This assessment concludes that a suitably worded condition should be included as part of a planning permission to secure further on-site surveys including a geophysical survey. It is not considered necessary at this stage that this be carried out.
- 1.26. The report also concludes that the proposed development is not within the setting of any listed buildings, and does not represent any harm to any built heritage assets.

SA23: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

The land to the south, as indicated on the Policies Map, is designated as a Semi Improved Grassland Priority Habitat. Manage this area to promote its conservation, restoration and enhancement in accordance with the Natural England management objectives for this type of habitat.

- 1.27. As detailed above, the southern parcel of land is remain undeveloped, semi-improved grassland. A Protected Species report and detailed landscaping design plan has been produced as part of the proposal which detail how the southern parcel of land will be managed and maintained to support the priority habitat.
- 1.28. The open space will be conserved and restored to enhance the site and provide a biodiversity net gain across the development. This will be in accordance with Natural England management objectives for Semi-improved grassland priority habitat.

Undertake a holistic approach to Green Infrastructure provision through biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the site that connect to the surrounding area.

- 1.29. The landscape-led design includes the Green Spine, which will provide landscaping enhancements and biodiversity to the centre of the built form development. This will provide a green connection from north to south, across the site, providing connectivity with the wider countryside.
- 1.30. Enhanced planting is proposed along the boundaries for both biodiversity purposes and amenity measures.

Conserve and enhance areas of wildlife value to ensure there is a net gain to biodiversity overall. Avoid any loss of biodiversity through ecological protection and enhancement, and good design. Where this is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss.

- 1.31. Ecological Reports has been prepared and submitted in support of the application.
- 1.32. Impacts to habitats and species are considered in detail within the reports alongside mitigation measures, enhancement measures and potential compensation measures.

ECE Planning

- 1.33. These have informed the design of the site layout which seeks to avoid loss of biodiversity and where it is not possible, mitigate and as a last resort, compensate for any loss. The proposal shall lead to a net gain in biodiversity.

Incorporate SuDS within the Green Infrastructure to improve biodiversity and water quality.

- 1.34. The proposed layout design incorporates SuDS, with a swale proposed through the central Green Spine on the northern parcel of land and three attenuation basins to the southern parcel of land.
- 1.35. The swale and attenuation basins will be dry basins that will provide flow control through the attenuation of stormwater runoff, and will only be used in the event of a significant rainfall. The storage of water in these events will allow for improved biodiversity and water quality, as the grass and soil will act as a natural filter and the varying moisture of the basins will provide an alternative habitat for several species that would not otherwise occupy the southern field.

Maintain a minimum buffer of 15 metres between the development and the north of Horsegate Wood ancient woodland.

- 1.36. As detailed above, the southern parcel of land will have no built-form development. This has allowed for a buffer of 125+ metres from the ancient woodland, significantly exceeding the 15 metre buffer requirement.

SA23: Highways and Access

Provide access from Hanlye Lane, the details of which need to be investigated.

- 1.37. The proposed layout includes access from Hanlye Lane, with a bell-mouth priority junction. The application is supported by a Road Safety Audit, Transport Statement and Travel Plan which have investigated the details of the access.

Investigate whether any highway measures are required to mitigate impacts at the intersection of London Road (B2036) and Ardingly Road (B2114).

- 1.38. A Road Safety Audit is included within the application which has reviewed the intersection of London Road and Ardingly Road, and details measures to mitigate the impacts of the proposal on this intersection.
- 1.39. A meeting was also held with West Sussex County Council to assess the impacts of the proposed development on the road infrastructure, and WSCC deemed the proposed development acceptable with this regard.

Provide a sustainable transport strategy to identify sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and how the development will integrate with the existing network, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport through the development and linking with existing networks.

- 1.40. The application is supported by a Road Safety Audit, Transport Statement and Travel Plan which have investigated and identified sustainable transport infrastructure improvements and how the development will integrate with the existing network, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and public transport through the development and linking with existing networks.

ECE Planning

- 1.41. A key feature of the proposed development is the enhanced footpaths and public rights of ways across the site, improving connectivity for pedestrians within the village and within the wider context of the countryside.

SA23: Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is situated next to the village pond. The culverted pipe taking the outflow of the pond to the watercourse along the western boundary of the site to the southern field is in poor condition. Consider drainage works to improve the situation such as creating an open watercourse to avoid future blockage and capacity issues.

- 1.42. Drainage works are proposed to improve the existing water course, and will include a partially open and partially covered outflow to assist the existing watercourse.

Design surface water drainage to minimise run off, to incorporate SuDS and to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased.

- 1.43. As detailed above, the proposed layout design incorporates SuDS, with a swale proposed through the central Green Spine on the northern parcel of land and three attenuation basins to the southern parcel of land.
- 1.44. The swale and attenuation basins will be dry basins that will provide flow control through the attenuation of stormwater runoff, and will only be used in the event of a significant rainfall. The basins and swale will store water to ensure that Flood Risk is not increased as a result of the development.

Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems in the southern part of the site as an integral part of the Green Infrastructure proposals to improve biodiversity and water quality.

- 1.45. As detailed above, the proposed layout design incorporates SuDS, with three attenuation basins to the southern parcel of land.
- 1.46. The attenuation basins will be dry basins that will provide flow control through the attenuation of stormwater runoff, and will only be used in the event of a significant rainfall. The storage of water in these events will allow for improved biodiversity and water quality, as the grass and soil will act as a natural filter and the varying moisture of the basins will provide an alternative habitat for several species that would not otherwise occupy the southern field.

SA23: Contaminated Land

The land may be contaminated due to present or historical on site or adjacent land uses. Provide a detailed investigation into possible sources of on-site contamination together with any remedial works that are required.

- 1.47. A Phase I Desk Study, Site Reconnaissance & Phase II Site Investigation Report has been prepared and submitted in support of this application.
- 1.48. The report outlines recommendations for the sustainable development of the site, and outlines that the proposal is acceptable with regards to ground contamination. Please refer to Site Investigation Report for further information

SA23: Minerals

ECE Planning

The site lies within the building stone (Cuckfield and Ardingly stone) Minerals Safeguarding Area, therefore the potential for mineral sterilisation should be considered in accordance with policy M9 of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and the associated Safeguarding Guidance.

- 1.49. While the Site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area in relation to Weald clay, given the size and nature of the site, any sterilisation of the mineral is not considered to have a likely significant effect on its availability across the County. In this respect the loss of the site on wider brick clay supplies would be inconsequential.
- 1.50. Clearly the development of 264 dwellings is of strategic importance for housing delivery for Mid Sussex District Council and ensuring that the Council can demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing. This need would in our view override the safeguarding of brick clay.
- 1.51. However, Policy SA13 also requires applicants to demonstrate that they have respected the existing landscape and topography across the site avoiding the need for cut and fill. Significant mineral extraction in our view is contrary to such policy requirements and in our view, greater weight to the delivery of a landscape-led development would carry greater weight in the decision-making process.

SA23: Utilities

Reinforcement of the sewerage network is required.

- 1.52. Contact has been sought with South East Water regarding a sewage connection, and reinforcement to the network will be undertaken if required.

Occupation of development will be phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in liaison with the service provider.

- 1.53. The position is currently being checked with the service provider and will be set out as a planning condition following the approval of the planning submission.