

Land West of Gatesmead **Haywards Heath**

Planning Statement

Submission of full planning application for 49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure

Prepared on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd

May 2026

Lucid
Planning

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Appendices

- 1. MSDC Pre-application Response, dated 16 April**
- 2. Planning Layout Drawing**

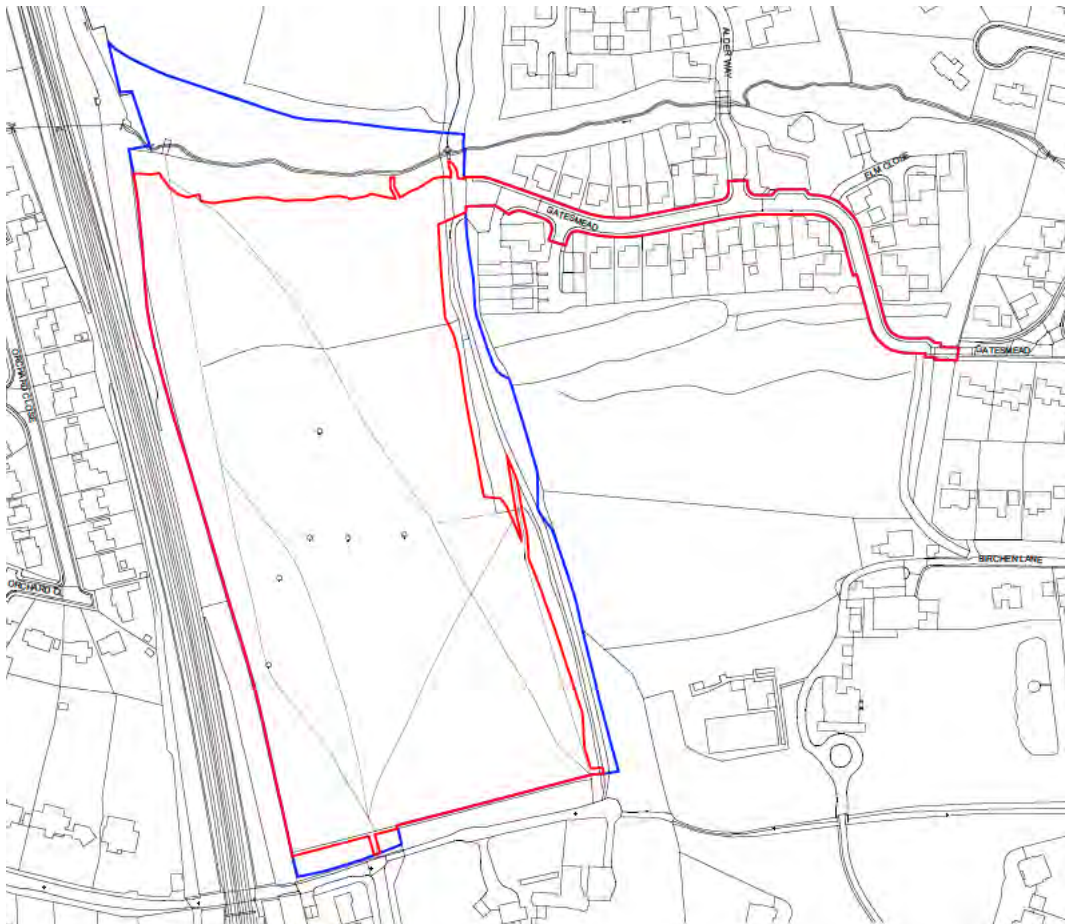
Executive Summary

- This application seeks full planning permission for 49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure on land west of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath
- The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies under paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework
- The Site is sustainably located and suitable for development
- It is on the edge of a highly sustainable settlement, within reasonable walking distance of Hayward Heath railway station and has good access to local services, facilities and public transport
- It represents a logical and well-contained extension to the built-up area
- The landscape-led design approach responds sensitively to the Site's context and characteristics, and provides:
 - a high-quality, attractive and sustainable place in accordance with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework Delivery
 - 34 new high quality market homes to meet local housing need and policy standards
 - 15 new affordable homes to meet the 30% local plan policy requirements and local need
 - Safe and integrated access arrangements
 - Retention and enhancement of key landscape features
 - Provision of public open space, including a southern buffer
 - Enhanced planting and green infrastructure
 - Active travel connections to Haywards Heath and its services and facilities

- New homes that meet emerging standards of energy consumption and construction
- The development will deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits
- Any adverse impacts of the proposal have been considered, and mitigated where possible, and put into the planning balance. This demonstrates that there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken 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
- The proposal accords with the objectives of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lucid Planning on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd (Crest) in support of a full planning application submitted in relation to land west of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath in Mid Sussex district.



Site Location Plan

- 1.2 The Site is located to the north of Haywards Heath directly adjacent to the built-up area boundary and within walking distance of Haywards Heath railway station.

- 1.3 The proposal is a full planning application for:
- “49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure”.
- 1.4 The proposals will provide 49 much needed new homes, including 15 (30%) affordable homes, in a sustainable location. Development will also provide financial contributions, as required, through a s106 agreement.
- 1.5 The Site benefits from being in close proximity to a comprehensive range of employment, retail, health, education and leisure services and facilities located within Haywards Heath.
- 1.6 The planning application submission includes sufficient detail to evaluate and assess the planning and layout merits of the proposed development. The list of documents is set out in the covering letter.

Pre-Application Engagement

- 1.7 A request for pre-application advice was submitted in December 2025. A response was received on 16 April 2026 (see **Appendix 1**).
- 1.8 The Council’s response has helpfully informed the proposals and the application, and as such the planning application and its supporting documents and drawings, respond to the specific issues raised in the pre-app response.
- 1.9 In accordance with the NPPF and Mid Sussex District Council’s (MSDC) Statement of Community Involvement, Crest undertook a 3 week online pre-application consultation between Monday 23rd February and Monday 16th March 2026 using a dedicated consultation website, <https://haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk/>. This followed the circulation of invitations and information newsletter to 1089 local residents and stakeholders.

- 1.10 Haywards Heath Town Council, Lindfield Parish Council, Lindfield Rural Parish Council, Lindfield ward members, key MSDC councillors and Alison Bennett MP were also contacted and offered the opportunity to meet with the project team. No responses were received. See Section 3 of this statement for more information.

2. Site Description and Context

Site Characteristics and Constraints

- 2.1 The application red line boundary, shown on the Site Location Plan in Section 1, is approximately 4.78 hectares and shows the connection to the nearest adopted highway within the red line. The 'Site' development boundary, which encompasses the assessed field and proposed housing development, is 4.54 hectares.
- 2.2 The Site is located west of Gatesmead to the north of Haywards Heath, approximately 900m from Haywards Heath Railway Station and 2km north of the centre of Haywards Heath.
- 2.3 The Site comprises grassland enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows. These natural boundaries form a visually contained, strong green framework around the site.
- 2.4 To the east, the site adjoins the established residential area accessed from Gatesmead and a hollow way PROW lined with mature trees, hedgerow and shrubs. To the north it is bordered by Scrase stream and open land and mature vegetation. The Brighton Mainline runs along the western boundary and is lined with trees, hedgerows and shrubs and separated from site by fencing, with residential development of Old Wickham Lane and Orchard Close on the western side of the rail line. The southern site boundary has trees and a formal hedgerow between the Site and the vehicular access lane leading to Wickham Farmhouse.
- 2.5 Beyond the Site boundary to the north is Birchen Wood Ancient Woodland. There are multiple individual and one group Tree Preservation Orders to south of the Site, outside the boundary. None of these assets are affected by the proposal.

- 2.6 The Site has a mixed topography; however, it generally slopes down to the northeast, with the highest point located in the southwestern corner estimated to be 63m AOD down to the northeast corner estimated to be at approximately 49m AOD. The site is generally bounded by vegetation described as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The site is generally covered in long grass.
- 2.7 There is a known gas main, owned by SGN, running north-south along the western edge of the site, which along with its easement is avoided by the proposed developable area.
- 2.8 The Site:
- is not a protected area or asset of particular importance as set out in footnote 7 of the NPPF, i.e. designated or potential Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar; Site of Special Scientific Interest; Local Green Space, National Landscape, National Park or Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitat; designated heritage asset (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); or an area at risk of flooding or coastal change
 - has no scheduled monuments within it, or adjacent to it
 - is not within or adjacent to any Conservation Area
 - has no designated heritage assets on Site
 - is in Flood Zone 1, and therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding, including the predicted effects of climate change.

Haywards Heath

- 2.9 Haywards Heath is the largest town in Mid Sussex and lies outside the High Weald National Landscape and South Downs National Park. Within the adopted Mid Sussex Local Plan and the submitted, emerging Local Plan, Haywards Heath is included in the highest tier of the district's settlement hierarchy, alongside Burgess Hill and East Grinstead.
- 2.10 Haywards Heath is a well-connected and sustainable settlement, providing a wide range of local amenities including shops, schools, healthcare facilities,

employment opportunities, and leisure spaces. The site is located within walking and cycling distance of many of these services and is positioned to integrate sensitively with the existing community, supporting access to everyday facilities and sustainable travel choices.

Planning History

- 2.11 Planning permission was granted on 24 March 2021 for a change of use of agricultural land for the keeping of horses, the erection of a stable block with associated hardstanding, fencing and access track. This planning permission has not been implemented.

- 2.12 Crest has promoted the Site (SHELAA Ref 988) through the various consultations associated with the preparation of the Mid Sussex District Plan, including submitting the online Site Promoter Information Form at the end of March 2026.

- 2.13 The 2023 Mid-Sussex Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) considered the Site's suitability for development as follows: "*Development would not have a negative impact on Conservation area and/or Area of Townscape Character*" and that "*Development may potentially affect listed building/s - mitigation may be necessary*" and concluded that the Site is "Relatively unconstrained".

- 2.14 The Council's Stage 2 review of proposed allocated Sites then departed from this earlier assessment rejecting the site at Stage 2c due to the perceived impacts on listed buildings. See 'Heritage' in Section 5 of this statement and the Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment, submitted in support of the application, for the detailed response to these matters.

- 2.15 At the 2026 Local Plan Examination hearings, the Inspector advised MSDC to increase its annual housing requirement to between 1200-1300 dwellings a year in order to make the Plan sound. In order to do this, the Council has embarked on a review of the site selection process previously undertaken and

is reviewing all sites. As part of this process, Crest submitted a Built Heritage Technical Note to accompany the online Site Promoter Information Form at the end of March 2026 to address this issue in more detail.

3. Proposed Development

3.1 The full planning application is for:

49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure.

3.2 In terms of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the development proposed falls within the description at 10 (b) of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017. Having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 to the above Regulations, however, the proposal would not be likely to have significant effect on the environment due to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development and nature of the receiving environment. Whilst there may be some impact on the surrounding area and nearby designated sensitive area as a result of this development, it would not be of a scale and nature likely to result in significant environmental impact. As such, the proposed development is not considered to be EIA Development. Agreement on this matter was specifically sought with the Council during pre-application on the larger proposal of up to 70 dwellings, but there was no direct response to that question in the Council's pre-app response.

The Layout and General Design Principles

3.3 The Planning Layout drawing at **Appendix 2 illustrates the layout and design.**

3.4 In visual terms, the Site is well contained by its boundary trees and hedgerows. Views occur only at short range. Responding to these baseline conditions, a landscape-led approach has shaped the proposed development. The proposals maximise the retention and enhancement of existing landscape features, including all boundary vegetation, internal mature trees and minimise impact on surrounding woodland.

- 3.5 The Site is accessed off, and a seamless extension to, Gatesmead. The proposed access (carriageway, footway, footpath and embankments) will be installed entirely above the existing ground levels using a cellular confinement system, filled and finished with suitable porous materials, to minimise soil compaction and to allow water and air to pass through the new surface to the soil beneath within the RPAs of the retained trees with the culvert pipes laid in the existing ditches, resulting in no excavation within the RPAs of the retained trees. This will ensure that the soil condition will be protected from the construction and subsequent use of the access. To ensure no damage occurs to the roots or rooting environments of the relevant trees, installation will be undertaken under the control and supervision of the arboricultural consultant.
- 3.6 As shown on the Planning Layout drawing in **Appendix 2** the general arrangement of the proposals consists of five outwardly facing block, arranged along a simple main access. A legible street hierarchy is proposed which includes a primary road and shared surfaces.
- 3.7 The layout promotes active travel with footpaths linking the existing PROW/informal footpath network with the wider area.
- 3.8 Existing trees and hedgerow within and on edge of site have been retained where possible. Areas of public open space (POS) are distributed throughout the proposals to take into account the significant trees within and on the boundaries of the Site, and their root protection area and shadow pattern. This approach allows for the new dwellings to sit comfortably within the Site with minimal impact.
- 3.9 The proposed SuDS attenuation basin is incorporated into the development and public open space layout.
- 3.10 A key aspect of the POS strategy is the 61m deep area to the south which will incorporate some of the translocated rush pasture, walking routes and landscaping features to create a further buffer to Wickham Farmhouse, the TPOs on outside of the southern boundary and residences of Old Wickham

Lane and Wickham Way. It is envisaged that access to the rush pasture areas will be limited to prevent trampling/damage to this habitat via cut paths alongside interpretation boards and possibly knee rail fencing where appropriate.

- 3.11 A LAP will be placed centrally and will be designed to fit in with the natural features of the Site.
- 3.12 The proposed dwelling types will include a mixture of terraces, semi-detached and detached houses, as well as some maisonettes. The new homes are 2 storeys in height to reflect existing development in the vicinity. See drawing 25714/5011A.
- 3.13 The form, elevational treatments, architecture appearance, the detailing and palette of materials proposed have been drawn from the traditional architectural styles present in the local area within Haywards Heath. See drawing 25714/5010B.
- 3.14 The proposals respond positively to the Site's existing context. Further, mitigation and a robust landscape strategy ensure that the development integrates comfortably within its setting and does not impact the off-site listed buildings.
- 3.15 In summary, the development comprises the following:
- Retention and maintenance of as many trees and existing landscaping features as possible
 - 49 homes, including 30% affordable homes, to meet the Council's latest housing need
 - Building heights generally limited to 2 storeys and largely in red brick with tile hanging to reflect the local character
 - Public Open Space to meet the Council's standards, including a Local Area for Play (LAP)
 - Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including an attenuation basin, swales and paving where required

- New vehicular and pedestrian access from Gatesmead to the north east
- New pedestrian access to the PROWs to the east and south of the Site
- Parking to meet WSCC Parking Standards for Parking Behaviour Zone 3
- Electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling
- Bin and bike storage facilities
- Site-wide landscape strategy, integrated with the proposed SuDS
- Biodiversity enhancements to achieve at least a 10% net gain
- Each dwelling will be built to meet the Future Homes Standards applicable at the time of construction

Housing Mix

- 3.8 To support the delivery of a sustainable, mixed and balanced community the application proposals will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes that reflect current and future local housing needs, as identified by the Principal Housing Enabling Officer in the pre-app response dated 3 March 2026 (see **Appendix X**) and summarised in Section 6, Affordable Housing Statement:

	1 bed 2 person	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	Total
Affordable Ownership	0	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	4 (27%) Rounding up to whole number
Affordable Rent	4 (27%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	11 (73%)
Total	4 (27%)	7 (46%)	4 (27%)	15 (100%)

- 3.9 All affordable homes are 'tenure blind' and organised into small clusters in accordance with the advice from the Principal Housing Enabling Officer, as shown on the Affordable Strategy Plan, 25714/5013A.

- 3.10 All affordable dwellings meet the Council's occupancy and minimum floor area/NDSS requirements.
- 3.11 In line with the Principal Housing Enabling Officer's pre-app advice, no wheelchair accessible dwellings are provided; however, 20% of homes will be accessible and adaptable in accordance with M4(2) of the Building Regulations to accord with Policy DP28.
- 3.12 Provision will be secured through a s106.

Energy and Sustainability

- 3.16 The development will include appropriate carbon reduction, energy efficiency and water consumption reduction measures to demonstrate high levels of sustainability. A highly optimised energy strategy will be developed, incorporating passive design principles, high-performance building fabric, efficient building services, advanced controls, and appropriate LZC technologies. Through the integration of both passive and active measures, the proposed development aims to achieve a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions compared to the baseline set by current Building Regulations.

Economic Benefits

- 3.17 The Proposal will deliver 49 new homes and the associated provision of infrastructure, to be secured through the preparation of a s106 agreement and by the on-site provision of affordable housing.
- 3.18 Additionally, the Proposal will generate employment during the construction phase and in the operational phase will be associated with local spending by future residents and increased council tax.
- 3.19 There will be increased house building in an area where there is demand for new housing; this in turn drives economic growth further and faster. The proposals will contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive

economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is being made available in the right plan and at the right time to support growth.

Social Benefits

- 3.20 The Proposal supports the social role of sustainable development, in helping to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, including through the provision of housing supply to meet identified needs.
- 3.21 The Proposal will deliver 49 new homes, including market dwellings and up to 15 affordable dwellings. Given the housing shortfall, the likely timeframes for new site allocations, the potential for increased housing requirements as a result of changes to the NPPF and unmet need from neighbouring authorities, this benefit attracts substantial weight.
- 3.22 Additionally, the future residents will reside in a sustainable location, within easy walking distance of local facilities including the local primary school. This supports healthy lifestyles which children can walk to school, and fewer private vehicle movements generate less vehicle and carbon emissions.
- 3.23 The proposed development also includes new footpaths and cycleways and will deliver children's play space, all of which support healthy, sustainable lifestyles. The social benefits attract significant weight.

Environmental Benefits

- 3.24 The Site is not located on land which is designated for its landscape value; the majority of trees and hedgerow will be retained, with additional planting undertaken.
- 3.25 The Proposal will deliver sustainable homes built to modern energy efficiency standards. The improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure will support

active travel, therefore delivering additional environmental benefits as we transition to a low carbon economy.

- 3.26 The Proposal will achieve the required 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 3.27 The Proposal will not have any adverse effects on ecological receptors, subject to the securing of the recommended mitigation.
- 3.28 Overall, the environmental benefits of the proposal attract moderate weight.

Public Consultation

- 3.29 In accordance with the NPPF and MSDC's Statement of Community Involvement, Crest undertook a 3 week online pre-application consultation between Monday 23rd February and Monday 16th March 2026 using a dedicated consultation website, <https://haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk/>. This followed the circulation of invitations and information newsletter to 1089 local residents and stakeholders.
- 3.30 Haywards Heath Town Council, Lindfield Parish Council, Lindfield Rural Parish Council, Lindfield ward members, key MSDC councillors and Alison Bennett MP were also contacted and offered the opportunity to meet with the project team. No responses were received.
- 3.31 Residents and stakeholders were able to provide feedback via a number of different channels, including an online feedback form on the dedicated consultation website, email address, and freephone telephone number. These were monitored throughout the consultation period and continue to be available if residents have any further queries. Residents were also able to request hard copies of the feedback form to be sent to their home address and returned via a provided freepost envelope.
- 3.32 There were 1659 views of the consultation website and 40 responses were received through the online feedback form and 3 emails. The proposals

received mixed feedback responses, with many residents raising comments around the loss of green space and walking routes, the potential impact on local services and infrastructure, and the safety of access to Gatesmead.

3.33 The Statement of Community Involvement, submitted with this application, sets out the engagement and comments in more detail.

3.34 Crest carefully reviewed all the feedback received from the public and stakeholders during the consultation.

3.35 Several feedback themes were raised regarding the proposed development of the site. As part of the application, Crest has sought to respond and address the key points raised through the information submitted as part of the planning application.

3.36 The table below provides a summary of Crest's response to key themes raised during the whole consultation process.

Feedback received	Applicant's response
Concern about the loss of green space and impact on wildlife	The scheme is designed to integrate sensitively with its surroundings – making the most of its well-enclosed and visually-contained setting. The proposals seek to integrate and formalise the existing desire line footpaths across the site to reduce impacts on trees. The development will provide new public open spaces, a Local Area for Play (LAP), and improved pedestrian and cycle connections to the wider area as well as new habitats and wildlife enhancements. The scheme will achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain, with habitat creation, protection of existing woodland and rush pasture, and targeted enhancements for local wildlife including bats and dormice.
Concern about the impact on local services and infrastructure	The development will include a substantial financial contribution towards local services and infrastructure, in accordance with MSDC policy and CIL Regulation 122. The relevant providers, such as West Sussex County Council (for highways and education) and the NHS (for GP services, etc),

	will decide how and where to spend these financial contributions.
Concern about road safety and the current access to Gatesmead	The site is well connected to public transport, with bus stops and Haywards Heath railway station within reasonable walking distance. The layout design promotes walking and cycling, and a full Transport Assessment will be submitted to ensure impacts are managed. Access to the site will be via Gatesmead. A comprehensive construction management plan will be agreed with Mid Sussex District Council before any works can begin, to ensure that the construction process does not have an unacceptable impact on Gatesmead residents.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 This section looks at the weight to be given to various planning policies and how these should be applied to this proposal.

The Development Plan

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.3 The Development Plan consists of:

- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, adopted in March 2018
- Mid Sussex Site Allocations Development Plan Document, adopted June 2022)
- Haywards Heath Town Council Neighbourhood Plan, Our Bright Future, December 2016

- 4.4 Listed below are the specific policies of the adopted Local Plan considered to be relevant to determination of this application.

- Policy DP4: Housing
- Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy DP12: Protection & Enhancement of the Countryside
- Policy DP15: New Homes in the Countryside
- Policy DP20: Securing Infrastructure
- Policy DP21: Transport
- Policy DP22: Rights of Way & Other Recreation Routes
- Policy DP26: Character & Design
- Policy DP27: Dwelling Space Standards
- Policy DP28: Accessibility
- Policy DP29: Noise, Air & Light Pollution

- Policy DP30: Housing Mix
- Policy DP31: Affordable Housing
- Policy DP34: Listed Buildings & Other Heritage Assets
- Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows
- Policy DP38: Biodiversity
- Policy 39: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy DP41: Flood Risk & Drainage
- Policy DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

4.5 Listed below are the specific policies of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document considered to be relevant to determination of this application.

- Policy AS1: New Housing Development
- Policy AS4: Housing Mix
- Policy AS11: High Speed Broadband
- Policy AS14: Walking and Cycling Routes

4.6 Listed below are the specific policies of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan considered to be relevant to determination of this application. Those listed in bold are considered to be the most important to the determination of this application.

- HHNP Policy E5: Local Gap
- HHNP Policy E6: Green Infrastructure
- HHNP Policy E7: Sustainable Urban Drainage
- HHNP Policy E8: Sustainable Development
- HHNP Policy E9: Design
- HHNP Policy E11: Assessment of views
- HHNP Policy E13: Private Outdoor Space
- HHNP Policy T1: Pedestrian and Cycle connectivity
- HHNP Policy T2: Cycle Routes
- HHNP Policy T3: Car parking

- 4.7 Further analysis of the policy requirements, compliance with the same, and other material considerations, is provided in Section 5.

Material Considerations

- 4.8 A number of material considerations are of relevance to determination of the application. This includes:

- MSDC Five Year Housing Land Supply
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024);
- Written Ministerial Statements regarding the housing crisis and the importance of boosting housing supply
- Mid Sussex District Council Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- The evidence base associated with the emerging Submitted Local Plan
- The draft revised NPPF

Out-of-Date Policies

- 4.9 As the strategic policies in the District Plan are over five years old, the housing need figure for Mid Sussex has to be calculated using the standard method in the December 2024 NPPF. This figure was 1356 dwellings per annum according to the Government figures released in December 2024, but is 1,334 dwellings per annum, as of April 2025 according to MSDC.
- 4.10 There are no post-December 2024 five year housing land supply figures published by MSDC; however, the Council stated it was 3.38 years at the Scamps Hill appeal in December 2024 (based on the new standard methodology and 5% buffer). It is noted that the Appellant, Gladman, considered it was 2.41 years. The appeal Inspector did not comment on a specific figure.

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- 4.11 Icení undertook a review of the housing land supply position in April 2025 for Crest and calculated the supply to be c.2.4 years when the next 5 year period, starting 1 April 2024, is used.
- 4.12 No matter which figures are used, this means that **MSDC has a shortfall of between 2200 to 3500 dwellings in the next five year period.**
- 4.13 As the Council can no longer demonstrate a five-year supply of housing, NPPF paragraph 11d, footnote 8 indicates that policies that affect the supply of housing may be considered out of date. This reduces the weight that may be given to such policies and engages the ‘tilted balance’ in decision making.
- 4.14 Further the test to be applied is set out in paragraph 11(d)(ii) which states development proposals should be assessed against the policies in this Framework taken 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.

Settlement Boundaries

- 4.15 The current settlement boundaries were identified in relation to the housing need of the March 2018 adopted plan. As there is now an unmet housing need, the weight to be attached to any conflict with them is reduced.
- 4.16 Further, it is clear from the 2026 Local Plan Examination hearings that more housing is needed in sustainable locations that accords with the emerging Local Plan’s spatial strategy, i.e. Tier 1 settlements first. Hence, settlement boundaries will have to be reconsidered accordingly.
- 4.17 The application site is in a sustainable location as set out against NPPF policy below.

The NPPF

4.18 Given the adopted Local Plan is out of date, the NPPF becomes the primary basis for decision making and has very significant weight.

4.19 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making, paragraph 11(d) states:

“Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date⁸, granting permission unless:

- (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance⁷ provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken 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 ⁹”.*

4.20 As set out in Section 5 of this Statement, Haywards Heath is acknowledged as a one of the highest sustainable locations in the district and the Site is well connected in terms of active travel and public transport links, making it a sustainable location. The layout has been designed to make effective use of land, whilst being cognisant of its context, and will securing a well-designed place and providing much needed affordable homes.

4.21 As set out in paragraph 2.7 of this Statement, the Site is not a protected area or asset of particular importance, so paragraph 11(d)(i) does not apply.

4.22 In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan, paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that,
‘In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of

allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:

- a. the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years of less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
- b. the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement....'*

- 4.23 As the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan is more than five years old, paragraph 14 will not apply.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

- 4.24 The following documents are material considerations:

- Affordable Housing SPD, 2018
- Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD, 2018
- Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, 2020
- Parking Guidance, 2020
- Air Quality Guidance for Sussex, 2021
- Planning Noise Advice Document; Sussex, 2023

MSDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

- 4.25 The MSDC IDP is a material consideration. As it is a live document, the most up to date position with regards to required infrastructure and contributions will be considered prior to submission.

5. Planning Appraisal

The National Planning Context

5.1 The requirement for local planning authorities to deliver sustainable housing sites has been a fundamental tenet of the planning system for many years; as is having an up-to-date local plan. Many authorities have failed to do so, particularly in the south east of England where the need for both market and affordable housing is high, resulting in increasing affordability ratios and high rents.

5.2 Matthew Pennycook's Ministerial Speech of 12 December 2024 accompanying the publication of the revised NPPF goes a little further stating,

"This Government has inherited an acute and entrenched housing crisis. The average new home is out of reach for the average worker, housing costs consume a third of private renters' income, and the number of children in temporary accommodation now stands at a historic high of nearly 160,000. Yet just 220,000 new homes were built last year and the number of homes granted planning permission has fallen to its lowest in a decade.

That is why the Plan for Change committed to rebuild Britain, with the hugely ambitious goal of delivering 1.5 million new homes this Parliament, and the vital infrastructure needed to grow our economy and support public services."

Paragraph 11d of the NPPF

5.3 As MSDC does not have a five year land supply, as set out in paragraph 4.10 of this Statement paragraph 11d of the NPPF is engaged.

5.4 The Site is not designated or a potential Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar; Site of Special Scientific Interest; Local Green Space, National Landscape, National Park or Heritage Coast; designated

heritage asset (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); or an area at risk of flooding or coastal change; hence is not a protected area or asset of particular importance that provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposal in accordance with paragraph 11d(i).

- 5.5 In terms of paragraph 11d(ii) the rest of this Section will consider the other elements of the Application that have to be considered in the planning balance when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, *“having particular regard to key policies directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination”*.

Sustainable Location

- 5.6 In terms of locational sustainability and availability of services and social infrastructure, Haywards Heath is identified in adopted Policy DP6, Settlement Hierarchy, as a ‘Category 1’ settlement and as such is a settlement with a comprehensive range of employment, retail, health, education leisure services and facilities. These settlements also benefit from good public transport provision and will act as a main service centre for the smaller settlements.

- 5.7 The following local services and facilities are particularly important:

Harlands Primary School	0.8km
Elan Day Nursery, Haywards Heath	1.0km
Haywards Heath College	1.2km
Newton Surgery	1.6km
Kamson Pharmacy	1.6km
Sainsbury’s	0.85km
Perrymount Road Post Office	0.9km
Sunte Avenue Bus Stop	0.53km
College Road Bus Stop	0.55km
Haywards Heath Rail Station	0.9km

Walking and Cycling

- 5.8 The Site is bound by two public rights of way (PRoW) which run along the eastern and southern boundary:
- Eastern boundary = PRoW LIR/24LR/2
 - Southern boundary = PRoW HAH/46cCU/1 (which continues east to HAH/47CCU and connects south to HAH/47aCU/1)
- 5.9 As such, the Site is well connected for active travel to the local PRoW network, that leads into Haywards Heath to the south and the countryside to the north.

Public Transport

Bus Services

- 5.10 There are two sets of bus stops close to the Site on Sunte Avenue and College Road, approximately 550m east and south of the Site access location respectively, equating to a circa 8-minute walk. Bus No 30 runs hourly from these stops to the rail station, the centre of Haywards Heath and Princess Royal Hospital.

Rail Services

- 5.11 Haywards Heath Railway Station is located approximately 900m south of the Site. The station can be accessed via Bus Service 30 (from bus stops at Sunte Avenue or College Road), 13-minute walk or by a 5-minute cycle. This railway station is located along the Brighton Main Line. Services go to Burgess Hill, Brighton, London Victoria; Eastbourne, Lewes, Redhill. Crawley, Worthing and Hastings.
- 5.12 As such, the Site is in a highly sustainable location.

Making Effective Use of Land

Agricultural Land Classification

- 5.13 The Site is classified as predominantly Subgrade 3a, with a small area of Grade 2 and a smaller area of Subgrade 3b, as shown in the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). However, the main soils comprise slowly permeable and compact subsoils, which result in seasonal waterlogging in the absence of artificial drainage and are classified as Wetness Class (WC) III. This represents a significant and consistent limitation to the versatility and reliability of the land for agricultural use, restricting the range of crops that can be grown and reducing yields. As such, while parts of the site fall within the best and most versatile land category in technical terms, the land does not function as high-quality agricultural land in practice. Furthermore, the extent of higher quality land is limited and fragmented, and the development would not result in the loss of a large or cohesive area of BMV land. In this context, and having regard to the site-specific constraints, the proposal is consistent with the aims of the NPPF, which seek to protect the best and most versatile land where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, and where poorer quality land is not reasonably available.

Density

- 5.14 In terms of the quantum of development, 49 new market and affordable homes are proposed at the Site with a density of 27 dwelling per hectare, which takes into account the root protection areas of trees and the southern buffer to the listed building, Wickham Farmhouse as well as precedent from the local area.

Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 5.15 Section 12 of NPPF 'Achieving well-designed places' the NPPF states:
- "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

- 5.16 NPPF Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
- 5.17 Good design is at the heart of sustainable development. As the Design and Access statement sets out, the design and layout of development meets the NPPF criteria and best practice as set out in the National Design Guide.
- 5.18 Paragraph 136 adds that trees make an important contribution to character and quality and that opportunities should be taken to incorporate trees. This proposal retains the vast majority of trees on Site (losing only 17 individual trees and three groups of trees) with additional planting being provided.
- 5.19 This high quality approach will also meet modern housing, environmental, open space and recreation, biodiversity and density standards to comply with the NPPF, Local Plan design policies, MSDC SPD Design Guide.

Affordable Homes

- 5.20 The Proposed Development will deliver 30% affordable homes (15 dwellings), thus achieving a policy compliant affordable housing provision that meets the needs of residents in the district.
- 5.8 All affordable homes are 'tenure blind' and organised into small clusters in accordance with the advice from the Principal Housing Enabling Officer, as shown on the Affordable Strategy Plan, 25714/5013A.
- 5.9 All affordable dwellings meet the Council's occupancy and minimum floor area/NDSS requirements.
- 5.21 The size of dwellings and tenure split are set out in the Affordable Housing Statement at Section 6.

Sustainable Transport

- 5.22 Section 9 of the NPPF sets out the approach to promoting sustainable transport.
- 5.23 Paragraph 110 states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth; focusing significant development on locations which are, or can be made, sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
- 5.24 Paragraph 115 sets out 4 criteria to be applied when assessing the suitability of specific applications for development.

Accessibility

- 5.25 In terms of accessibility and connectivity, the site:
- Scores 65 and is in band A of the DfT Connectivity Tool
 - Is within a Top 60 highest ranking Travel to Work Area

- Is within 900m of Haywards Heath railway station.

- 5.26 The site benefits from good accessibility by sustainable modes. A wide range of local facilities, including shops, schools, health services, leisure uses and employment opportunities, are located within walking and cycling distance.
- 5.27 Bus stops on Sunte Avenue and College Road are located within an approximate 8-minute walk of the site and provide access to local and wider destinations, while Haywards Heath railway station is located approximately 900m from the site, offering frequent rail services to Brighton, London and other regional centres.

Transport Assessment

- 5.28 An assessment of travel demand and impacts is provided in the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application and adopts a vision-led approach to transport in line with national policy. The scope of which has been agreed with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) acting as the Local highway Authority.
- 5.29 The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development at Land West of Gatesmead is located in a sustainable and accessible location, with good opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 5.30 The level of traffic generated by the development is modest and can be safely accommodated on the surrounding highway network without giving rise to capacity or safety concerns. The proposed access arrangements, parking provision, pedestrian and cycle connections, and off-site improvements are appropriate and policy-compliant.
- 5.31 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the development would not result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the transport network.

Site Access

- 5.32 Access to the site for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles is proposed via Gatesmead, through an extension of the existing road into the development. A priority-controlled (shuttle working) traffic calming feature is proposed at the site entrance to manage vehicle speeds and enhance safety. The position of the access has taken into account the Ancient Woodland and its buffer to the north, root protection areas, and the extents of land retained by Crest at the end of Gatesmead. See Drawings 7627-MJA-SW-XX-DR-C-003 P1 and 7627-MJA-SW-XX-DR-C-004 P1.
- 5.33 The access has been designed to incorporate traffic calming and safe crossing facilities, and achieves appropriate visibility standards in accordance with Manual for Streets and WSCC guidance. Appropriate landscaping will be provided to soften the appearance of this new infrastructure, whilst maintaining required visibility splays for highways safety reasons.
- 5.34 Two crossings are proposed, on a raised table, to slow vehicles and raise awareness of pedestrians, to:
- Provide for the PRow that run north-south along the eastern boundary of the site
 - Connect the proposed footway into the site to the footway along Gatesmead.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

- 5.35 The internal site layout will also provide secondary pedestrian and cycle connections to the surrounding Public Rights of Way (PRow) network, improving permeability and access to the wider area.

Parking Provision

- 5.36 The scheme includes appropriate levels of car and cycle parking, provision for electric vehicle charging (see drawing 25714/5012A) and a range of off-site pedestrian and accessibility improvements, including dropped kerbs, tactile paving and enhanced walking routes to bus stops and the railway station.

Cycle parking

1 & 2 bed houses (up to 4 rooms)	1 space
3+ bed houses (5+ rooms)	2 spaces

Car Parking – Parking Behaviour Zone 3

1 bed houses	0.9 spaces per unit
2 bed houses	1.3 spaces per unit
3 bed houses	1.8 spaces per unit
4+ bed houses+	2.5 spaces per unit

Visitor Parking

- 5.37 In addition to the above, 12 visitor parking spaces will be provided across the site in accordance with WSCC parking guidance of a ratio of 0.2 spaces dwelling.

Electric Vehicle Charging

- 5.38 One electric vehicle (EV) charging point per dwelling will be provided, in line with The Building Regulations 2010 Part S Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles.

Improvements to Infrastructure

- 5.39 The proposed development includes a comprehensive package of on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements designed to enhance pedestrian safety, accessibility and sustainable travel opportunities, in line with WSCC pre-application advice and national policy objectives.
- 5.40 Targeted pedestrian route enhancements are proposed along key walking routes between the site, nearby bus stops on Sunte Avenue and College Road, and Haywards Heath railway station. These works include the provision of dropped kerbs, tactile paving and continuous footway improvements to deliver safe, inclusive and legible walking routes.

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- 5.41 Improvements are also proposed to the PRow network, including a high-quality crossing of Footpath FP47bCU at the site access and a financial contribution towards resurfacing approximately 500m of Footpath FP46cCU. These measures will improve east–west connectivity and enhance the usability of routes linking residential areas on either side of the railway line.
- 5.42 Overall, the proposed infrastructure improvements will deliver tangible benefits to both future residents and the wider community by strengthening sustainable travel connections, improving safety, and supporting a shift away from car dependency.

Framework Travel Plan

- 5.43 A Framework Travel Plan also accompanies the planning application and sets out measures to encourage sustainable travel choices from first occupation.
- 5.44 The proposed development is consistent with the national and local plan policies by locating housing within reasonable distance of services, public transport and active travel routes, and by incorporating appropriate mitigation and enhancements where necessary.

Conclusion on Highways, Access and Connectivity

- 5.45 Taking the above into account, the proposals accord with the adopted DP21, DP22 and NPPF paragraphs 109 to 118.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change & Flooding

Flood Risk

- 5.46 A small un-named tributary of the Scrase Stream, itself a tributary of the River Ouse, flows from west to east beyond the Site's northern boundary. It is classified as a Main River, but is offset a minimum of 10 metres from the application boundary, with the small exception of the SUDs outfall pipe.

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- 5.47 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, outside of flood Zones 2 and 3, and is not at risk of fluvial flooding from anything less extreme than a 0.1% (1 in 1,000) annual probability flood event. There is no record of flooding within the red line boundary on the EAs Historic Flood Map dataset or from the LLFA or Southern Water.
- 5.48 The Site is generally at a very low risk of flooding from surface water including for the impacts of climate change. There are some localised areas at a low and medium risk but these are all generated within the Site boundary, with no overland flow entering from off-site, so these would be managed as part of the surface water drainage strategy.
- 5.49 The existing Site is greenfield. It is drained by a combination of infiltration, overland runoff, and a network of ditches.
- 5.50 There are small areas of low to very low risk of surface water flooding on site over the lifetime of the proposed development, due to rain; however, these will be managed as part of the proposed surface water drainage strategy. Surface water discharge from the Site is proposed to be restricted to match existing greenfield runoff rates.
- 5.51 There is no record groundwater or sewer flooding.
- 5.52 When climate change is applied a very small area at the northern boundary of the Site would be affected by the 1% AP+climate change event. However, the masterplan, and in particular the site access, has been designed to avoid any built development within this area, instead retaining it as open space.
- 5.53 The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted to support the planning application demonstrates that the development:
- Aligns with the relevant national and local policy;
 - Follows industry best practice and guidance;
 - Is safe from flooding from all sources over its lifetime; and

- Does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Sustainable Drainage

- 5.54 Initial testing suggests that infiltration is not a viable solution. Consequently, the proposed surface water drainage strategy will seek to discharge runoff into the Scrase stream that lies adjacent to the Site's northern boundary. To address the increase in impermeable areas arising as a consequence of development, an attenuation pond and linking swales are envisaged, along with porous paving. This will ensure runoff is consistent with existing greenfield rates.
- 5.55 The provision of an attenuation basin will create opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancements, including rush pasture translocation. This drainage feature will be designed to contribute to the broader green infrastructure strategy for the Site and will be designed to appear naturalistic, rather than engineered or structural.
- 5.56 The Detailed Drainage Strategy, submitted in support of the application, sets out a maintenance plan for all the SuDS components.

Foul Water Management

- 5.57 The closest outfall connection can be found on Gatesmead. The foul water will gravitate towards a Type 3 pumping station, in accordance with the DCG, located to the north of the site. From there, it will be pumped via a rising main to a foul water manhole adjacent to Gatesmead, before finally gravitating to the existing foul water manhole on Gatesmead. All foul water drainage will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Building Regulations Part H. Primary foul runs have been preliminarily sized as ranging between 150-300mm diameter pipes.
- 5.58 The proposals will comply with Policy DP41, as well as Section 14 of the NPPF.

Natural Environment

- 5.59 Section 15 of the NPPF relates to the natural environment.
- 5.60 Paragraph 187 seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes (which does not apply here) and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared and is submitted in support of this application.

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

- 5.61 The Site is well enclosed with views into the Site generally associated with footpaths alongside the Site boundaries. Long views into the Site are generally limited due to the large trees and vegetation along the Site boundaries.
- 5.62 An LVIA has been undertaken, and submitted in support of the application, to demonstrate the impact of the proposed development at completion and once mitigation planting has been established. 20 representative viewpoints were identified, as set out in Appendix 7 of the LVIA. These were selected based on a desk study. The desk study tested the development areas at 12m to allow for 2.5 story units, to ensure a worst case scenario. Viewpoints were then refined during the site survey where landscape elements that did not show up in the desk study could be observed. As a result only 10 viewpoints were considered to have potential views of the Site and these were assessed for visual impact.
- 5.63 The LVIA concludes:
- The baseline landscape character sensitivity of the study area is medium to low and the Site is medium to low
 - Views immediately adjacent to the boundaries afford glimpsed views into the Site, only those locations where gaps occur in the existing perimeter vegetation were clear views into the Site available. Views from receptors located further away were all screened by a combination of existing trees, woodland and vegetation, built development and intervening landform.

- The level of effect on the study area at Year 1 will be minor, adverse and permanent
- The proposed development will introduce a noticeable change to the Site's character, particularly at Year 1, as the grassland gives way to new homes and a network of public open space. This will result in a major/moderate, adverse effect on overall Site character. However, the defining landscape features of the Site including the mature trees and perimeter and internal hedgerows will be retained and enhanced. As the planting establishes the residual (Year 15) levels of effect on views from the north, south and east would reduce.
- The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise harm to landscape character and visual harm, using a best practice approach that responds to a recorded baseline within a defined study area. The Proposed Development will protect high quality features at the outset, be sympathetic to visual receptors including those along the Public Rights of Way along the eastern and southern boundaries. The proposed development would be integrated with off-site landscape features to create a cohesive and legible green and blue infrastructure.

5.64 As such the proposals will accord with Policies DP12 and the paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Trees and Woodland

5.65 In addition to protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 187(b) also recognises the wider benefits of natural capital and ecosystems of tree and woodlands.

5.66 There are woodlands beyond the Site's northern boundary (Stave's Copse and Birchen Wood) which are classified as 'Ancient Woodland'.

5.67 There are several trees adjacent to the Site to the south covered by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) ref. CU/05TPO/83; however, the proposed 61m

buffer to the south of the Site will create an adequate buffer which will address any potential effects.

- 5.68 A tree survey has been undertaken and the trees assessed using the current British Standards methodology and in respect to the Mid Sussex District Plan (March 2018) Local Plan Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows.
- 5.69 The arboricultural character of the Site is an enclosed field with established wooded boundaries with internal hedgerows, groups of trees and scattered large-canopied individual trees within the field. English oak is the most common and dominant species in the landscape. The trees are well established with majority of trees being either mature (43%) or semi-mature (52%).
- 5.70 The Arboricultural Implications Report, submitted in support of the planning application, sets out that the tree survey recorded 156 individuals and 13 groups growing within or adjacent to the Site. The vast majority of trees are assessed as Category C (56%) and Category B (approx. 39%) with the remaining trees assessed as Category A (3%) or Category U trees (2%). The Tree Survey Schedule is attached to Appendix 3 of the Arboricultural Implications Report.

Irreplaceable Habitat: Ancient Woodland

- 5.71 There are two woodlands to the north of the Site that are classified as Ancient Woodlands. Staves Copse is to the north west of the Site, but is not close. Birchen Wood is to the north east of the Site and is in close proximity to the proposed access. The NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
- 5.72 To avoid negative effects on ancient woodland an appropriate buffer zone of semi-natural habitat of at least 15m should be left between the development and the woodland. This buffer has been applied.

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- 5.73 The proposed development does not encroach into Birchen Wood; however, the proposed banking of the access road encroaches marginally within the 15m buffer.
- 5.74 The assessment of this impact, and the alternatives considered are set out in 4.2.1-4.2.16 of the Arboricultural Implications Report. There are no alternative access routes into the site, so the approach was to mitigate potential adverse impacts as far as reasonably possible whilst meeting appropriate standards for a safe access and an appropriate crossing point for the PROW that runs north-south. Different construction options were also considered as a standard specification for the road would result in excavation within the ancient woodland buffer zone and within the RPAs of several mature oaks, which would have led to significant arboricultural impacts.
- 5.75 The proposed access is an above soil solution ensuring that there will be no excavation into the soil within the ancient woodland buffer or within the RPAs of trees within the buffer and the structural base for the road and the banks are based on a permeable geogrid system with a semi-natural habitat finish (either soil, vegetation or natural surfaces such as gravel) that will allow water and air to penetrate to the soil beneath, thereby ensuring that the RPAs of the retained trees are protected and the ancient woodland buffer continues to function.
- 5.76 The level of existing public right of way needs to be increased to meet the raised carriageway level to provide a crossing. The combination of the raised access solution and the build-up for the public footpath results in a slight incursion into the ancient woodland buffer; however, given the historical and current usage of the footpath, the roots associated with the trees along the footpath will have adapted to the soil conditions likely by preferentially rooting elsewhere where better soil condition exists. Accordingly, there are unlikely to be significant levels of fine fibrous roots beneath the footpath, and whilst structural roots are likely present, these will have adapted to the existing soil condition. Consequently, we consider that it is appropriate to approach the footpath as existing surfaced ground, and the introduction of a new surface that will reduce

the extent of loading on the soils will potentially provide an opportunity for the compacted soil to de-compact and begin to be recolonised by soil bioactivity.

- 5.77 It should be noted that the watercourse along the southern end of the ancient woodland is considered to act as a rooting barrier and essentially separates the connectivity of the soils within the ancient woodland from those on the south side of the water course. The hydrology and soil conditions within the ancient woodland will therefore not be altered in any regard by the proposed access.
- 5.78 The existing trees within the ancient woodland buffer are to be retained, which ensures that the green link along the tree belt along the water course is retained.
- 5.79 The proposals do not alter the existing situation in relation to accessibility to the ancient woodland, as such there will be no alteration of impacts in respect to damage or compaction of the soil, disturbance to wildlife or fly-tipping.
- 5.80 In terms of impact to the ancient woodland, there will be no loss or deterioration of the woodland itself and the incursion into its buffer is small. The negligible impact on the buffer zone for the ancient woodland should be considered by MSDC in the planning balance alongside the benefits of providing much needed housing.

Irreplaceable Habitat: Ancient or Veteran trees

- 5.81 The Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory lists one veteran tree (English oak no. 34) growing along the PRoW along the east site boundary and numerous notable trees adjacent to the south and east site boundaries with one notable tree identified within the site itself. The SJAtrees survey methodology includes a detailed assessment in respect to determining if a specimen is veteran based on the definitions set out in the Arboricultural Implications Report. That assessment concludes that there are four veteran oaks (nos. 34, 71, 73 and 74).

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- 5.82 There are no incursions into the buffer zones (15x trunk diameter or 5m offset from canopy, whichever is larger) of the four veteran trees and at least 500mm offset is provided between veteran buffer zones and any proposed building or new surface, this will provide construction space for these elements of the proposals without temporary incursions into the buffers. Further, to mitigate any potential adverse impacts during construction, work will be supervised by an arboricultural consultant to ensure that there is no over-dig and that any exposed roots are retained and protected where possible. This can be secured through conditions for a construction management plan and detailed arboricultural method statement.
- 5.83 The proposals also seek to formalise the existing desire line footpaths across the site, which has resulted in footpaths encroaching within the veteran buffer zones of oaks nos. 34, 71, 73 and 74. The footpaths will be installed above the existing ground levels to ensure that there is no excavation and will be finished with a permeable semi-natural surface. The proposed footpaths are routed outside the drip lines of the veteran canopies which will limit the potential risk to future users and thus allow for the retention of deadwood habitat and defects that form important habitat niches. Furthermore, the network of informal desire line footpaths will be made redundant, which will increase the separation between the public and the veteran trees and allow for the recovery of the compacted soil along these paths.
- 5.84 Section 9 of the Arboricultural Implications Report sets out the parameters for a Veteran Tree Management Plan, to be secured through condition, to ensure a strategic and integrated approach to the management and maintenance of the existing veteran and notable trees on the site, and to ensure their retention and successful integration into the proposed development.

Conclusion on Irreplaceable Habitats

- 5.85 The Arboricultural Implications Report concludes there are no incursions into the adjacent ancient woodland and consequently, the proposals will not result in any loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habit. The maintenance and planting

of the buffer zone will enhance and maintain the landscape character of the area. Consequently, there is no strong reason for refusing the proposed development on these grounds.

Trees That Contribute to the Character of the Local Landscape

5.86 Adopted Local Plan Policy DP37 and emerging Local Plan Policy DPN4 require the retention of trees that contribute to the features that contribute to the landscape and green infrastructure. The individuals and groups of trees within or adjacent to the site, whose attributes are considered to meet this criteria, are as follows:

- the established tree belt (G1) along the PRow (ref: 47bCU) adjacent to the east site boundary, including the veteran aged oaks nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22, 31 to 37, 44, 55 and 56;
- the belt of trees (G12) growing along the banks of the watercourse along the north site boundary, including the established oaks nos. 1, 3, 57, 80 and 90;
- the established oaks (nos. 67, 68 and 70-74) growing within the site itself;
- the significant components of the row of trees adjacent to the south site boundary, including trees nos. 45, 47, 50, 51 and 52; and
- the dense belt of vegetation and trees (G10) growing along the railway embankment to the west of the site.

5.87 The root protection areas of each significant tree has been plotted and these areas are protected from development. The shadow pattern from the trees on Site will also be taken into account when considering layout and orientation of dwellings.

Trees to be Removed

5.88 To accommodate the proposed development, as shown on the proposed Planning Layout drawing (Appendix 2), 17 individual trees and three groups of trees are to be removed, either because they are situated within the footprints of proposed structures or surfaces, or because they are too close to these to enable them to be retained. In addition, a further three groups of trees (G8, G9 and G13) are to be partially removed as part of the proposals.

5.89 Details of the trees to be removed, including their dimensions, age class and British Standard categorisation, are shown and listed on the TPP and in the Table below:

Tree no.	Species	Height	Trunk diameter	Age class	BS category
4	English oak	21.5m	1235mm	Mature	B (23)
24	Holly	6m	Avg 8 stems @ 250mm	Mature	C (3)
25	English oak	12m	375mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
26	English oak	15m	520mm	Semi-mature	B (1)
27-30	English oak	Max 7m	Max 215mm	Young	C (1)
42	Sycamore	10m	140mm est.	Semi-mature	C (1)
60	Goat willow	8m	Avg 5 stems @ 190mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
63	English oak	12.5m	275mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
64	Silver birch	14m	260mm 320mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
65	English oak	13m	735mm	Mature	B (1)
66	Goat willow	9m	180mm 170mm 2 stems @ 220mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
69	Silver birch	11m	245mm 160mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
75	Silver birch	11m	285mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
76	Goat willow	9m	225mm 335mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
G5	Various	12m	Avg 225mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
G6	Various	7m	Avg 12 stems @ 100mm	Semi-mature	C (13)
G7	English oak	5m	Avg 100mm	Young	C (1)
G8	Various (partially removed)	4m	Max 3 stems @ 175mm	Mature	C (13)
G9	English oak (partially removed)	Avg 6m	Avg 150mm	Semi-mature	C (1)
G13	Various (partially removed)	Avg 7m	Avg 10 stems @ 100mm	Semi-mature	C (123)

5.90 The English oak no. 4, goat willow no. 76 and a 15m section of G13 are to be removed to accommodate the site access. As discussed in the Arboricultural Implications Report, and summarised above, the proposed access arrangement was subject to extensive scrutiny to establish the most arboriculturally sensitive route into the site, but there were no options that avoided the loss of the oak no. 4; however, the specimen is in poor structural condition with numerous wounds noted on the trunk and in the primary canopy structure. It is also in below average physiological condition with a crown reduction density of between 40 to 50% with a sparsely foliated outer canopy. The removal of the specimen will result in a 15m gap in the tree belt, which will increase the extent of skyline visible from Gatesmead and the footpath. The

retention of the surrounding trees, including the mature trees (nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 57) will mitigate the visual impact of the proposed removal by ensuring the mature arboricultural character is retained, and screening visibility of the tree in views from north and south along the footpath. The landscaping proposals will also incorporate new trees along the access that, once established, will grow to compensate for the loss of the oak and to fill in the canopy gap in the tree belt.

Root Protection Area Incursions

- 5.91 Section 7 of the Arboricultural Implications Report sets out that there is some incursion within 18 retained trees, mostly as a result of the proposed access. All but one incursion is below the 20% maximum incursion into currently unsurfaced ground recommended in BS5837.
- 5.92 Although, the incursion into the RPA of English oak no. 57 slightly exceeds the 20% maximum incursion, at 21% of existing unsurfaced ground, recommended in BS5837 this does not necessarily mean that the trees will be adversely impacted. Following research and technological advances undertaken since the publication of BS 5837 in 2012, it has since been acknowledged that the 20% figure is a “cautious recommendation and it should not necessarily be considered an absolute limit...” In this case, because the hard surfacing will be installed entirely above existing ground levels, will not result in any excavation within their RPAs and will incorporate a suitable cellular confinement system, and because the soil is not a heavy clay and thus susceptible to compaction, there is no reason to suggest that this specimen will not remain viable.
- 5.93 Furthermore, within the site boundary the opportunity exists for the soil used by these trees for root growth to be improved. This could be ensured by an appropriate landscaping condition. As such, this incursion complies with paragraph 5.3.1 of BS5837.

Proposed Planting

- 5.94 As shown on drawing 3403-5-2-DR-0001 S4-P4, the Landscape General Arrangement, the proposals incorporate considerable replacement/new tree planting within the proposed development, with native trees within the soft landscaped areas around the internal mature trees and 20 trees between the southern edge of development and the southern boundary.
- 5.95 This will mitigate the proposed removals identified above, improve the age class balance of the trees on site, enhance the local landscape, and re-establish a framework for the ongoing and long-term character of the site. The establishment of the replacement planting will progressively reduce the magnitude of the impact of the proposed removals on the character and appearance of Gatesmead and the public footpath.

Conclusion on Trees

- 5.96 The site benefits from an abundance of established mature trees of arboricultural, landscape and biodiversity value. The development of the layout has focused on retaining and protecting the valuable arboricultural features of the site. This has allowed the retention and integration into the layout of the veteran oaks along with the majority of the mature trees on the site.
- 5.97 A calculation of the existing canopy cover of the surveyed trees highlights that there is an existing canopy area, including the off-site trees of 36,000m². The proposals will retain 34,850m² (97%) of the canopy cover, including veteran, notable and aged oaks. As a result, the proposals protect the arboricultural framework of the site which also provides significant benefits for biodiversity, green infrastructure and visual landscape.
- 5.98 As the proposal does not result in the loss or deterioration of Ancient Woodland, aged & veteran trees, trees of landscape, historic or wildlife importance, and provides appropriate buffer zones to ensure the integration and protection of trees within the context of development, the arboricultural impact of this scheme

is of low magnitude, and as such it complies with Policy DP37 of the District Plan and Paragraphs 135 (c), 136 and 193 (c) of the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

5.99 NPPF Paragraph 187(d) recognises the value of biodiversity and protected species.

5.100 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) submitted in support of the application:

- 2km desktop search submitted to Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SBIC) (April 2025)
- Walkover survey assigning UKHab habitat types and assessing for protected / notable species suitability (April 2025)
- Ground Level Tree (roost) Assessment (GLTA) (April 2025)
- Bat activity surveys (walked transects and static deployments covering April – October 2025)
- Bat Emergence Surveys and Aerial Close Inspection Surveys (Trees) (August – September 2025)
- Reptile Presence/ Likely absence survey (April - May 2025)
- Dormouse Nest Tube Survey (April – September 2025)
- Breeding Bird/ Ground Nesting Bird Survey (April – June 2025)

5.101 Based on the results of the above survey work, outline mitigation measures for each species group / feature are indicated in the Table below:

Species Group / Features	Potential Impacts	Outline Mitigation / Compensation
Bats (Foraging & Commuting)	Site considered to be of at least 'county importance for commuting' and foraging bats, with notable registrations/ species including <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> , <i>Serotine Eptesicus serotinus</i> and <i>Leisler's bat Nyctalus leisleri</i> . Scheme	Retention of the majority of the existing hedgerow and boundary woodland habitat with dark corridors implemented along these features and sensitive lighting recommended across the site. Enhancement of foraging resources through enhancement/ reinforcement

	will result in vegetation removal which may reduce foraging resources and introduction of new lighting on site may disrupt foraging areas and commuting routes.	of boundary habitats/ commuting routes.
Bats (Trees)	A number of trees identified as supporting PRF-I features will require removal as part of the proposed works which may result in damage and destruction of bats/ associated roosts, should they be present.	Tree removal works will adopt a precautionary working methodology, which will include inspections of features prior to felling under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist and soft felling techniques were appropriate
Reptiles	A 'low' population of Slow Worm and a 'low' population of Grass Snake were identified within the site, with the majority of the individuals recorded within along the western and north-eastern boundaries. The works will involve impacts to areas of suitable reptile habitat and in the absence of mitigation this may result in the harm or killing of reptiles.	Combination of passive dispersal (March-October)/ reptile translocation methodology to be adopted with exclusion fencing within the main development footprint and 30-60 day translocation effort (March-September). On site receptor areas will be enhanced with targeted habitat creation/ management with two log piles to be provided within this habitat to enhance its suitability for reptiles.
Badgers	No evidence of Badger setts or associated field signs recorded on site. Notwithstanding this, the site is considered suitable to support foraging and commuting Badger activity with potential for them to be entrapped within open excavations during construction.	Pre-commencement walkover to be undertaken within 4 weeks of commencement of ground works to ensure no setts present. Open excavations left overnight should either be covered to prevent commuting Badgers falling in or escape ladders should be used.
Hazel Dormice	Confirmed presence of Dormice utilizing the onsite habitats. Potential for Dormice to be harmed and/or disturbed through proposed vegetation clearance works which will result in a deficit in foraging/ nesting resources	All vegetation clearance works (if required) to be undertaken with an EPS licence adopting a single stage active season approach. Compensational/ enhancement planting to provide alternative foraging/ nesting resources on site, with targeted planting and site design

		to prevent habitat fragmentation. Dormouse boxes to be erected to increase the carrying capacity of the site, with reinforcement planting of hedgerows/ boundary habitats to be implemented where appropriate.
Breeding and nesting birds	Site noted to support a number of breeding and nesting birds including 11 species noted as Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (BoCC5), with the majority of activity recorded within the surrounding woodland which will be largely retained as part of the proposed works. Notwithstanding this, through vegetation removal works there is potential for disturbance of nesting birds and direct impacts to nests.	Majority of boundary habitats to be retained through the site design. Clearance of woody vegetation to be undertaken outside of bird nesting season (or following an appropriate PWMS where this is not possible) with compensational planting proposed around site and a variety of nest boxes due to be installed on retained mature trees and erected dwellings.
Designated Sites	Wickham Woods Local Wildlife Site (LWS), designated primarily for supporting ancient woodland habitat is situated approximately 0.07km north of the Site boundary.	A minimum buffer zone of 15m will be provided from the ancient woodland situated to the north of the proposed access route, with sensitive measures implemented to minimise damage to trees/ roots within this area as required.
Rush Pasture	Areas of rush pasture are present within the north-eastern portion of the site which represents a priority habitat type of value. The proposed works will result in impacts to this habitat type and in the absence of mitigation permanent habitat loss.	Scheme designed to retain as much of this habitat type in situ as possible, with sensitive translocation of this habitat to be undertaken within SUDs basins and other appropriate locations identified on site to ensure that there is no net-loss of this habitat on site.

5.102 In addition to the above species/feature specific recommendations, ecological enhancements are proposed which will include the retention of green corridors, provision of bird, bat and dormouse boxes, bird and bat bricks and two wood-based hibernacula (log piles) for reptiles to hibernate in, along with planted

buffers and other features to enable other benefits such as Hedgehog movement throughout the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

5.103 A BNG Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and the BNG Metrics spreadsheets have been submitted in support of the application.

5.104 The statutory requirement for developers is to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% to ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurable better state than they were before the development.

5.105 This will primarily be achieved by applying the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy as follows:

- **Avoid:** The habitats of highest value, where possible, have been retained in situ, with sensitive translocation of rush pasture habitat to be undertaken within SUDs basins and other suitable locations identified on site to ensure that there is no net-loss of this habitat on site, and avoidance of impacts to the majority of woodland habitat bounding the site. Some modified grassland, bracken, bramble scrub, other neutral grassland, hedgerow, lowland mixed deciduous woodland (proposed access route), mixed scrub and individual trees could not be retained. Notwithstanding this avoidance and subsequent restoration/enhancement of retained habitat will be undertaken as necessary.
- **Mitigate:** In order to mitigate (in-part) for the loss of the on-site habitats, a total of 26 trees will be planted throughout the site to provide alternative habitat opportunities following the loss of trees on-site. Modified grassland, other neutral grassland, mixed scrub, and hedgerow habitat will also be created post works to offset the loss of these habitats from the baseline.
- Furthermore, it is anticipated that translocation of the rush pasture on site will be undertaken moving the existing habitat in the north of the site to a suitable location within the southern portion of the site to retain this habitat on-site.

- **Offset:** Given the constraints of the site, it is not possible to deliver the full net gain on site while delivering much needed housing. Therefore, the remaining impacts will be offset through the use of an offsite provider such as a registered habitat bank.

5.106 Following the incorporation of the site proposals into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric, on site there is a net loss of -41.09% in area habitats (or -14.16 habitat units) and a net gain of +35.82% in hedgerow units (+0.56 hedgerow units) and the trading rules are not satisfied. A further 3.45 area habitat units are required to achieve a 10% net gain. Therefore, the requirement of a 10% net gain for biodiversity has not been achieved on site and as such further measures are required through offsite habitat enhancement. Credits will be sought from a reputable provider, and secured via s106 legal obligation, to address the habitat deficit as follows to satisfy the trading rules and achieve a 10% net gain:

- 0.61 units of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- 2.09 units of Other Neutral Grassland (same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness units)
- 14.91 units of Low distinctiveness units (or higher distinctiveness units)

5.107 A more than sufficient gain has been achieved for hedgerow habitats within the proposed development scheme.

5.108 The BNG Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan provides a prescription of the management of habitats for a period of at least 30 years within the site and brings together all relevant sections of the EclA and use them to inform a site-wide Landscape & Ecological Management Plan. In combination with this, the report details how this site will deliver a 10% net gain for biodiversity post-development and how this will be secured for a period of 30 years. With the provision of all recommendations within this report, the site is expected to provide a net biodiversity enhancement for wildlife and ensure the local conservation status of protected / notable species on site is preserved.

5.109 As set out in the EclA and paragraph 3.74 of this Statement, a wide range of additional enhancement measures are proposed, including bat and bird boxes, log piles and measures to maintain permeability for hedgehogs. These are proposed separately and in addition to the quantitative BNG calculations.

5.110 As such the proposals will accord with Policies DP37 and DP38 and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF.

Cultural Heritage

5.111 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

5.112 A Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment has been submitted in support of this application. This clarifies the cultural potential of the Site.

Archaeology

5.113 In terms of relevant designated archaeological heritage assets, no Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites, Registered Battlefields, or Historic Wreck sites lie within the Study Site or its immediate vicinity.

5.114 The Registered Park and Garden (RPG) Borde Hill is situated c. 700m northwest of the Site. The Site does not form part of the setting of this Registered Park and Garden, and the proposed development is assessed as having no potential to impact on the significance of Borde Hill RPG.

5.115 The Site has been in agricultural use throughout most of its recorded history. A moderate but widespread below ground impact is identified as arising from historical and modern cultivation of the Site.

5.116 The potential of the Site to contain archaeological evidence of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age origin is considered to be low. The Site is

considered to have a moderate potential for the presence of archaeological evidence of Iron Age date. The Site is considered to have a low potential for the presence of Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval archaeological evidence. The Site is considered to have a high potential for evidence of post-Medieval cultivation, and a low potential for any other evidence relating to the post-Medieval period.

- 5.117 Any archaeological evidence present within the Site is most likely to be of local significance only.
- 5.118 The Site is located in an Archaeological Notification Area, relating to a perceived enhanced potential for the presence of archaeological evidence relating to Iron Age and Roman industrial activity.
- 5.119 An archaeological evaluation is considered to be a proportionate and sufficient response to the archaeological potential of the Site. It is recommended that any such archaeological work required by the Local Planning Authority and their Archaeological Advisors could follow the granting of planning consent and be secured by an appropriately worded archaeological planning condition.

Built Heritage

- 5.120 The Site does not contain any designated or non-designated built heritage assets.
- 5.121 The Site has a historical relationship with Grade II* Wickham Farmhouse, located c.50m south of the Study Site, having previously formed part of the farmsteads landholdings. The southern part of the Site, as a result of intervening mature tree lines and hedgerows and a wall, affords only limited, partial views towards Wickham Farmhouse. Within these limited views from the Site, the ability to appreciate the architectural and historic interest of the building diminishes rapidly with intervening distance.

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- 5.122 Setting is not itself a heritage asset and it is not purely a visual consideration. Settings are comprised of the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. In accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition, December 2017), views of or from an asset play an important part, however the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.
- 5.123 The central and northern parts of the Site, as a result of intervening treelines, hedgerows, and topography, afford no notable views towards Wickham Farmhouse. It is considered that the southern end of the Site makes a moderate contribution to the significance of this building as a remaining element of the building's rural-agricultural setting with a historical relationship to Wickham Farmhouse and a partial visual relationship. The northern and central parts of the Site, due to the lack of any opportunity to appreciate the significance of the listed building, makes only a low contribution to the significance of the listed building as a remaining element of the building's historically associated wider rural-agricultural setting.
- 5.124 The southern part of the Site will be retained as landscaped open space by the proposed development as part of mitigation by design. No notable existing opportunity to appreciate or understand the significance of the Grade II* Wickham Farmhouse will be lost as a result of the proposed development. In particular, no notable change will occur within the private, enclosed close setting from which the building's architectural and historic interest is primarily understood; no change will occur to the intrinsic architectural and historic interest of the building.
- 5.125 The Grade II* listed Sunte House, is the next closest designated built heritage asset to the Site, at c.130m to the east of the Study Site boundary. Two further listing designations are associated with Sunte House. These comprise, the Grade II listed Garden Wall to the north east of Sunte House and Grade II listed
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Garden Building, within the Walled Garden, to the east of Sunte House, which are both located within the private grounds of Sunte House. The Site is considered to make a low to moderate contribution to the significance of this group of listed buildings for its role as a surviving element of their formerly semi-rural or edge of settlement setting, with this contribution reducing with distance. The proposed development includes mitigation by design through the retention of the southern end of the Site as landscaped open space and increased planting to suitably respond to the presence of the Sunte House group.

- 5.126 The Site, as a result of intervening modern built development, including residential developments and a railway line, and tree lines, makes no contribution to the significance of Mill Hill Close Conservation Area and forms no appreciable element of the experience of Mill Hill Close Conservation Area within its setting. The proposed development is assessed as not having the potential to change the way in which Mill Hill Close Conservation Area is experienced or understood and so will have no impact on its significance.
- 5.127 No non-designated built heritage assets have been identified as relevant to this assessment.
- 5.128 The proposed development, through the erosion of a remaining element of the rural-agricultural character setting of the Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse and Grade II* listed Sunte House is considered to represent a low or very low degree of less than substantial harm to their respective significance. Embedded mitigation by design, including the retention of the southern end of the Study Site as landscaped open space and increased planting, are considered to be a proportionate response to the presence of these listed buildings. No notable change is anticipated to occur within the private, close settings within which the significance of these buildings is most readily appreciated or understood and no change will occur to their intrinsic architectural or historic interest.

5.129 In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, any degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.

5.130 The PROW to the east of the Site is a medieval hollow way, but it is off-site so generally unaffected by the proposals. It is proposed to link the Site to the PROW by an informal path in the centre of the Site. This link have been chosen to minimise any disturbance to the PROW by utilising existing breaks in the tree line and the banking along the PROW.

Noise

5.131 An environmental noise assessment has been undertaken to determine typical ambient sound levels. The sound levels have been used to calculate the required facade sound insulation to meet the guideline internal levels from BS8233:2014.

5.132 The rail line along the western boundary has been assessed for noise, but no specific buffer is required to locate dwellings a certain distance away. The noise assessment sets out the requirements for dwellings to have standard thermal double glazing to achieve satisfactory internal noise levels.

5.133 In terms of external noise levels for gardens, the noise assessment recommends dwellings on the western edge of the proposed development to have 3m tall fences to the north and 2.4m tall fences in the central and southern area (as shown on the plan on page 14 of the noise assessment) to achieve <55dB LAeq,16hour in all garden areas.

Air Quality

5.134 An Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted in support of the application.

5.135 The Site is not located within, or in close proximity to, any AQMA and is situated away from major roads or significant industrial sources of air pollution. Local air

quality is generally good, supported by background monitoring data reported in MSDC's 2024 Air Quality Annual Status Report.

- 5.136 Due to the Site's location and surrounding land uses, the pollutant concentrations at the Site are expected to be represented by Defra background mapping data for Mid Sussex, rather than by Haywards Heath town centre. As such, the annual mean concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are comfortably below the relevant Air Quality Objectives (AQOs). These values confirm that pollutant levels at the development site are not expected to pose a risk to future occupants.
- 5.137 Future concentrations are projected to decline further as a result of national and local policy interventions, improvements in vehicle emissions technology, and wider adoption of clean transport. Based on the evidence available, air quality across the development site is expected to remain comfortably below the AQOs throughout the operational lifetime of the development.
- 5.138 A qualitative assessment of construction-phase dust has been undertaken. In the absence of mitigation, construction activities have the potential to generate fugitive dust emissions; however, given the scale of the development and the local context, the risk is considered to be medium. Appropriate best-practice mitigation measures will be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Construction traffic associated with the development is predicted to remain well below the IAQM screening threshold of 100 HGV movements per day, and with mitigation in place, construction dust and traffic emissions are not expected to result in significant effects on nearby receptors.
- 5.139 The energy strategy for the development is based on an all-electric approach, with space heating and hot water provided by air source heat pumps and no on-site combustion plant. Building-related emissions will therefore be negligible and will not adversely affect local air quality.

- 5.140 The proposed development is not expected to result in significant adverse air quality effects, and future occupants will not be exposed to pollutant concentrations exceeding national objectives. No additional mitigation beyond standard best practice is considered necessary.
- 5.141 In conclusion, there are no air quality constraints to the proposed development. The scheme accords with adopted Local Plan Policy DP29 and national air quality policy and is considered acceptable in air quality terms.

Lighting

- 5.142 A Baseline Lighting Survey For Planning has been undertaken and is submitted in support of the planning application.
- 5.143 The existing site currently has no lighting installed on it. To maintain the 'darkness' of the site, the lighting design for the new development will follow standards to avoid introducing obtrusive light. Whilst the area is classed as environmental zone E3 with reference to the ILP GN01 (Guidance on the reduction of obtrusive light), a positive approach would be to design the lighting to meet the criteria of E2. E2 sets stricter limits for obtrusive light.
- 5.144 The ecology report has identified a need for 2700K light sources and the reduction of the blue component of light. This is possible with the products available on the market but can be conditioned.

Ground Condition Assessment

- 5.145 The Site Investigation concluded a worst case low risk for residential end users from potential contact with contaminants or ground gas associated with the neighbouring railway. Additional work will be undertaken prior to construction to confirm this risk is at the lower risk level.

- 5.146 Very low risk levels have been applied to construction/groundworkers and controlled water.

- 5.147 Existing topsoil and natural soils on site are suitable for private garden areas as part of the proposed development.

- 5.148 The soils on site will allow for traditional foundations for up to three storeys.

- 5.149 No groundwater was encountered during the ground investigation and was encountered at a minimum depth of 1.74mbgl during subsequent monitoring rounds.

- 5.150 Infiltration is not feasible, and therefore SuDS are proposed. See flood risk and drainage in Section 5.

Mineral Assessment Report

- 5.151 The Mineral Assessment Report, submitted in support of the application, states that the site is safeguarded for both brick clay and building stone. Brick clay is a widely available resources across most of West Sussex and one which the WSJMLP identifies as having in excess of 25 years' worth of supply across the county. There is a very small portion of the site that is also safeguarded for building stone. Similarly, the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (adopted in July 2020 and updated in March 2021 following a Soft sand Review) outlines that the demand for building stone will be met by existing quarries over the course of the plan period. As a result, it is considered the loss of the mineral resources beneath the site will not undermine the long-term supply of minerals across the county.

- 5.152 In addition, it has also been demonstrated that the entirety of the mineral resources within the site are already sterilised by existing site constraints, in particular the dwellings immediately to the east of the site and around 50m to the west. Mineral extraction on the site would therefore not be practical or viable owing to the potential detrimental impact it would have on the residential

amenity of these existing residents. Consequently, the mineral resources beneath the site could not be extracted in any event, irrespective of the proposal.

- 5.153 On this basis it is considered that the mineral safeguarding designations within the site should not preclude the proposal.

Utilities

- 5.154 The Preliminary Infrastructure Appraisal Report, submitted with this application, demonstrates that the necessary enquiries to statutory undertakers and utility service providers have been completed.
- 5.155 Generally, these confirm that there is either sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development or that the necessary improvements required for the development to proceed can be provided and will be funded by the applicant.
- 5.156 In accordance with this report, allowance has been made to accommodate an electric substation with the requisite buffers in the northern part of the site, to the north of the car parking spaces for Plots 45 and 46.

6. Affordable Housing Statement

- 6.8 With respect to affordable housing, all such homes will be provided on-site, in accordance with adopted and emerging Local Plan policies (as applicable at the point of determination).
- 6.9 Local Plan Policy DP31 requires that schemes for 11 or more dwellings should contain a minimum of 30% affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Requirement

- 6.10 In his pre-app response dated 3 March 2026, the Principal Housing Enabling Officer, set out the requirements for up to 70 units. The principles from that response can be applied to the current application for 49 dwellings as follows:
- Affordable housing requirement of 30%, in accordance with Policy DP31
 - 25% shared ownership
 - 75% social rented or affordable rented housing
 - To meet a range of housing need the overall affordable housing size mix will need to comprise approximately:
 - “26% (5) x 1B/2P flats, Coach Houses /FOGS, maisonettes, or bungalows @ a minimum of 50m² (excluding the staircase and entrance hall in the case of any Coach Houses/FOGS or maisonettes or 58m² including them). Maisonettes should each have their own private garden area
 - 45% (10) x 2B/4P houses and flats or all houses (the rented units should all be houses) @ a minimum of 79m² in the case of houses (2 storey) and 70m² in the case of flats (excluding the staircase and entrance hall in the case of any Coach Houses /FOGS or maisonettes or 79m² including them). Maisonettes should each have their own private garden area
 - 29% (6) x 3B/5P houses @ a minimum of 93m² (2 storey) or 99m² (3 storey)”
 - It is not essential to provide 4% wheelchair accessible accommodation on this development

- A tenure blind approach is required
- No more than 10 affordable units (or 12 flats) should be in one cluster.

Affordable Housing Provision

6.11 To support the delivery of a sustainable, mixed and balanced community the application proposals will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes that reflect current and future local housing needs, as identified by the Principal Housing Enabling Officer in his pre-app response summarised above:

	1 bed 2 person	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	Total
Affordable Ownership	0	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	4 (27%) Rounding up to whole number
Affordable Rent	4 (27%)	5 (33%)	2 (13%)	11 (73%)
Total	4 (27%)	7 (46%)	4 (27%)	15 (100%)

6.12 All affordable homes are 'tenure blind' and organised into small clusters in accordance with the advice from the Principal Housing Enabling Officer, as shown on the Affordable Strategy Plan, 25714/5013A.

6.13 All affordable dwellings meet the Council's occupancy and minimum floor area/NDSS requirements.

6.14 In line with the Principal Housing Enabling Officer's pre-app advice, no wheelchair accessible dwellings are provided; however, 20% of homes will be accessible and adaptable in accordance with M4(2) of the Building Regulations to accord with Policy DP28.

6.15 Provision will be secured through a s106.

7. Heads of Terms

- 7.1 In addition to the benefits of the site layout, increased accessibility and site access on Gatesmead, Crest will engage in proactive discussions with UDC in respect of the potential on-site and off-site planning obligations related to this outline application, as set out in the ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions 2024.
- 7.2 The obligations will have to meet the standard Regulation 122 tests of being:
- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
 - directly related to the development, and
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.3 It is expected that the scope and nature of any contributions will be established through the determination period, taking account of responses provided by statutory consultees.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The Government's Plan for Change seeks to deliver 1.5 million new homes this Parliament to address "*an inherited acute and entrenched housing crisis*".
- 8.2 Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF sets out clearly that decision-takers should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development; where housing policies are out-of-date and where any benefits outweigh any adverse impacts 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.
- 8.3 This Planning Statement and the associated Technical Reports confirms that no footnote 7 constraints limit development of the site.
- 8.4 The evidence submitted with the application, and the summary table below, demonstrates that the benefits outweigh any adverse impacts 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.

Matter	Effect of Development	Weight
Housing Delivery (including 30% affordable housing)	Delivery of 34 new high quality market homes in a highly sustainable location, making a contribution towards addressing the Council's acute housing shortfall and boosting supply in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.	Substantial positive
Affordable Housing Delivery	Delivery of 15 new high quality affordable homes in a highly sustainable location, making a contribution towards addressing the Council's acute housing shortfall and boosting supply in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.	Substantial positive

Matter	Effect of Development	Weight
Sustainable Location	Site is contiguous with a Category 1 settlement; within a reasonable walking distance of Haywards Heath railway station and with excellent access to services, public transport and active travel routes. Reduces reliance on private vehicles and supports sustainable patterns of growth.	Substantial positive
Economic Benefits	Construction employment, local spending by future residents, and contributions via s106 towards infrastructure and services.	Moderate positive
Social Benefits	Provision of market and affordable housing, public open space, play facilities, and improved connectivity supporting healthy lifestyles and community cohesion.	Substantial positive
Design and Layout	Landscape-led design responding positively to site context, retaining key features and delivering a well-integrated extension to the settlement.	Moderate positive
Landscape and Visual Impact	Minor adverse effects at Year 1 reducing over time as planting establishes. Site is well contained with limited wider visibility.	Minor adverse (reducing to neutral)
Built Heritage	Development results in a low to very low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II* Wickham Farmhouse and Grade II* Sunte House, limited to a minor change in their wider rural setting. No harm to their architectural or historic interest or immediate setting. Embedded mitigation includes substantial landscape buffers and planting.	Less than substantial harm – low weight
Trees, Woodland and Green Infrastructure	Loss of a limited number of trees, including some of moderate quality; however: 97% canopy retained, all veteran trees protected, no loss of ancient woodland, and new planting proposed. Overall outcome is a low impact with long-term enhancement of tree cover and green infrastructure .	Neutral to moderate positive
Ancient Woodland and Buffer Zone	No loss or deterioration of ancient woodland. A minor incursion into the 15m buffer is required for the access; however, this is: (i) unavoidable due to site constraints; (ii) limited in extent; and (iii) mitigated through a no-dig, above-ground construction methodology	Very limited adverse (negligible weight)

Matter	Effect of Development	Weight
	which preserves soil structure, root function and hydrology. The buffer will continue to function ecologically and will be enhanced through planting and management. Overall, this results in no material harm to the ancient woodland or its ecological function .	
Ecology and Biodiversity	On-site mitigation and off-site provision delivers at least 10% biodiversity net gain. Protection and enhancement of habitats including rush pasture and woodland edges.	Moderate positive
Flood Risk and Drainage	Site located in Flood Zone 1. Sustainable drainage strategy reduces runoff and improves management compared to baseline.	Neutral to moderate positive
Agricultural Land (BMV)	Although parts of the site are classified as BMV, soil constraints significantly limit agricultural productivity and versatility. Land does not function as high-quality BMV in practice. Loss is limited and fragmented.	Limited adverse (low weight)

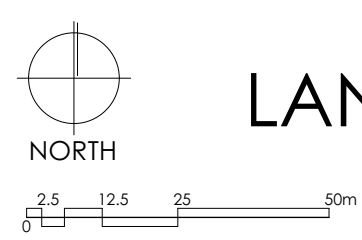
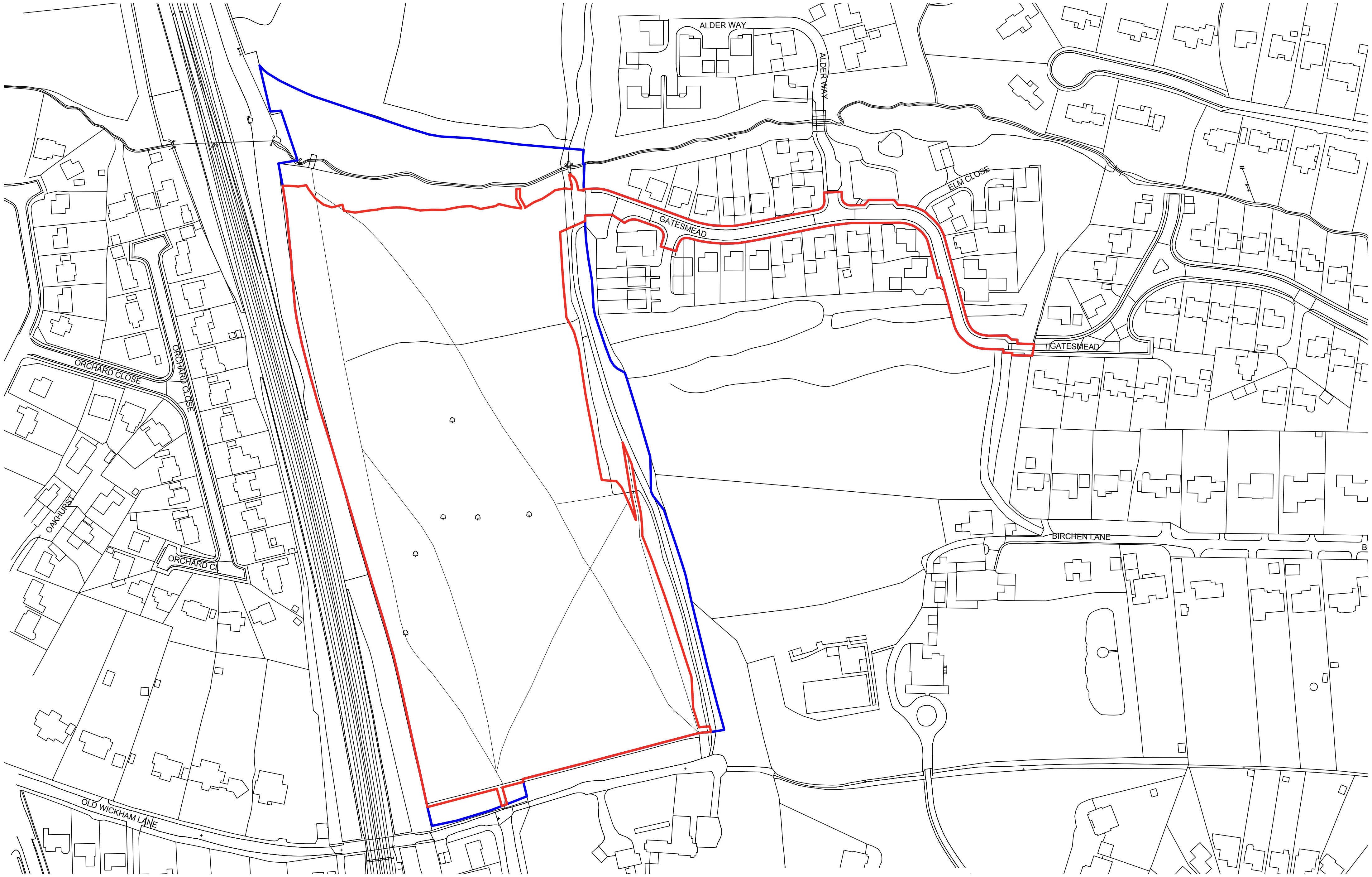
8.5 When assessed against the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole, and in the context of the Council's significant housing land supply shortfall, the proposal delivers substantial economic, social and environmental benefits.

8.6 The identified adverse impacts are limited in nature and extent. In particular:

- the heritage impact amounts to a low level of less than substantial harm;
- the arboricultural impact is low with a net positive long-term outcome; and
- the limited incursion into the ancient woodland buffer does not result in any loss or deterioration of the woodland or its ecological function.

8.7 These matters attract limited weight and do not provide a clear reason for refusal. Accordingly, the adverse impacts of the proposal do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole, and planning permission should therefore be granted.

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD SITE LOCATION PLAN

- Key**
- Application Boundary
 - Ownership Boundary

Amendments

By Chk'd Date

PLANNING

Job No/Drawing No
25714/1000E

Scale Date Drawn Chk'd
1:1250 03/26 LG MR

@ A2

All Dimensions to be checked on site OS Licence No: -

pad Design Ltd - The Tobacco Factory - Raleigh Road - Bristol BS3 1TF - Tel. 0117 9530059 - www.pad-design.com

Job Title
Land West of Gatesmead

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

pad
MASTERPLANNING ARCHITECTURE URBAN DESIGN

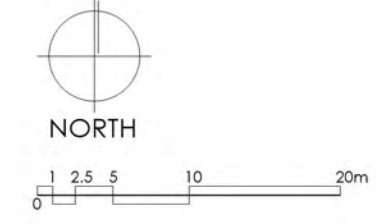
Appendix 2: Planning Layout Drawing

LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD PLANNING LAYOUT



Key

- Site Boundary
- Ownership Boundary
- Adoptable Highway (see Engineers details)
- Adoptable Footpath (see Engineers details)
- Shared Surface
- Private Drive
- Trim Trail/POS Footpath
- Private Path
- Grasscrete
- Public Open Space (Inc. Mown Paths)
- Existing Trees/Planting (see Landscape Arch. details)
- Proposed Trees/Planting (see Landscape Arch. details)
- Attenuation pond (see Engineers details)
- Boardwalk
- Gas Pipeline - 6 & 12m Easement
- Rear gate
- Affordable Housing - Rented
- Affordable Housing - Shared Ownership
- BCP Bin Collection Point



F	Boundary lines updated.	LG	PK	13/05/26
E	Plot 30 Trent HT replaced with Stour HT. Plot 40 Trent HT replaced with Severn HT. Reference to M4(3) removed on plots 33,34 & 41.	LG	PK	22/04/26
D	Spur added to northern application boundary for drainage outfall.	LG	PK	01/04/26
Amendments		By	Chk'd	Date
PLANNING				
Job No/Drawing No 25714/5000F		Job Title Land West of Gatesmead		
Scale Date Drawn Chk'd 1:500 03/26 LG MR		Drawing Title Planning Layout		
All Dimensions to be checked on site. OS Licence No: -				
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