

# Land at LVS Hassocks

London Road, Sayers Common



## Design & Access Statement

Outline Planning Application | January 2026 | Revision C



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Application Description

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by OSP Architecture and the wider consultant team on behalf of Wates Developments Limited and the Licensed Trade Charity (LTC) for the proposed hybrid planning application on Land at LVS Hassocks, London Road, Sayers Common, West Sussex and should be read alongside the other supporting application documents.

Hybrid application for separate and severable elements comprising:

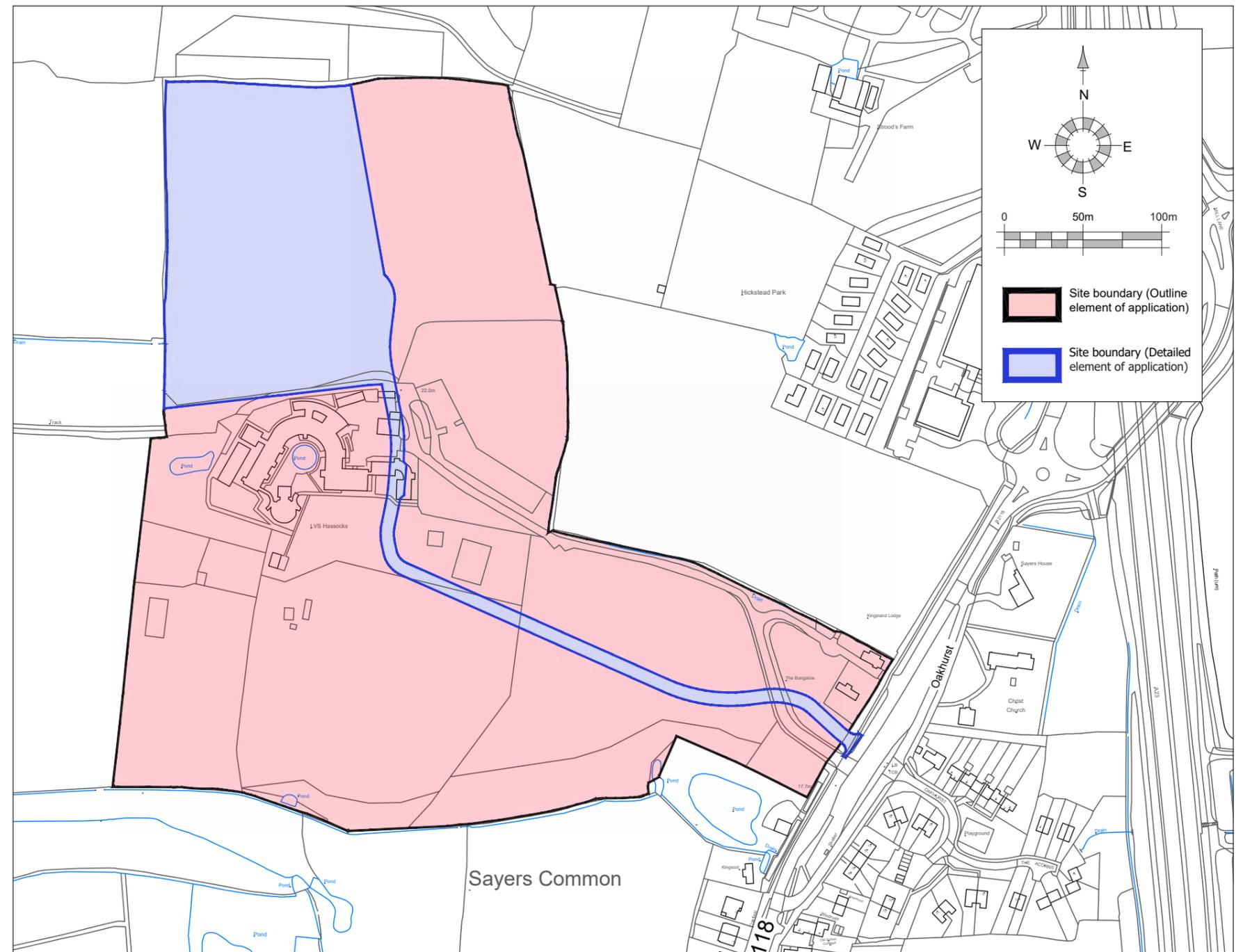
Demolition of all existing buildings bar the chapel, to be retained for use within Use Class F and:

- a) Full planning permission for the development of the north western part of the Land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate a new SEN School with associated access from London Road, car parking, landscaping and drainage works; and
- b) Outline planning permission (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale Reserved) for the development of the rest of the land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate up to 210 dwellings (including affordable housing) with associated access, car parking, landscaping, play areas, informal outdoor space and drainage works

## 1.2 Site Location

The Site is located on the northern edge of Sayers Common, near to the junction of London Road with the A23. To the north are the extensive grounds of the All England Jumping Course at Hickstead Park and to the west and north-west is open countryside. A caravan park lies to the north-east. To the south is the recent housing development of Sayers Meadow (Nuthatch Lane and Goldcrest Drive), whilst on the opposite side of London Road to the east is Christ Church. Abutting the south-eastern corner of the Site are the pond and grounds of the Grade II listed house, Kingscot.

A public bridleway passes midway through the Site from east to west and a public footpath runs alongside the northern boundary.



Hybrid application areas plan (not to scale)

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.3 Background

LVS Hassocks opened in 2009, following the relocation of The Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Since then, the school has continued to provide a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment for every student.

Looking ahead, the existing buildings, while fully functional today, were not designed to meet the long-term needs of a growing and increasingly specialist provision. To secure the best possible environment for future generations, a modern replacement is required.

The Site has thus been promoted through the Local Plan Review to provide 200 homes, replacement school facilities, informal outdoor space, sustainable transport measures, and other works. The premise being that the residential development comes forward in tandem with the new school as it helps facilitate the new school facilities

LVS Hassocks is one of five sites identified in the Mid Sussex District Councils Submission Draft Local Plan in Sayers Common, which together will deliver some 2,543 new homes and associated facilities. These facilities include, within the main site at Reeds Lane, early years, primary, secondary and sixth form education, a neighbourhood centre which could comprise a self-service library, cafe, retail, co-working space, employment and potential healthcare and extra care housing, along with various on and off site infrastructure works. Wates is working closely with the other site promoters in Sayers Common, particularly Berkeley Homes, on infrastructure delivery.

In addition, in looking to repurpose the existing Chapel for a community use, Wates is partnering with Plunkett UK, to look to secure an appropriate end user, supported by the local community, that will complement the existing and proposed facilities in Sayers Common.



Aerial view from the south of the existing chapel and school buildings

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## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT



## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.1 Site Description

The 14.4 hectare site is currently occupied by LVS Hassocks, a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school. The majority of the buildings are clustered in the middle of the Site, surrounded by playing fields and accessed from London Road along the route of the public bridleway.

The Site contains a range of 19th, 20th and 21st century buildings. The main focus of the school complex is the conically shaped former chapel (oast house) constructed in the 1970s as part of the redevelopment of the Site into a convent for The Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The Priory complex, designed by the architect Michael Blee, included the conversion of an earlier late 18th / early 19th century house ('Kingsland') and new build elements, the latter responding to existing landscape features such as the pond to the west of Kingsland. Beyond these principal buildings, the Site includes a number of ancillary structures of varying dates. Later alterations and the construction of new structures have compromised the design intent of the both the late 18th / early 19th century and 1970s built form. Beyond the built element the complex, the wider site includes playing fields, pastoral land and a cemetery associated with the late 20th century Priory.

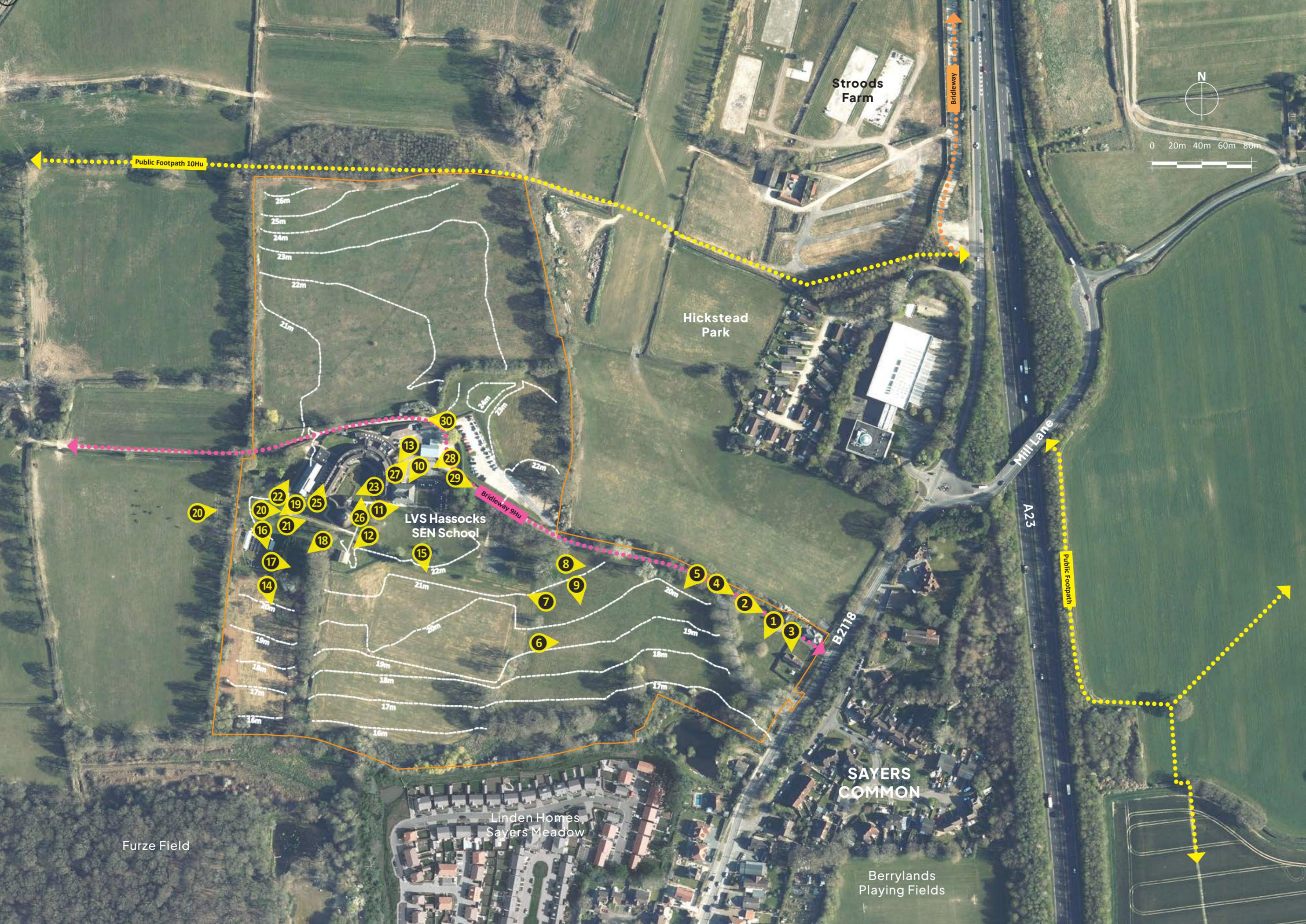
A public bridleway (9Hu) runs east-west through the middle of the Site, much of it being used as the access driveway to the school. A public footpath (10Hu) runs east-west alongside the northern boundary.

The Site comprises of 7 parcels of land divided by tree belts and hedgerows which slopes gently down 10 metres from the northern edge down to a drainage ditch alongside the southern boundary.



View east across the Site from the western boundary towards the existing chapel building with school buildings in the foreground

Aerial photograph of the Site (with photo locations) ►



Stroods Farm

Hickstead Park

LVS Hassocks SEN School

SAYERS COMMON

Linden Homes Sayers Meadow

Furze Field

Berrylands Playing Fields

Public Footpath 10Hu

Bridleway

Bridleway 9Hu

Mill Lane

A23

B2118

Public Footpath

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.2 Site Photographs



1. View from bridgeway



2. London Road lodge building



3. London Road bungalow



4. Bridgeway looking towards London Road



5. Sheep grazing area looking south (commemorative tree in foreground)



6. Sheep grazing area looking east



7. Sheep grazing area looking west towards playing fields



8. Bridgeway



9. Sheep grazing area looking south

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.2 Site Photographs



10. Kingsland



11. Kingsland



12. Shelter



13. School entrance



14. South-western field



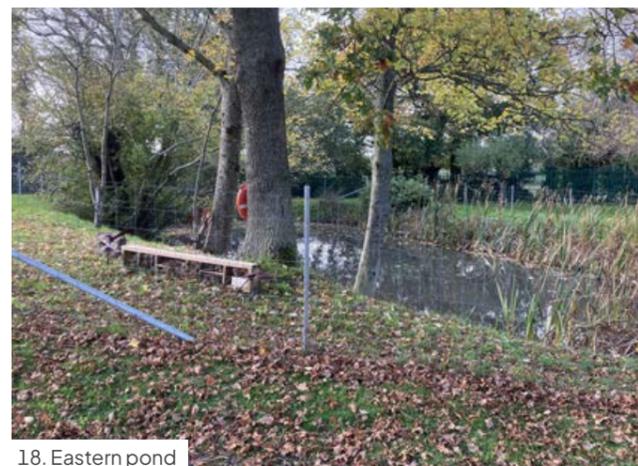
15. Looking south from playing fields



16. Food-growing area



17. Nuns' cemetery



18. Eastern pond



19. Orchard

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.2 Site Photographs



20. View from orchard looking towards chapel



21. Sussex Centre and chapel



22. Sussex Centre



23. Music room



24. Chapel



25. Rear of monastic arc



26. Front of monastic arc and pond



27. Yoga and café



28. Kingsland and entrance



29. Bridleway looking east



30. Bridleway and rear of café

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.3 Site Context: Oakhurst

Located on the opposite side of London Road from the Site, this area consists of predominantly mid twentieth century, brick built, two-storey residential houses arranged around a central play area. The northern part is more historic, consisting of the flint, brick and stone Victorian Christ Church, surrounding cemetery and associated hall.



Christ Church hall



Oakhurst play area



## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.4 Site Context: London Road

The built up areas of Sayers Common are generally arranged in a linear pattern alongside London Road, stretching north-south either side of the former trunk road. Whilst it does not have a historic central core, local facilities and amenities are located alongside the road, including the former school, community shop/village hall and Duke of York public house. Reeds Lane divides the "Common" at the junction with London Road.

Older brick built buildings generally have tile hanging at first floor level, whilst newer buildings have introduced render and cladding. Heights are consistently 1½ - 2 storeys.



Village hall and community shop



Existing bungalow at site entrance



"Aymers" Grade II Listed



The Old School



Duke of York Pub



## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.5 Site Context: Recent Developments

Late twentieth and early twenty first century developments are filling in the gaps along the linear pattern of development of Sayers Common and extending further to the east and west. Predominantly consisting of two storey semi-detached and detached brick-built housing, they have also introduced different roof forms, tile hanging and coloured boarding.



Berrylands Farm



Goldcrest Drive



Nuthatch Lane



Dunlop Close



Berrylands Farm



Goldcrest Drive



Nuthatch Lane



Dunlop Close



Harvey Close



Heron Close

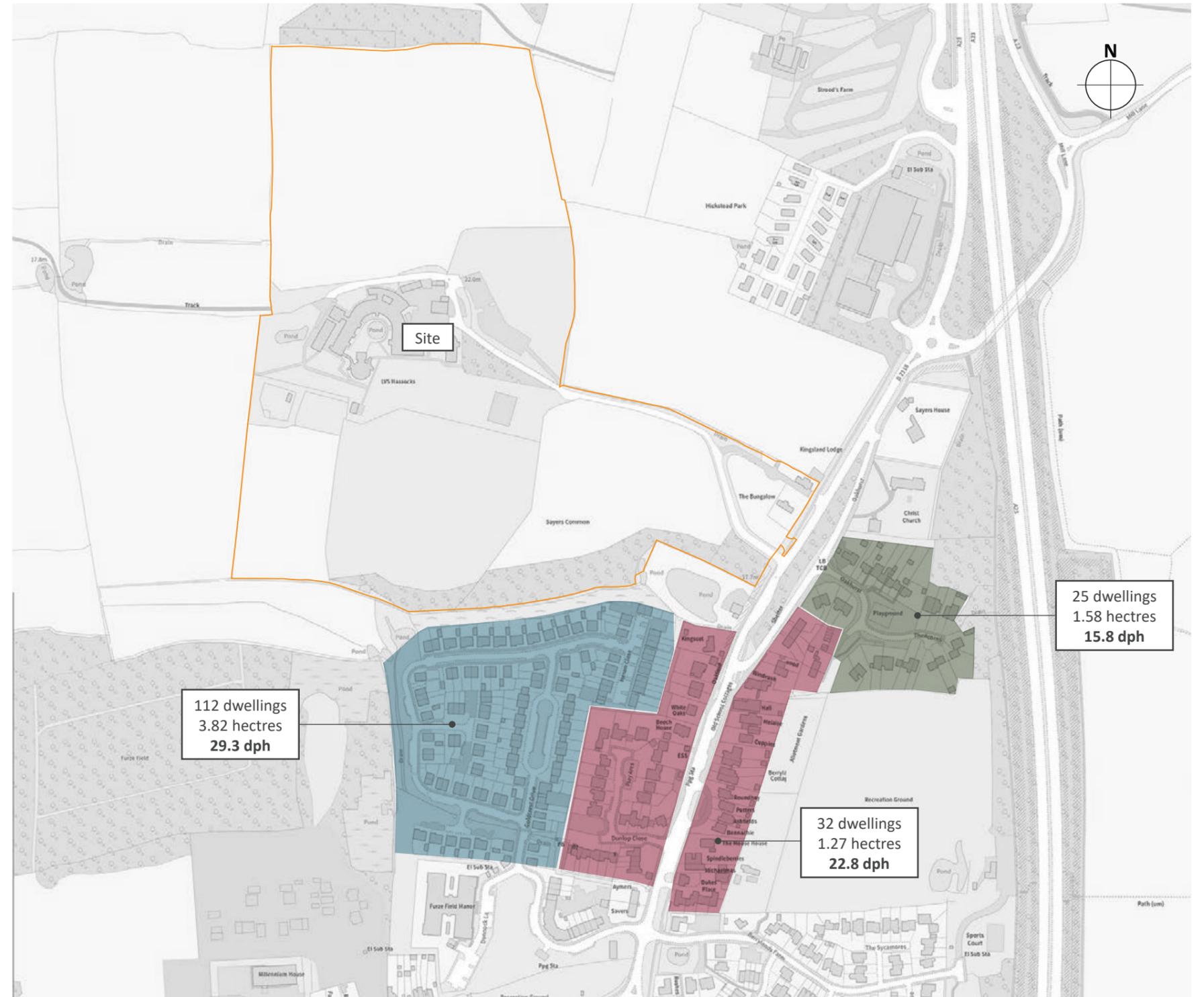


Nuthatch Lane

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.6 Residential Densities

Residential densities adjoining the Site range from 15.8 dph (dwelling per hectare) for the mid twentieth century development on Oakhurst to 29.3 dph for the recently completed development by Linden Homes at Sayers Meadow immediately to the south of the Site.



Residential densities surrounding the Site

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.7 Topography

The highest point on the Site is located on the northern boundary at 29.49m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). From here the Site slopes gradually downwards to the core of the Site surrounding the existing buildings which sit on a plateau of between 20 - 22m AOD. The land continues to fall to the south and east from this plateau to the lowest point on the Site at approximately 14m AOD in the south western corner.



## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.8 Trees

A tree survey has been carried out by SJA trees to inform the application.

The arboricultural character of the Site is dominated by deciduous species, with coniferous specimens present only in low numbers. The Site's arboricultural character is defined by mature, native tree belts established along historic field and property boundaries, an area of traditional orchard, and several more recent arboricultural features. These include the oak avenue flanking the school access, the established woodland copse centrally located within the Site, and ornamental planting associated with the school grounds.

The age demographic of the tree population is well presented by the mature and semi-mature age classes accounting for 57% and 36% of the tree population respectively. The remaining age classes are underrepresented with just over 5% being young and over-mature and veteran amounting to 2% of the total population. This is reflected in the sizes of the tree with site benefiting from a high proportion of large specimens.

None of the trees or groups of trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, nor is the Site located within a Conservation Area. There are no ancient woodlands within or adjacent to the Site, but there is one veteran oak (no. 357) growing adjacent to the south site boundary, which despite not being included in the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory displays attributes consistent with it being 'Veteran'. In addition, there are numerous notable and aged oaks that contribute to the mature arboricultural character of the Site.

The proposals retain 79% of the existing canopy cover within the Site, including all veteran, notable and aged trees, including all veteran, notable and aged trees. It protects the mature arboricultural character of the Site and the benefits that the trees provide in terms of green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape value. Whilst the majority of trees proposed for removal are small or of lower quality, several trees are of moderate arboricultural and landscape value. The proposed removals have provided the necessary space for access, development, landscaping and the protection of the important arboricultural features, so their removal should be balanced against the benefits of these.



Tree survey plan (SJA Trees)

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.9 Flood Risk & Drainage

The Site lies within Flood Zone 1 which is the area at lowest risk of river and sea flooding.

The SuDs strategy will be planned and integrated from the start of the development. It is designed to cope with heavy storms (up to a 1-in-100-year rainfall event), with extra capacity included for future climate change so will generate a betterment over the existing runoff rate.

The SuDs features will form part of the wider blue-green corridors across the Site, providing attractive green spaces that help manage surface water and enhance biodiversity. They will also ensure that those areas where the Site is currently affected by saturated ground and pooling water are addressed.

Wastewater from the existing school is pumped to a nearby sewer in the verge on the west side of the B2118, close to the Site entrance. Both the new school and the proposed residential development will connect to the existing foul sewer system via a new pumped drainage system.

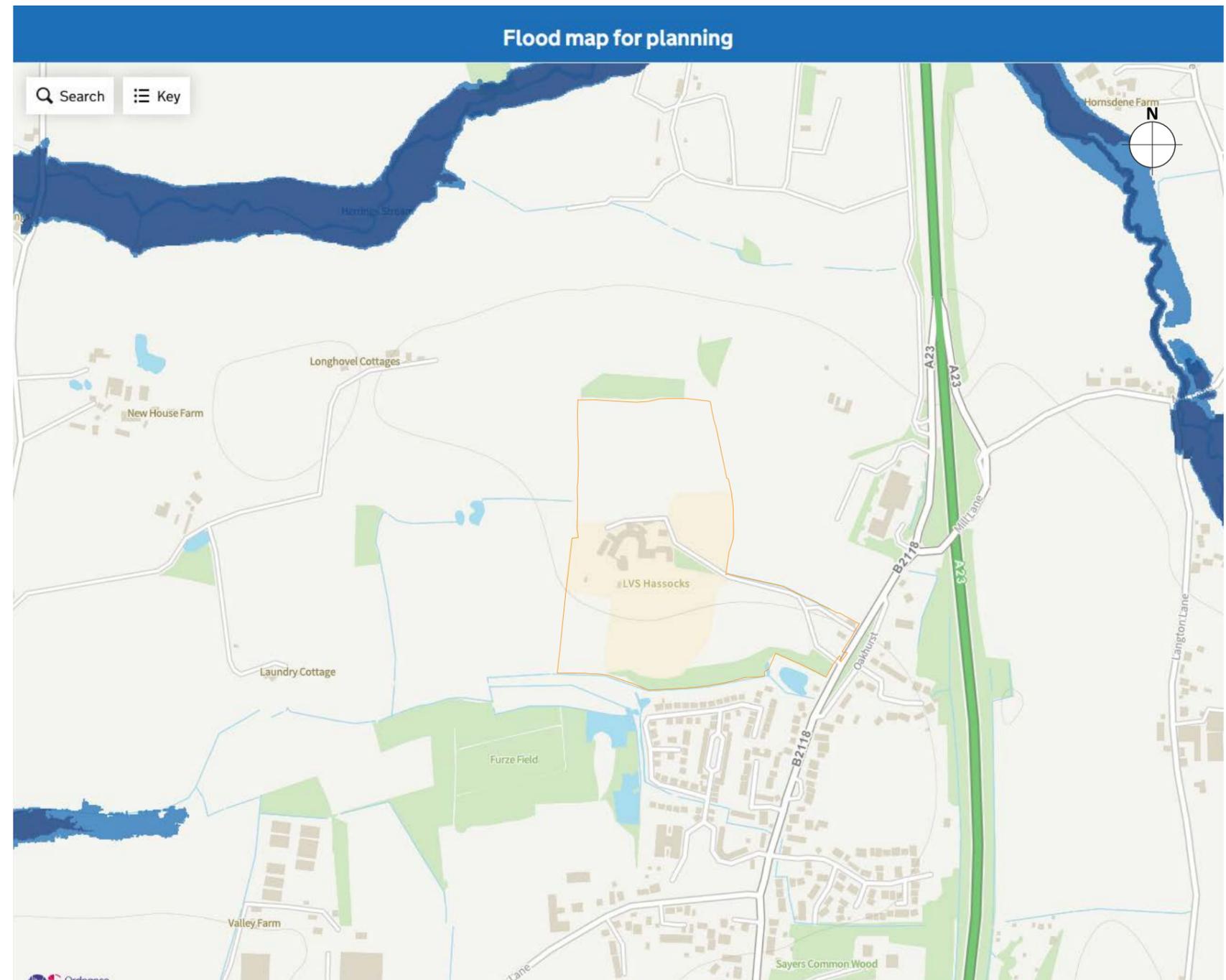
Southern Water have confirmed that there is adequate capacity in the local sewerage network to accommodate a foul flow in this location. The surface water and foul water systems will thus be separately controlled and managed.



Rain garden



Swale



Environment Agency Fluvial Flood Map for Planning

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

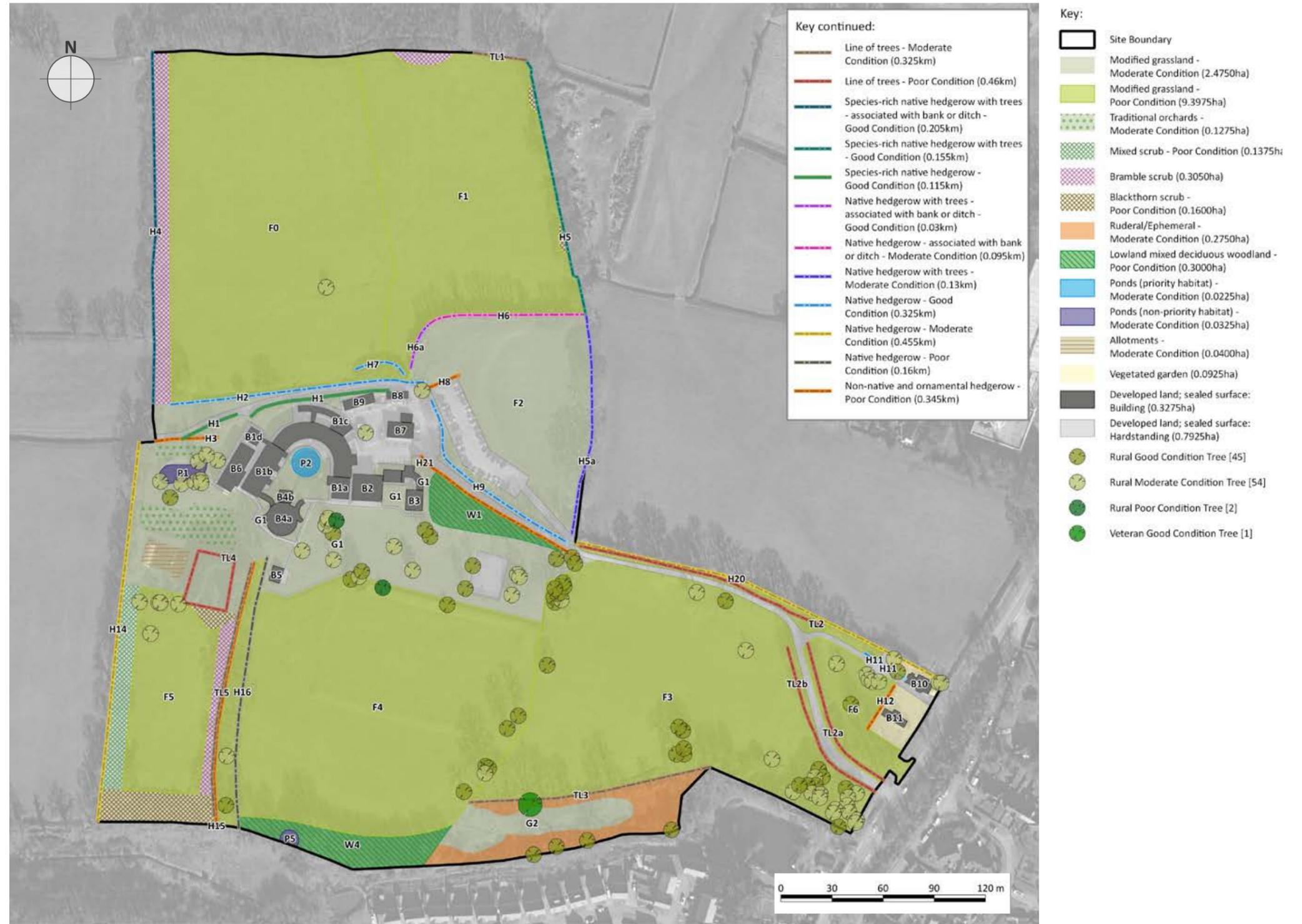
### 2.10 Ecology

A comprehensive suite of ecological surveys has been completed across the Site, providing a robust baseline to inform the master planning process. This has included a desk study and habitat survey, in addition to detailed Phase 2 survey work for bats, Great Crested Newt, breeding birds, Dormouse and reptiles to assess the Site's current ecological value for such species.

The Site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations. The nearest statutory nature conservation designation to the Site is South Downs National Park, which is located approximately 2.52km southeast of the Site. The nearest non-statutory nature conservation designation to the Site is Mill Lane Designated Road Verge (DRV) which is located approximately 1.36km east of the Site. The nearest European designation is Castle Hill Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and National Nature Reserve (NNR), approximately 15km southeast of the Site. All of the ecological designations in the surrounding area are physically well separated from the Site by existing development and given the type and scale of the proposals, these designations are unlikely to be affected.

In terms of habitats, the Site is dominated by a number of modified grassland fields which are species-poor and not representative of priority habitat. Features of ecological importance include native hedgerows and associated trees, trees (including those of veteran age), woodland, orchard and ponds. Following detailed Phase 2 survey work, the Site has been recorded to support foraging and commuting bats, roosting bats, Great Crested Newt, reptiles and breeding birds. No Dormouse were recorded onsite.

In summary, the Site is not considered to be subject to any overriding ecological constraints, and the proposed development of the Site is considered to be readily deliverable in ecological terms.



Pre-development habitat plan (Aspect Ecology)

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.11 Landscape and Visual Context

#### Landscape Policy

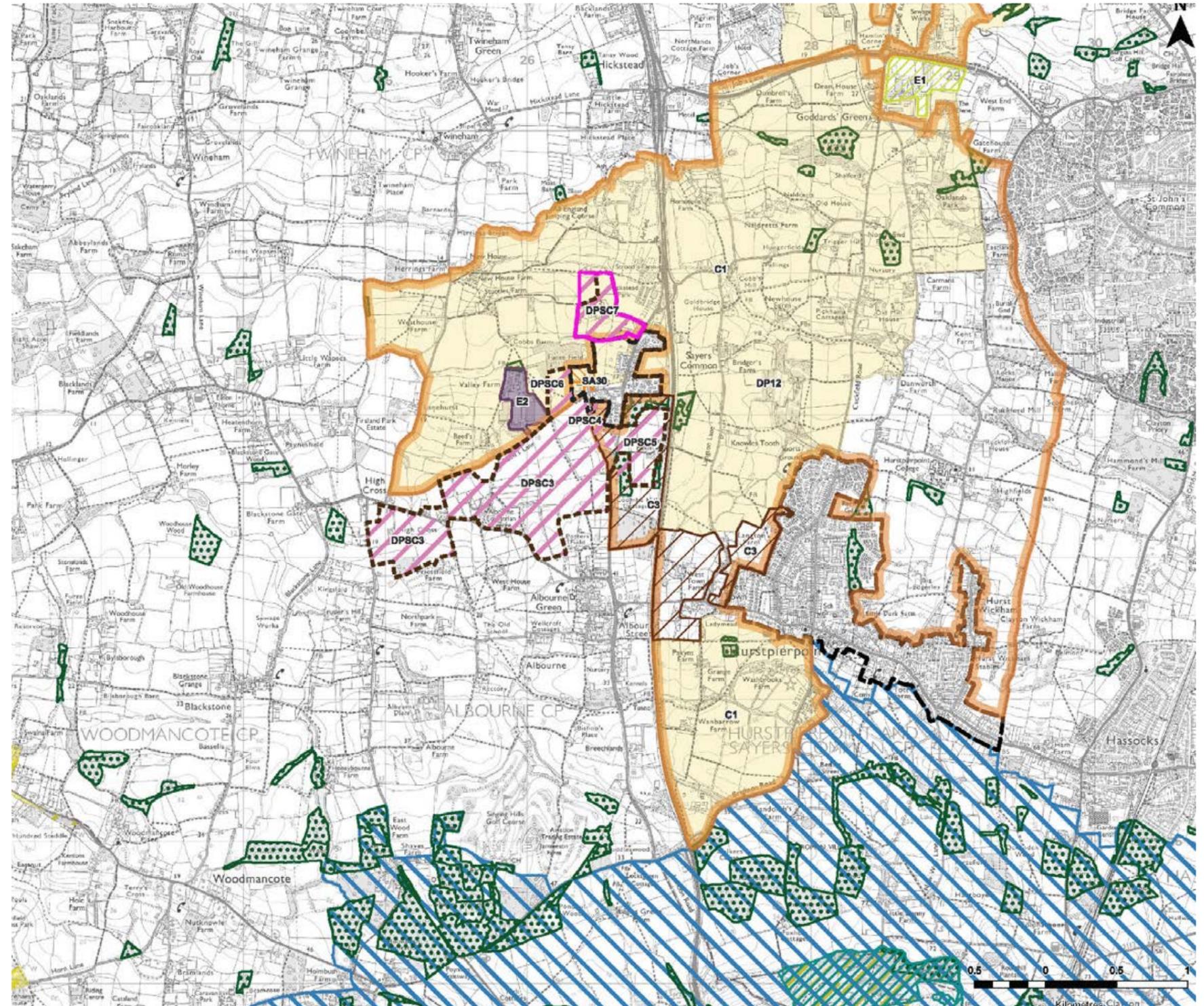
The Site is not located within any landscape or landscape-related designations. The South Downs National Park is located approximately 2.5km south of the Site and it has been determined that the Site does not form part of the setting of this National Park (refer to the LVA for further detail). The High Weald National Landscape is located approximately 3.3km to the north of the Site and the Site also does not form part of the setting of this National Landscape.

Public bridleway 9Hu extends through the Site, east to west, and public footpath 10Hu is located immediately north of the Site.

#### Landscape Character

In the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid-Sussex (November 2005) the Site is classified as part of character area 4, "Hickstead Low Weald".

The Site and its context strongly align with the characteristics of area LCA 4; an undulating, agricultural landscape with scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerows. The area is crossed by roads on north-south axis and whilst the landscape is partially rural and secluded, such as to the west of the Site, there are also influences of built form such as the existing settlement of Sayers Common and the A23.



Landscape designations plan (SLR Consulting)

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.11 Landscape and Visual Context

#### Site Character

The Site is formed by school buildings and associated infrastructure and open spaces in the centre, further outdoor facilities and grassland fields to the south and east, two residential dwellings on the eastern edge and a pastoral field to the north.

The Site is located on the northern settlement edge of Sayers Common with London Road to the east and existing built form south and east.

The landform within the Site is gently sloping; the highest elevation is in the north-western corner and then gradually falls away to the south.

The Site is predominantly bound by well-established hedgerows and trees, and hedgerows and trees also extend through the Site along historic field boundaries. These trees provide a sense of enclosure across site and limited views out. Exceptions are for views onto London Road to the east, below the tree canopies, which are available within the eastern extent of the Site. Some glimpsed views of dwellings along Nuthatch Lane can also be available to

the south, especially during winter months. Glimpsed, long-distant views to Wolstonbury Hill within the South Downs to the south of the Site are also available from the higher ground in the north and from the central section of bridleway 9Hu.

As a consequence the Site is only partially influenced by Sayers Common and London Road. Therefore, the Site is generally still and quiet due to the buffering of the well-established vegetation, but the existing school buildings and glimpses out do provide some diversity in colours, forms and textures.



Views into the Site from London Road (SLR Consulting)



A distant view of Wolstonbury Hill from bridleway 9Hu. (SLR Consulting)

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.11 Landscape and Visual Context

#### Visibility

Site visits found that views of the Site are limited due to the landscape's well-established vegetation:

- Clear views across the Site are available from bridleway 9Hu within the Site.
- To the north clear views into the Site are available from footpath 10Hu on the north-eastern edge of the Site. Elsewhere and beyond the Site's immediate vicinity views are screened by the well-established vegetation and undulating landform, including from the High Weald National Landscape.
- To the east views are available from London Road and Hickstead Park. Elsewhere the Site is screened by the well-established vegetation.
- To the south glimpsed views into the Site are available for residents along Nuthatch Lane through and above the boundary vegetation. However, elsewhere views are predominately screened by the well-established vegetation and existing settlement edge of Sayers Common. The exception is a distant view from Wolstonbury Hill within the South Downs National Park. Although, the Site is viewed from over 5km away and is barely perceptible.
- To the west glimpsed views are available from bridleway 9Hu through and above the boundary vegetation. However, elsewhere the Site is screened by the well-established vegetation.



A clear view into the Site from footpath 10Hu (SLR Consulting)



A view towards the Site from Nuthatch Lane to the south (SLR Consulting)



A view from Wolstonbury Hill in the direction of the Site (SLR Consulting)

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.12 Archaeology & Heritage

Pegasus Group have been commissioned to assess the potential heritage significance of the built form and wider site at LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common. Built form within the Site is principally characterised by the complex of buildings which now operate as LVS Hassocks, occupying the former The Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel complex, established in the 1970s following the relocation of the priory from Haywards Heath.

The priory complex was designed by the architect Michel Blee and included the conversion and extension of an earlier 19th century property, known as 'Kingsland House', alongside new build element.

The 1970s new build elements comprised three main elements – the 'Monastic Arc', the 'Secular Wing' and the conical Chapel. The latter has subsequently become a well-known structure in the locality due to its unusual design. That said, detailed assessment has demonstrated that all buildings have been subject to notable change and require extensive upgrades and reconfiguration to maintain an institutional use.

Early 21st century change within the Site, including the construction of new structures and the creation of play fields, has also resulted in a change to the overall character of the Site, and the manner to which both the 19th century and 1970s buildings are experienced.

All buildings within the complex were subject to assessment by Historic England in 2025, with the resulting decision (endorsed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) being that the buildings were not of sufficient interest to warrant designation.

Mid Sussex District Council have identified the 1970s building as non-designated heritage assets in the terms of the NPPF. As discussed further within the Built Heritage Statement, not all elements of the 1970s Priory complex are considered to be of equal architectural and historic interest. It has been assessed that the Chapel holds the highest level of value (moderate local value), with the Monastic Arc and Secular Wing being of a lower value based upon their original design intent and the level of change that has been undertaken.

No further built form within the Site has been identified as being of sufficient value to warrant classification as non-designated heritage assets, with this including the former 19th century dwelling known as Kingsland. Remnants of the 19th century designed landscape associated with Kingsland have also not been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

The Built Heritage Statement provides a discussion on the historic development of the Site and built form within its bounds, including how the scheme has been developed in response to an understanding of the built historic environment.

The nearest designated heritage asset to the Site is the Grade II Listed Kingscot, situated c.50m south of the Site. As discussed within the Built Heritage Statement, neither this asset nor others within the wider environs of the Site, are considered to be sensitive to the proposals as a result of a change in 'setting'.

The Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (ADBA) confirms that in terms of relevant, nationally significant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wrecks or Registered Battlefields lie within the study site or in its immediate vicinity; the nearest Scheduled Monument being a Romano-British villa at Randolph's Farm located over 3.7km south of the Site. The ABDA also confirms that in terms of relevant local designations, the study site does not lie within a locally designated, Archaeological Notification Area (ANA); and that the few past archaeological investigations undertaken in the vicinity of the Site have identified only limited archaeological evidence of low (local) significance.

The ABDA goes on to advise that based on available information, the Site is considered to have a high potential for the remains of 19th century farm buildings of low (local) significance and for evidence related to Post-Medieval and modern archaeological activity of low/no (Local/Negligible) significance. A low/uncertain archaeological potential is identified for all other periods.

In view of the size of the Site, the ABDA indicates that it is anticipated that the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority will require archaeological mitigation in advance of development. In the first instance a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation will be required, focussed within the areas of proposed impact, with further works depending upon the results of the evaluation. As remains of national significance are not anticipated, this work can the ABDA concludes be secured to the granting of consent, by the inclusion of a standard archaeological planning condition.



Monastic Arc



The Chapel



Kingsland principal elevation

## 2.0 THE EXISTING SITE & CONTEXT

### 2.13 Connectivity and Local Amenities

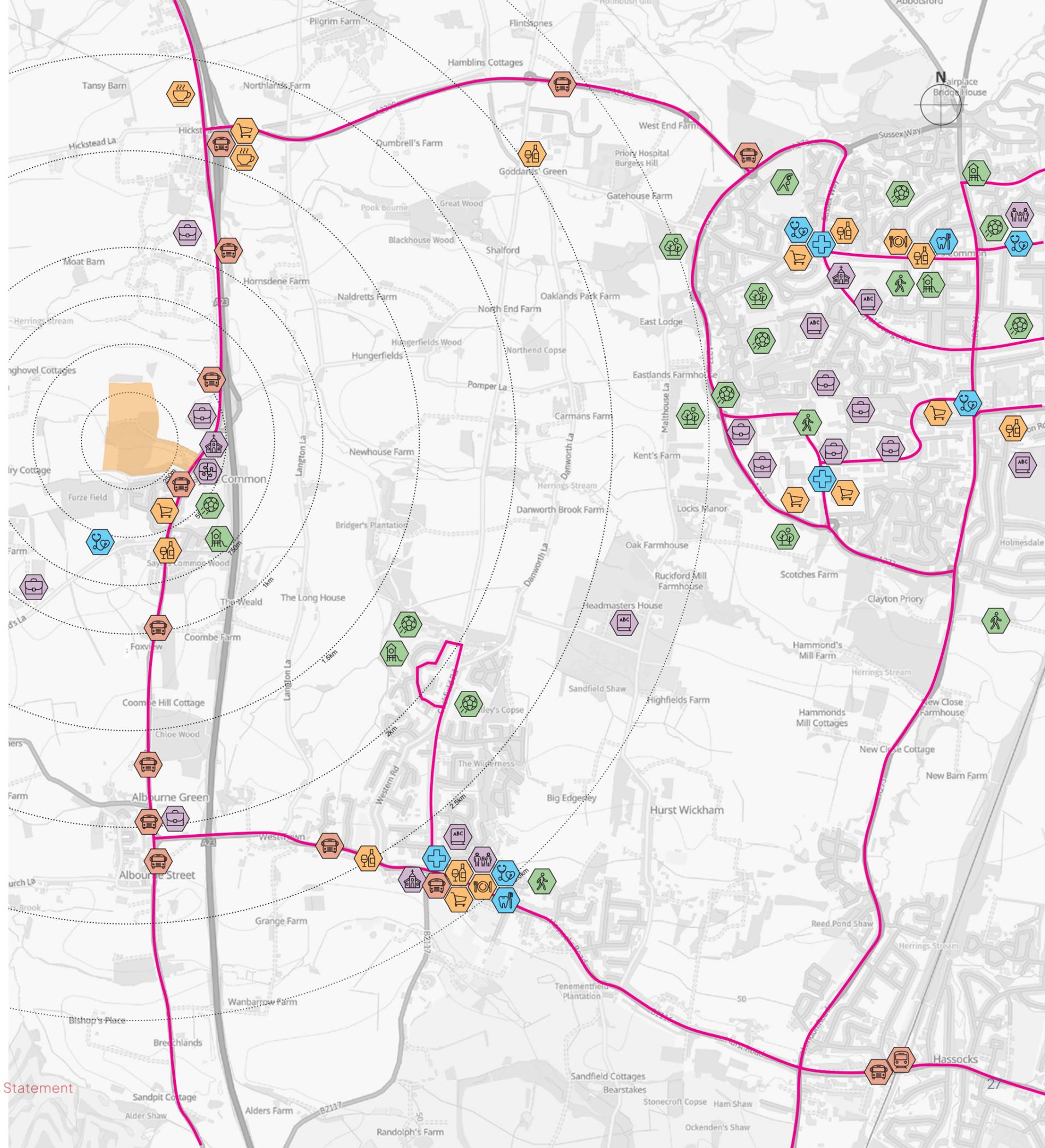
The nearest bus stops to the Site are located along London Road (B2118). Both northbound and southbound stops are located within a comfortable walking distance of circa 100m from the Site. Bus service 100 operates from these bus stops on an hourly basis on Monday to Saturday and serves Burgess Hill, Storrington, Pulborough, Billingshurst and Horsham. Similarly, bus service 273 runs between Brighton and Crawley and also serves the bus stops opposite the Site. The service also operates circa every hour on Monday to Sunday. School bus service 331 also operates twice a day in the morning and afternoon from the bus stops to Downlands School.

The closest railway station to the Site is Burgess Hill, located c. 6km east of the development. There are 64 cycle storage spaces and 141 car parking spaces, with the station providing frequent services to key destinations including Central London, Brighton, Gatwick Airport and Cambridge. The station can be accessed via bus route 100 from the bus stop directly opposite the Site.

The Site is well located to take up the opportunities for sustainable travel – local facilities and services are nearby, as is a frequent bus service to destinations further afield.

- |   |                          |   |                    |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Bus stop                 |  | Place of Worship   |
|  | Railway station          |  | Library            |
|  | Cycle route              |  | Community use      |
|  | Shop                     |  | Employment         |
|  | Post Office              |  | School/college     |
|  | Cafe                     |  | Nursery/pre-school |
|  | Restaurant/take-away     |  | Playground         |
|  | Pub/bar                  |  | Sports fields      |
|  | Doctors surgery/hospital |  | Swimming pool      |
|  | Dentist                  |  | Sports centre/hall |
|  | Pharmacy                 |  | Public open space  |
|   |                          |  | Parkland/forest    |
|  | Bus routes               |   |                    |

Plan illustrating the location of the Site in relation to local facilities and amenities ►



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# 3.0 DESIGN FRAMEWORK



# 3.0 DESIGN FRAMEWORK

## 3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the key policies and guidance which form the framework within which the design of the scheme has been developed.

Further considerations include the relevant policies of the Planning Practice Guidance and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

For more detailed planning information please refer to the Planning Statement prepared by Judith Ashton Associates which accompanies the application.

## 3.2 Design Guides

The emerging development proposals have been designed with reference to a number of relevant design guides as follows:

- Manual for Streets (2007) (MfS 2, September 2010);
- Secured by Design;
- Living with Beauty (2020);
- Building for a Healthy Life (2020); and
- Places Where People Want to Live (2018).



## 3.3 National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF was published in 2012 and has been updated on a number of occasions since, the latest being in December 2024. The document sets out national guidance relating to design. Paragraph 131 states:

*“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process..”*

Paragraph 135 explains that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- 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;
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- 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);
- 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;
- 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
- 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<sup>51</sup>; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

More detailed guidance on design was provided in March 2014 (updated in October 2019) within the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance. The Guidance explains that planning should promote:

- Local character (including landscape setting)
- Safe, connected and efficient streets
- A network of green spaces (including parks) and public places
- Appropriate security measures and address crime prevention
- Access and inclusion
- Efficient use of natural resources
- Cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods

A well designed place is defined as one which is functional, supports mixed uses and tenures, is adaptable and resilient, has a distinctive character, is attractive and promotes ease of movement. Public spaces should be lively. Guidance is provided on layout, building form, scale, details and materials.

## 3.4 The National Design Guide

The National Design Guide was initially published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in September 2019 and updated in January 2021. It is a response to the ‘Living with Beauty’ report published in January 2020 by the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.

This guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government’s priorities in the form of ten characteristics. The choices made in the design process contribute towards achieving these characteristics and shape the character of the place.

### The 10 characteristics of the National Design Guide

Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical distinctiveness. The ten characteristics highlighted in the National Design Guide help to nurture and sustain a sense of community and work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The ten characteristics which are set out in the Design Guide and will be extensively considered in the design development of this scheme are:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public spaces
- Uses
- Homes and Buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan



The ten characteristics of well designed places (National Design Guide, September 2019)

## 3.0 DESIGN FRAMEWORK

### 3.5 The National Model Design Code

The purpose of the National Model Design Code is to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide which reflects the Government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

The chart shown below illustrates how the principles of the NDG are embedded in the vision for Land at LVS Hassocks from the outset.

<b>A well designed place</b>	How the principles of the NDG have been embedded within this DAS
<b>Context</b>	Please refer to pages <b>10 to 27</b> for an understanding of the Site and its immediate surroundings.
<b>Identity</b>	Please refer to pages <b>15 to 17</b> for an overview of the local identity.
<b>Built Form</b>	Refer to pages <b>50–53 &amp; 56 to 61</b> to understand how the proposals have a coherent pattern of development.
<b>Movement</b>	Refer to the movement strategy on page <b>62</b> .
<b>Nature</b>	Refer to the landscape strategy on page <b>63 to 64</b> .
<b>Public Spaces</b>	Refer to the open space strategy on page <b>65</b> .
<b>Uses</b>	Please refer to <b>page 46</b> for information regarding the school site which forms the detailed element of the hybrid application. Refer to pages <b>54 &amp; 55</b> for details of the dwelling size and tenure distribution within the outline residential element of the application.
<b>Homes &amp; Buildings</b>	The application is seeking hybrid planning permission, with appearance and detailed architecture being part of a future reserved matter. Therefore the application is based on parameter plans which are shown on pages <b>47 &amp; 48</b> .
<b>Resources</b>	The approach taken to sustainability is detailed on pages <b>67 to 69</b> .
<b>Lifespan</b>	The open spaces are the places for the community to come together. Management and stewardship arrangements will be made in later reserved matters planning applications management

### 3.6 Local Planning Policy

#### The Development Plan

The Development Plan for the application site comprises the following documents:

- The Saved policies from the Mid Sussex Local Plan (May 2004);
- The Saved policies from the Small Scale Housing Development Plan Document (April 2008);
- The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (March 2018);
- Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan 2015;
- The Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD (June 2022); and
- The West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2021)

It is noted that none of the saved policies in the Mid Sussex Local Plan (May 2004) and the Small Scale Housing Development Plan Document (April 2008) are germane to this site.

It is further noted that as set out in the Planning Statement, the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2014 – 2031 which sets the housing target in policy DP4 was adopted in 2018 and was adopted against the backdrop to the Objectively Assessed Housing Need established in the Mid Sussex Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (February 2015), as updated in November 2015 and August 2016, and the NPPF 2012.

As the basis for calculating the Local Housing Need was since changed and the NPPF has been subject to a number of revisions since 2012, the approach adopted to the housing requirements in the Adopted Local Plan is inconsistent with the NPPF 2024.

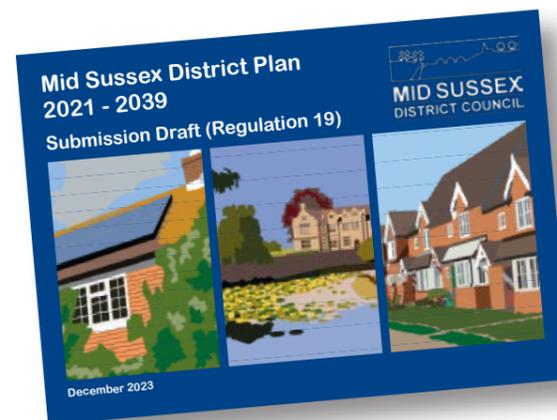
As a result, the weight to be attributed to spatial policies DP4 and DP12 of the adopted plan is significantly reduced, and para 11d of the NPPF and the tilted balance engaged.

This is exacerbated by the fact the Council have accepted that as at 1st April 2024, they did not have a five year housing land supply.

As para 78 of the NPPF makes it clear that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing, the fact Mid Sussex District Council have openly acknowledged they do not have a five year housing land supply, the weight to be attributed to spatial policies DP4 and DP12 of the adopted plan is significantly reduced, and para 11d of the NPPF and the tilted balance engaged.

That said we accept that the fact that these policies are out of date does not mean that they must be disregarded in the planning assessment. However, any breach of these policies would be afforded reduced (limited) weight in the planning balance.

Similarly, as the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan (HPP&SCNP) does not look to allocate housing sites and is now over 10 years old para 14 of the NPPF does not apply and the weight to be attributed to it is significantly reduced and para 11d of the NPPF and the tilted balance engaged.



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### 3.6 Local Planning Policy

#### Emerging Local Plan

Mid Sussex District Council is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan.

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was submitted for independent examination on the 8th July 2024.

Whilst the Local Plan Inspector in her Stage 1 Post Hearings Findings indicated that she considered the Submission Draft Mid Sussex Local to be unsound, having in her opinion failed the Duty to Cooperate; we note that MSDC have challenged these findings, and most recently, in light of the Minister of States letter on 9 October to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate, written to the Local Plan Inspector asking that the debate on the Duty to Cooperate be reopened and a further hearing session scheduled; and that as a result the examination remains open

Having identified the Local Housing Need (LHN), and identified completions to date, proposed windfalls and the current sources of supply, (existing allocations and permission), the Submission Draft Local Plan indicates that there is a need to allocate sites to accommodate 6,687 dwellings if the plan is to meet its LHN in full and have an oversupply to provide for resilience/ address the unmet needs of neighbouring authorities.

As a result of its housing need and having regard to the findings of the Urban Capacity Study, Housing Land Availability Assessment, Settlement Sustainability Review Study, Habitat Regulation Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Strategic Transport Study, the Site Selection Process, and Sustainability Appraisal the plan looks to allocate 3 sustainable communities (on land west of Burgess Hill, at Crabbet Park and south of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common). That at Sayers Common encompassing 5 sites, which includes the land at LVS Hassocks (Policy DPSC7), along with 17 other sites to meet its LHN.

Policy DPSC7 indicates that the land at LVS Hassocks will provide for up to 210 dwellings, and the following infrastructure on-site:

- Informal outdoor space
- Relocation of the SEND School

It also requires the developers of the Site to make financial contributions towards the provision of:

- Sustainable Transport
- Improvements at Hassocks Station
- Education
- Library
- Community buildings

- Local Community Infrastructure
- Emergency Services
- Health
- Play area
- Other outdoor provision
- Outdoor sports

And to make provision for the following off site:

- Sustainable transport measures
- Highway works
- Reprovision of SEN School
- Sewerage network upgrades

In addition, policy DPSC7 also contains the following policy requirements:

1. Demonstrate a coordinated approach and collaboration with other housing allocations in the Plan within Sayers Common to deliver high quality placemaking which supports the 20-minute neighbourhood principles, with direct enhanced active/ sustainable travel connections, and includes enabling the viability of new public transport services.
2. Prioritise pedestrian and cycle access throughout the development and integrate and enhance the existing PRoW which crosses the Site.
3. Provide any necessary upgrades to the existing access onto B2118.
4. Redevelopment proposals shall provide evidence that demonstrates how a replacement SEND school will be provided either on-site or within the district, to the satisfaction of the Council and relevant key stakeholders.
5. Occupation of the development will be phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in consultation with the service provider.
6. Follow a sequential approach by directing development away from areas of flood risk.
7. Investigate, assess and address any land contamination issues arising from former uses of the Site or from uses, or former uses, of land in proximity to the Site.
8. Address impacts associated with the brick clay (Weald) Minerals Safeguarding Area.
9. Meets the requirements of other relevant development plan policies

The Planning Statement along with the other statements submitted in support of this application look to demonstrate how policy DPSC7 is addressed.

Para 49 of the NPPF makes it clear that:

*'Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:*

- a) *the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
- b) *the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and;*
- c) *the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).'*

Para 50 continues:

*'However, in the context of the Framework – and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than in the limited circumstances where both:*

- a) *the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan; and*
- b) *the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.'*

Having regard to the above, whilst the application site is a proposed allocation in the submission local plan it is not so substantial/ its cumulative effect would not be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to the submission local plan. The application site is in effect a small, self-contained part of the wider policy DP9 site, located on the edge of the urban area that is not fettered by any land use designations and is capable of delivering a sustainable development that helps address the councils five year housing land supply deficit and accommodates the requirements of the submission local plan without creating an undesirable precedent / being premature to the adoption of the Local Plan.

Given the above and mindful of the fact that this site could contribute towards the five year housing land supply, due consideration should be given to the merits of permitting this sites development ahead of the local plan process.

To this end it should be noted that this application has sought to address the policy requirements set out in the emerging local plan and been designed to be in general conformity with policy DPA9.