

The erection of 44 new homes with access from West Hoathly Road, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure and highway works.

Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4LY

Planning Statement

*incorporating Affordable Housing Statement
& Statement of Community Involvement*

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Document Information

About

This document has been prepared for Devine Homes PLC by Squires Planning.

Squires Planning is the trading name of Squires Planning Ltd. The company is registered in England & Wales with Company Number 11917764. The registered office is Home Farm, Purley on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 8AX. The head office address is Squires Planning, The Long Barn, Poplars Place, Turners Hill Road, Crawley, RH10 4HH.

Should you wish to contact Squires Planning about this report, please email info@squiresplanning.co.uk or phone 01293 978 200. Please quote our project reference number which is 0455.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Squires Planning in support of an application by Devine Homes PLC for :

'The erection of 44 new homes with access from West Hoathly Road, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure and highway works.'

- 1.2. This document provides an overview of the site, its context and the proposed development before considering the material considerations relevant in the determination of this application.

Site & Situation

- 1.3. The site is located on the southern edge of East Grinstead, which is a main (Category 1) settlement. The site is on the southeast side of West Hoathly Road, approximately 1.58 km south of the town centre and adjacent to the suburb of Sunnyside. It extends to approximately 1.97 hectares and benefits from an existing informal access at its northern corner.
- 1.4. The site comprises an undeveloped parcel of land. It is bounded to the north by a hedgerow and line of trees, beyond which lies Sunnyside Recreational Field. This area is public open space, with a public footpath running along its northern boundary. The eastern boundary is defined by a line of trees and a ditch, beyond which is agricultural land. To the south, the site is bounded by a further line of trees and an access track, beyond which a field and the Trefoil Montessori Farm School.
- 1.5. West Hoathly Road lies immediately to the west of the site, separated by a hedged boundary. Coombe Hill Road joins West Hoathly Road at a T junction approximately halfway along the site frontage on the opposite side of the road. This junction is flanked by the Toybox Day Nursery and other built development. In this location, the section of West Hoathly Road running north from the junction forms part of the High Weald Landscape Trail.
- 1.6. The site is outside of the built-up area boundary of the adopted development plan, within the High Weald National Landscape, and within the Ashdown Forest 7km Zone of Influence. It is within Flood Zone 1. There is one designated heritage asset in proximity of the site which is the Grade II Listed Dunnings Mill (List Entry 1249038), circa 90m north of the site.
- 1.7. In terms of planning policy, the site lies within the countryside as defined in the District Plan. The site however is identified for allocation for a housing development of up to 45 homes under Policy DPA4 in the Submission Draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 which is currently at examination. That same document would amend the Built Up Area Boundary of East Grinstead so that the site sits within it.

Planning History

1.8. The relevant applications made on the site are set out below:

Reference	Description	Decision
14/03033/FUL	New access to field including gate.	Approved

1.9. The site has a very limited history with only application 14/03033/FUL being made for a new access to the field, which was approved in 2015.

Pre-submission discussions

1.10. A scheme for 43 dwellings was submitted for pre-application advice under DM/24/1199. The layout included a new access off of West Hoathly Road with the 43 dwellings spread across the site. It included a flatted building to the northeast of the site, public open space with a pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation Ground, a SuDS pond to the southeast and an indicative landscaping scheme. It proposed 14 affordable homes and 29 market units. The submitted layout is displayed in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Scheme submitted for pre-application advice under DM/24/1199

1.11. We summarise the key points from the pre-application response dated 10th September 2024, below:

- At the time of the pre-application advice request, the emerging District Plan could only be given minimal weight due to unresolved objections to the majority of policies in the Regulation 19 consultation. The principle of development would not accord with the development plan as the site is within the countryside and is not allocated for development.

- The layout is well thought through, with houses and apartments facing the street and open space and overlooking the pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation. Buildings are aligned well and create clear, readable streets. The main open space is located correctly, close to the site entrance, the system of pedestrian links creates good levels of permeability, and there is strong building frontage presence along West Hoathly Road.
- Some improvements were suggested such as the preparation of a character study and a drawing to identify broad connections and movements through and around the site, together with long street sections. Other improvements suggested included some amendments to building relationships including rearranging units 29 and 34, removal of the diagonal green link which has the potential to feel uncomfortable in places and lacks natural surveillance, introducing further trees to create interest in the streets, review of car parking spaces in a number of locations and a preference to include flats over garages, opening up hedging to the east edge of the site, introducing elements of play to the landscape, and that apartments are dual aspect. .
- The scheme provides less dwellings than allocated so justification would need to be provided for a lower provision.
- To provide a better mix against the SHMA, the proposal should provide a higher number of smaller market units.
- The Conservation Officer noted that the Grade II Listed Old Dunnings Mill is considered to possess archaeological interest as well as communal value as a former focus on the farming community. The elements of the original setting of the mill remain legible and contribute positively to its special interest. The site to the southeast constitutes perhaps the most prominent remainder of the countryside which originally surrounded the mill and there will be intervisibility between the mill building and/or its immediate setting and the field constituting the site. This field also influences the character of the backdrop against which the mill is seen in views looking south. The proposed development is unlikely to have any material impact on the setting or special interest of Boyles Farmhouse. The proposal will have a fundamental impact on the currently open and rural character of the site, and the scale and intensity of the development will inevitably be apparent in external views, including those that contribute to the character of the setting of the mill. This will result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the special interest of the listed building and therefore the balancing exercise of paragraph 208 of the NPPF applies.
- The Council's Housing Officer commented that the overall affordable housing provision is acceptable, as is the proposed mix, however the rented flats will preferably need to be located in a separate block. The car parking spaces for open market Plot 16 should be relocated.
- With the site being within a brick clay (Wadhurst) Mineral Safeguarding Area, any subsequent application should be supported by a Mineral Resource Assessment.

1.12. In addition to this, the proposal was presented to the planning committee of East Grinstead Town Council on 4 November 2025, and a productive discussion had on several points.

2. The Proposed Development

- 2.1. This application seeks *'The erection of 44 new homes with access from West Hoathly Road, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure and highway works'*.
- 2.2. The proposed development comprises a residential scheme of high quality homes arranged around a network of internal streets and shared surface areas, accessed from West Hoathly Road. The layout has been designed to create a cohesive and legible place, with development structured into a series of small clusters that respond to the site's landscape context.



Figure 2 – Proposed Layout (extract from 7189 PL-01 P06)

- 2.3. Vehicular access is taken from West Hoathly Road, leading into a primary internal route which serves the wider development. The access has been designed to minimise incursion into the hedgerow fronting West Hoathly Road, with opportunities taken to retain the rural character of West Hoathly Road with replacement hedge planting and new native tree planting to complement the existing treed character of the road. Secondary shared surfaces and private drives branch off this route to serve individual plots and smaller groups of dwellings. Pedestrian connections are provided throughout the site, including a dedicated pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreational Ground to the north, enhancing permeability and connectivity to surrounding facilities.
- 2.4. The development provides a mix of detached, semi-detached and flatted dwellings, arranged to create active frontages onto streets and shared spaces, while also enclosing more private rear gardens. Building footprints and orientations vary across the site to avoid uniformity and to reflect the informal grain of development typical of edge-of-settlement locations. Car parking is provided predominantly on plot, with a combination of driveways, garages and small parking courts integrated into the layout.

- 2.5. Landscape and green infrastructure form a central component of the scheme. Existing boundary vegetation is largely retained and reinforced, providing a strong green edge to the development and helping to integrate it into the surrounding landscape. New tree planting, hedgerows and areas of soft landscaping are distributed throughout the site, including along streets and within shared spaces, contributing to visual amenity and biodiversity.
- 2.6. An attenuation basin is located towards the eastern part of the site and is integrated into the landscape design as a functional and visual feature. This forms part of the site's sustainable drainage strategy and is complemented by additional landscaped buffers along the eastern boundary, which adjoins the countryside beyond.
- 2.7. The proposed development would deliver 31 market dwellings and 13 affordable dwellings. At the point of submission, no Registered Provider (RP) has been secured (despite proactive communication with a number of RPs and the Council's housing officer). As such the precise tenure and transfer arrangements for the affordable housing will be agreed during the determination of the application in consultation with the local planning authority. The proposed housing mix is as follows:

Type	Bedrooms	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Affordable	1-bedroom flat	6	14%
Affordable	2-bedroom flat	2	5%
Affordable	2-bedroom FOG	1	2%
Affordable	2-bedroom house	3	7%
Affordable	3-bedroom house	1	2%
Open Market	2-bedroom house	9	20%
Open Market	3-bedroom house	19	43%
Open Market	4-bedroom house	3	7%

- 2.8. Overall, the scheme delivers 30% affordable housing and 70% open market housing.
- 2.9. The dwellings would be served by a combination of on- and off-plot car parking, timber cycle storage sheds, private garden areas, garden gates, and refuse and recycling storage facilities.
- 2.10. The dwellings would be constructed using a palette of materials informed by local character, including a combination of brickwork and cladding. External walls would comprise red multi brick, soft brown brick, black weatherboarding and tile hanging, with brick detailing used for features such as quoining. Roofs would be finished in brown or red tiles.
- 2.11. An attenuation pond is proposed to the north eastern part of the site as part of the drainage strategy. The scheme is supported by a comprehensive landscaping strategy, including tree and hedge planting throughout the site, provision of public open space, and a pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation Ground.
- 2.12. The final scheme has been informed by the pre-application advice and subsequent discussions, with the overall site approach retained where it was positively received. This includes the access

arrangement from West Hoathly Road, a clear and legible layout, strong frontage to streets and open spaces, and the provision of public open space, pedestrian links and sustainable drainage features. The revised layout builds on these fundamentals while refining the design to better respond to the site's context and constraints.

- 2.13. A number of specific changes have been made to improve how the development functions and feels on the ground. The layout has been simplified to provide clearer streets and better overlooked routes, removing areas that could feel less comfortable or disconnected. Building positions have been adjusted to improve relationships between homes, with additional tree planting and landscaping introduced to add interest, soften the built form and strengthen the overall character of the scheme. Parking has also been reviewed to ensure it is well integrated and does not dominate streets or public areas.
- 2.14. The housing mix has been reviewed in light of comments to ensure appropriate affordable housing provision. The affordable homes are arranged in a coherent manner and are designed to be visually consistent with the rest of the development. The overall number of dwellings reflects a balanced response to policy aspirations while recognising the physical, landscape and heritage sensitivities of the site.
- 2.15. The final scheme also responds to heritage and landscape considerations, particularly in relation to the setting of Old Dunnings Mill and the countryside edge to the east and south. Development has been carefully arranged to reduce its visual impact in these more sensitive areas, supported by enhanced landscape buffers and open space. While development will inevitably change the character of the site, the revised scheme demonstrates a considered and proportionate response to the issues raised at pre-application stage and delivers a well-designed residential development that sits comfortably within its surroundings.

3. Planning Policy

- 3.1. Planning decisions should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 3.2. The requirement to determine applications "*in accordance with the plan*" does not mean applications must comply with each and every policy but is to be approached on the basis of the plan taken as a whole. This reflects the fact, acknowledged by the Courts, that development plans can have broad statements of policy, many of which may be mutually irreconcilable so that in a particular case one must give way to another.
- 3.3. Under section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 if a policy contained in a Development Plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to be adopted, approved or published.
- 3.4. Using this as the starting point the Development Plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of:
- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (MSDP)
 - Sites Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD)
 - East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 (EGNP)
- 3.5. Policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) is also material in the determination of this application. It is noted that an updated NPPF is currently out for consultation and it is possible that this document will come into effect prior to the determination of this application.
- 3.6. It is also noted that this application was submitted after mandatory biodiversity net gain came into effect, so this application is subject to the 10% mandatory biodiversity net gain introduced under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 3.7. These documents are explored in more detail below.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

- 3.8. The Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted on 28th March 2018 and sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex will evolve over the plan period and provides a delivery strategy for how it will be achieved. The policies most relevant to this application are set out below.
- 3.9. **Policy DP4: Housing** states that the District Plan will deliver an average of 876 dwellings per annum until 2023/24 and thereafter an average of 1,090 dwellings per annum between 2024/25 and 2030/31. It then provides a spatial distribution table which categorises settlements and identifies what the minimum requirement over the plan period is for them.

- 3.10. **Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy** highlights that development will be permitted within towns and villages within defined built-up area boundaries. It provides the settlement hierarchy which distinguishes settlements by five categories depending on their characteristics and functions. It states that the growth of settlements will be supported where the site is allocated, it is contiguous with an existing built up area of the settlement and is demonstrated to be sustainable.
- 3.11. **Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside** requires development outside of the built-up area boundaries to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District. Development will only be permitted where '*it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan*'.
- 3.12. **Policy DP13: Preventing Coalescence** states that '*development will be permitted if it does not result in the coalescence of settlements which harms the separate identity and amenity of settlements, and would not have an unacceptably urbanising effect on the area between settlements*'.
- 3.13. **Policy DP15: New Homes in the Countryside** highlights that new homes in the countryside will be permitted where special justification exists, particularly where accommodation is essential to enable agricultural, forestry and other full time rural workers to live at, where the design is of exceptional quality in the case of isolated homes in the countryside, affordable housing, and where the development complies with Policy DP6. It also supports agricultural dwellings, re-use of rural buildings and replacement dwellings. Whilst policy DP15 is considered to have full weight, this is aimed at specific types of housing (essential accommodation for rural workers, isolated new homes of exceptional quality, affordable housing rural exception sites) and therefore any conflict with this policy, by providing other types of housing, is not considered determinative.
- 3.14. **Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** requires development to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape and have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- 3.15. **Policy DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** states that in order to avoid effects on the SPA and SAC, development likely to have a significant effect will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Within the 400m buffer of the Ashdown Forest mitigation measures are unlikely to be capable of protecting the integrity of the SPA therefore residential development will not be permitted. Within the 7km zone of influence residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to contribute to mitigation towards the provision of SANG and a financial contribution towards the Ashdown Forest SAMM strategy.
- 3.16. **Policy DP20 - Securing Infrastructure** requires that new development is supported by the infrastructure necessary for it to operate sustainably. It seeks to ensure that infrastructure is provided in the right place and at the right time, and that development contributes appropriately to the delivery or funding of services, facilities and networks needed to support both new development and existing communities.
- 3.17. **Policy DP21: Transport** requires development to support the objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan 2011-2026 by taking into account of a number of factors including that the site is sustainably located, designing the scheme to adoptable standards and providing adequate car parking.

- 3.18. **Policy DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes** seeks to protect rights of way, Sustrans national cycle routes and recreational routes. It also aims to encourage access to the countryside by ensuring development provides safe and convenient links to rights of way, supporting the provision of additional routes between settlements and making new or existing rights of way multi-functional to allow for benefit for a range of users.
- 3.19. **DP23 - Communication Infrastructure** supports the delivery of modern communication infrastructure by encouraging the provision of high-quality digital networks. It promotes the deployment of infrastructure such as broadband and mobile connectivity in a way that minimises visual intrusion and protects the character of the area while ensuring communities and businesses can access reliable services.
- 3.20. **Policy DP26: Character and Design** states that '*All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside*'. It requires development to comply with 11 design related criteria.
- 3.21. **Policy DP27: Dwelling Space Standards** requires new residential dwellings to comply with the minimum nationally described space standards (NDSS) other than in exceptional circumstances where clear evidence will need to be provided that these requirements cannot be met.
- 3.22. **Policy DP28: Accessibility** highlights that '*All development will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely*'. It states that developments of 5 or more dwellings are expected to make provision for 20% of dwellings to meet Category 2 – accessible and adaptable dwellings under Building Regulations.
- 3.23. **Policy DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution** seeks to protect nationally designated environmental sites, nationally protected landscapes, areas of nature conservation or geological interest, wildlife habitats, and the quality of people's life from unacceptable levels of noise, light and air pollution by requiring development to comply with a number of requirements.
- 3.24. **Policy DP30: Housing Mix** requires development to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes that reflects current and future local housing needs, as well as the needs for different groups in the community.
- 3.25. **Policy DP31: Affordable Housing** seeks the provision of a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing for all residential developments providing 11 dwellings or more and requires development to comply with other requirements including a tenure mix of 75% social or affordable rented and 25% intermediate housing.
- 3.26. **Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets** requires development to protect listed buildings and their settings by ensuring compliance with 6 criteria.
- 3.27. **Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows** seeks to support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows that contribute to the amenity value or character of an area. It also includes requirements for new trees, woodland and hedgerows.
- 3.28. **Policy DP38: Biodiversity** aims to protect and enhance biodiversity by ensuring development complies with 5 criteria.

- 3.29. **Policy DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction** requires development to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate and feasible incorporate a number of measures, including minimising energy use through the design and layout of the scheme.
- 3.30. **Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage** requires development to follow a sequential risk-based approach to ensure that development is safe across its lifetime. It also encourages the use of sustainable drainage systems for schemes of more than 10 dwellings to avoid any increase in flood risk and protect surface and ground water quality.
- 3.31. **DP42 - Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment** requires that development must take account of water supply and wastewater infrastructure and protect the water environment. It expects proposals to ensure there is adequate capacity in water and sewerage systems to serve new development, avoid causing harm to water quality or the water environment, and incorporate appropriate measures (such as sustainable drainage and efficiency) so that impacts on water resources and ecosystems are minimised.

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031

- 3.32. The East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan was ‘made’ in November 2016 and sets out a vision for the area that reflects the thoughts and feelings of local people and includes policies to be used in the determination of planning applications in East Grinstead. The policies most relevant to this application are set out below.
- 3.33. **Policy EG1: Protection of the High Weald AONB** states that ‘*within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty planning permission will be refused for major development proposals unless the development is demonstrably required in the public interest and meets the exceptional circumstances criteria outlined in the NPPF*’. It also provides criteria for other forms of development.
- 3.34. **Policy EG2: Areas of Development Constraint** supports the conversion of redundant rural buildings, limited small-scale new development and extension to existing buildings within the Countryside Areas of Constraint. It also seeks to prevent coalescence of East Grinstead with Crawley Down or Ashurst Wood.
- 3.35. **Policy EG3: Promoting Good Design** requires development to comply with 8 criteria relating to design.
- 3.36. **Policy EG4: Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets** requires development that affects designated or non-designated heritage assets to be supported by an appropriately detailed assessment of the impacts of the development.
- 3.37. **Policy EG5: Housing** supports new housing development on previously developed land, and other proposals for new housing will be supported subject to 7 criteria.
- 3.38. **Policy EG7: Housing Mix and Density** supports new housing schemes that achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare unless local character indicates differently, on sites of 5 dwellings or more provides a minimum of 20% 2 and 3 bedroom units and provides affordable housing in accordance with District policy.

- 3.39. **Policy EG11: Mitigating Highway Impact** requires development to be supported by an appropriate assessment of the impact of the proposal on the highways network and include access arrangements that are appropriately designed and include adequate visibility splays.
- 3.40. **Policy EG12: Car Parking** requires development to comply with West Sussex County Council's adopted parking standards unless specific local circumstances require a different level of parking provision.
- 3.41. **Policy EG16: Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area** requires development within the 7km zone of influence to contribute to the enhancement and improvement of SANGs and contribute towards the SAMM Strategy.

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 - Submission Draft (Regulation 19)

- 3.42. The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. The Submission Draft District Plan was published for public consultation on 12th January 2024 and is currently at examination. After a pause in the examination process, recent correspondence from the Inspectorate suggests the examination may now continue with a new Examiner.
- 3.43. The site subject to this planning application is proposed to be allocated for development under policy DPA4 in the Submission Draft District Plan. Policy DPA4 refers to the site as Land off West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, and proposes to allocate the site for up to 45 dwellings.
- 3.44. The policy refers to the following infrastructure requirements:
- *being provided on site*: Open space | Natural, semi-natural and amenity green space
 - *financial contributions towards*: Sustainable Transport | Education | Library | Community buildings | Local Community Infrastructure | Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC mitigation measures | Health | Play area | Other outdoor provision | Outdoor sports | Parks and Gardens
 - *provision of*: Sustainable transport measures | highways works
- 3.45. It goes on to set out policy requirements any scheme would be expected to comply with. This includes:
- a need to conserve and enhance the character of the High Weald AONB, with the design and layout responding to the site's landscape features and the character of the surrounding area.
 - Appropriate buffers must be provided to protect the ancient woodland and priority deciduous woodland within and to the east of the site.
 - Existing boundary features, particularly the hedgerow along West Hoathly Road, should be retained where possible and enhanced.
 - The scheme should also provide safe and convenient access and movement, including a suitable vehicular access from West Hoathly Road, a pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation

Ground, and, subject to highways considerations, a pedestrian crossing to the footway on West Hoathly Road opposite the site.

- 3.46. In accordance with the NPPF, weight may be given to relevant policies within an emerging development plan, having regard to the stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections, and the consistency of those policies with national policy. While unresolved objections¹ mean that only limited weight can currently be afforded to the Submission Draft District Plan as a statement of policy, this does not diminish the relevance of the evidence base that underpins its site allocations.
- 3.47. The Submission Draft District Plan remains at examination at the time of writing. The initial examining Inspector raised concerns in relation to the Council's compliance with the Duty to Cooperate, which has implications for the Plan's progression. A new examiner is now appointed. However, these concerns relate to matters of strategic process rather than the robustness of the site selection methodology itself. The Inspector's correspondence does not call into question the assessment framework used to identify and test potential housing sites.
- 3.48. Notwithstanding the limited weight that can presently be attached to the emerging Plan as policy, the sites proposed for allocation have been identified through a comprehensive and structured site selection process. This process was set out in the District Plan Review Site Selection Methodology and was informed by a detailed evidence base, including Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment. All proposed housing allocations were assessed consistently through this framework, which was designed to identify the most sustainable and deliverable sites in accordance with the NPPF.
- 3.49. The site selection process began with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which established the pool of potential sites. These sites were then subject to a multi-stage assessment, including a detailed appraisal against environmental constraints, deliverability considerations and accessibility to services. This approach ensured that sites with significant environmental sensitivity were filtered out early, and that only sites capable of being delivered in sustainable locations were progressed.
- 3.50. The Council's evidence confirms that sites allocated in the Submission Draft District Plan were found to perform well when assessed against these criteria. In particular, the Sustainability Appraisal identified allocated sites as representing sustainable options for development, with no overriding constraints identified through transport modelling, ecological assessment or air quality analysis, subject where necessary to appropriate mitigation. As such, the allocation of sites within the emerging Plan reflects a reasoned and evidence-led judgement as to their suitability to contribute towards meeting housing needs.
- 3.51. In summary, while the emerging District Plan currently attracts limited weight as policy, the site selection work that underpins its allocations, including DPA4 is robust, consistent with national policy and capable of being relied upon as a material consideration in decision making. This evidence

¹ It is noted that the principle unresolved objection at this stage relates to the Duty to Cooperate. It is noted that this is proposed to be removed soon, should that happen the policies and allocation in the emerging plan are likely to attract greater weight.

provides clear support for the principle of development on sites that have been identified for allocation through the emerging Plan process.

Mid Sussex Draft Position Statements (December 2025)

- 3.52. Mid Sussex District Council has approved Position Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Position Statement 2: Infrastructure as material considerations to support decision making in the period prior to the adoption of the reviewed District Plan. These Position Statements provide clarity to applicants and decision makers where the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land and relevant development plan housing policies are therefore to be treated as out of date.
- 3.53. Position Statement 1 sets out the Council's approach to delivering sustainable development in this interim period, confirming that proposals for development should be determined positively where the adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole. PS1 acknowledges the importance of maintaining a continuous supply of housing land and directs decision makers to consider sites that have been progressed through the emerging District Plan process, including draft allocations identified as the Council's Preferred Sites for growth.
- 3.54. Paragraph 4.2 of PS1 clearly underscores that the site selection work undertaken through the emerging District Plan, including identification of draft housing allocations, forms part of the Council's preferred strategy for sustainable housing growth. Paragraph 5.3 further guides that planning applications for sustainable housing sites consistent with the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy should be supported where there is no clear conflict with development plan policy. This approach gives further credence to draft allocation sites as appropriate locations for new housing in advance of plan adoption.
- 3.55. PS1 also explicitly acknowledges the use of the standard method for calculating local housing need and provides guidance on the relative weight to be afforded to adopted policies where those policies are out of date, including through Appendix A. This reinforces a positive direction for housing delivery consistent with national policy.
- 3.56. PS1 provides a clear and positive direction for decision making, enabling sustainable housing sites to come forward in a plan-led manner that maximises delivery consistent with the Council's preferred pattern of growth. In this context, the application site at land off West Hoathly Road, identified as a draft allocation through the emerging District Plan and recognised through PS1 as a preferred location for housing growth, warrants material weight in its consideration.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.57. The NPPF is the overarching national policy framework for England. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. As set out in paragraph 2, the NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

- 3.58. Of particular importance to this application is paragraph 11 which sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.59. For decision-taking this means:
- c) *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
 - d) *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 strong 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'*
- 3.60. Footnote 8 of the NPPF in reference to Paragraph 11(d) states that '*This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years..*
- 3.61. In this case, as set out through recent decisions such as DM/25/1864, Mid Sussex District Council is not currently able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. Recent appeal decisions in Mid Sussex confirm that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. In appeal ref. APP/D3830/W/25/3361729 (decision dated 2 October 2025), the Inspector recorded that the Council's reported supply amounted to approximately 3.38 years. More recently, in appeal ref. APP/D3830/W/25/3368572 (decision dated 7 November 2025), the Inspector again confirmed that the Council could not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, albeit without identifying a specific supply figure. Therefore, in accordance with NPPF Footnote 8, for applications involving the provision of housing (such as this application), the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date.
- 3.62. For this application the most important policies are DP4, DP6, DP12, DP13 and DP15 as they relate to the provision of housing, and/or "*built-up area boundaries*" which dictate the location of residential development. With this being the case, the weight to be applied to those policies is reduced.
- 3.63. This position is however potentially limited by Criterion i of NPPF Paragraph 11(d) which relates to "*protected areas and assets of particular importance*". These are listed in NPPF Footnote 7 and include the High Weald National Landscape, Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC and the Grade II Listed Dunnings Mill.
- 3.64. Accordingly, the determination of this application must have regard to those policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) which protect areas or assets of particular

importance for the purposes of paragraph 11(d)(i). In this respect, paragraphs 189 and 190 are relevant in relation to the High Weald National Landscape, requiring great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty and setting out the policy tests for major development within designated landscapes. National policy relating to internationally designated ecological sites, including the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, is also engaged, requiring development to avoid adverse effects on site integrity or to secure appropriate mitigation where impacts arise. In addition, paragraphs 207, 208, 210, 212, 213, 214 and 215 are relevant to the assessment of impacts on heritage assets, including the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill, and set out the requirements for identifying and assessing significance, weighing harm to designated and non-designated assets, and balancing any less than substantial harm against public benefits. These policies provide the relevant national policy framework against which it must be assessed whether there is a strong reason for refusing the development proposed.

- 3.65. Criterion ii of NPPF Paragraph 11(d) sets out that permission should be granted for this application unless the adverse impacts of doing so would **significantly and demonstrably** outweigh the benefits.
- 3.66. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF is also relevant. It 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 or less before the date at which the decision is made; and*
 - b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70'*

In this case, the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in 2016 and so more than five years ago. Accordingly, the provisions of NPPF Paragraph 14 does not apply in this case.

Ministerial Statements

- 3.67. Written Ministerial Statements provide important context on the Government's intended direction of national planning policy. While they do not form part of the statutory development plan, they are capable of being material considerations and are routinely relied upon to demonstrate clear and consistent ministerial intent to boost housing delivery. Where development plan policies are out of date and housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, such statements reinforce the expectation that decision making should support sustainable housing proposals and apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development in a positive and delivery-focused manner.
- 3.68. Taken together, recent ministerial statements provide a clear and up-to-date expression of national policy intent to prioritise housing delivery and to ensure that the planning system operates in a way that supports sustainable growth. In the context of an acknowledged shortfall in housing land supply, they reinforce the application of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF and support a positive approach to proposals that contribute to meeting housing needs in appropriate locations.
- 3.69. The most recent Written Ministerial Statements relevant to housing delivery are summarised below.

December 2025 – Planning Reform: Next Phase

- 3.70. In December 2025, the Government issued a Written Ministerial Statement outlining the next phase of planning reform, including consultation on further changes to national planning policy. The statement reaffirmed that increasing housing supply remains a central national priority and emphasised the need for a planning system that actively supports delivery, removes unnecessary barriers, and enables sustainable development to come forward more quickly. It reinforced the policy intent underpinning the NPPF and confirmed that housing delivery should not be unduly delayed by plan-making timetables where sustainable proposals are brought forward.

November 2025 – Reform of Local Plan-Making

- 3.71. A Written Ministerial Statement published in November 2025 confirmed reforms to the local plan-making process, aimed at accelerating plan preparation and ensuring that sufficient land is allocated to meet identified housing need. The statement acknowledged that delays in plan adoption have constrained housing delivery nationally and made clear that decision making in the interim should continue to support sustainable development proposals that align with the overarching spatial strategy and supporting evidence base.

June 2025 – Planning Reform and Housing Delivery

- 3.72. In June 2025, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning issued a Written Ministerial Statement reaffirming the Government's commitment to significantly increasing housing supply over the course of the Parliament. The statement highlighted the role of the planning system in enabling housing delivery, reducing delay, and supporting positive decision making where proposals contribute to meeting housing needs in sustainable locations. It emphasised that national housing objectives should be afforded significant weight in planning decisions.

4. Main Considerations

4.1. In this section we will consider the main issues relevant to the determination of this application, Having regard to the proposed development, the sites context and relevant policy provisions, we believe these to be:

- Principle of development
- Housing Mix & Local Need
- Design and impact on the character of the area
- Amenity
- Access, Highways & Parking
- Landscape
- Heritage
- Ecology
- Arboriculture
- Drainage and Flooding
- Sustainability

4.2. We take each consideration in turn below.

Principle of development

Emerging Allocation

4.3. Before discussing policy considerations, it is important to note, as we have above, that the site is allocated in the emerging District Plan Review for up to 45 dwellings under DPA4: Land off West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead. In the Site Selections Conclusions Paper which was submitted as part of the evidence base for the Regulation 19 consultation, Mid Sussex District Council stated that:

'The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that, overall, the site represents a sustainable option for allocation. The transport modelling undertaken to date for the District Plan Review does not indicate that there will be any showstoppers, associated with this site. The HRA does not identify any likely significant effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, subject to appropriate mitigation. In terms of air quality, there are currently no anticipated significant effects on the Stonepound Crossroads AQMA, or adverse impacts on the Ashdown Forest.'

In light of the above, it is considered that the site represents a suitable option for allocation. Therefore this site is allocated in the District Plan 2021 – 2039 Proposed Submission (DPA4).'

- 4.4. The Council therefore considers that the site is suitable for the residential development of up to 45 dwellings and that the impact on the landscape, transport network, heritage assets etc. can be made acceptable. It also highlights that the site is within a sustainable location.
- 4.5. Whilst the emerging District Plan and allocation within it holds limited weight, the body of evidence supporting the development of this site is material and holds considerable weight.

Mid Sussex Position Statement

- 4.6. Mid Sussex Position Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development acknowledges the application site as one of the Council's Preferred Sites for development and provides clear support for the delivery of housing on land identified for allocation in the Submission Draft District Plan. The site forms part of the Council's preferred growth agenda, which is underpinned by the settlement hierarchy and the established evidence base.
- 4.7. Position Statement 1 provides a clear direction to support the delivery of housing on sustainable sites progressed through the emerging District Plan process. It confirms that draft allocation sites, identified as Preferred Sites for development, should be afforded material weight in decision making, notwithstanding that the Submission Draft District Plan has not yet been adopted.
- 4.8. The inclusion of the land off West Hoathly Road within this framework reflects the Council's assessment of the site's sustainability, deliverability and conformity with the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy. Position Statement 1 is expressly intended to enable such sites to come forward in a positive and plan-led manner during the interim period, thereby supporting continued housing delivery in the most sustainable locations.
- 4.9. In this context, significant weight should be given to Position Statement 1 as a main consideration in favour of the proposed development in principle. The proposal aligns with the Council's preferred growth strategy, responds to the acknowledged shortfall in housing land supply, and is supported by the Council's adopted interim policy framework for delivering sustainable development. Collectively, these matters weigh materially in favour of granting planning permission.

Adopted Development Plan

- 4.10. The site is situated outside of the built-up area boundary and within the countryside. Policy DP12 states that development within the countryside will only be permitted where *'it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan'*.
- 4.11. Policy DP15 supports new homes in the countryside where special justification exists, which is defined as:
- *Where accommodation is essential to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work; or*
 - *In the case of isolated homes in the countryside, where the design of the dwelling is of exceptional quality and it enhances its immediate setting and is sensitive to the character of the area; or*

- *Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DP32: Rural Exception Sites; or*
- *The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy*

- 4.12. The development would not comply with the first three special justifications above.
- 4.13. Regarding Policy DP6, the site is not within any settlement defined by the settlement hierarchy. However, Policy DP6 states that outside of the defined built-up area boundaries, the expansion of settlements will be supported where:
1. *The site is allocated in the District Plan, a Neighbourhood Plan or subsequent Development Plan Document or where the proposed development is for fewer than 10 dwellings; and*
 2. *The site is contiguous with an existing built up area of the settlement; and*
 3. *The development is demonstrated to be sustainable, including by reference to the settlement hierarchy*
- 4.14. In this case, the site is not currently allocated within the adopted development plan and is for more than 10 units and therefore fails criterion 1.
- 4.15. The site is contiguous with the built-up area of East Grinstead as its northern corner directly abuts the built-up area boundary.
- 4.16. The Council have also confirmed that the site is a sustainable location through the work they have done in proposing the allocation in the emerging plan. The site provides pedestrian access to East Grinstead, It also includes a pedestrian route to the adjacent recreational field and the PRow network beyond. The nearest bus stop is on Dunnings Road, circa 113m north of the site, which provides links to the centre of East Grinstead, Crawley Bus Station, Three Bridges Station, Turners Hill, Sharpthorne, Saint Hill Green and West Hoathly. The nearest shop is a Budgens convenience store on Dunnings Road circa 300m north of the site which provides goods to meet the day-to-day needs of residents within walking distance. This position that the site is in a sustainably located is supported by the Site Selections Conclusions Paper² published alongside the emerging District Plan.
- 4.17. The proposed development is not compliant with all the criteria of Policy DP6 due to its size and lack of allocation in the emerging plan, but it is noted that it otherwise complies with the policy requirements of Policy DP6.
- 4.18. There are no other relevant policies in the MSDP, or any other Development Plan documents such as the Site Allocations document, or the Neighbourhood Plan that would explicitly support the residential development of this site.

² <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/nee1312z/site-selection-conclusions-paper-2023.pdf>

Presumption in favour of development

- 4.19. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means:
- c) *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
 - d) *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 strong 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'*
- 4.20. Footnote 8 of the NPPF in reference to Paragraph 11(d) states that '*This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where: the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (with the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 78); or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the previous three years.*
- 4.21. In this case, as set out through recent decisions such as DM/25/1864, Mid Sussex District Council is not currently able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. Therefore, in accordance with NPPF Footnote 8, for applications involving the provision of housing (such as this application), the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date.
- 4.22. As previously described, for this application the most important policies are DP4, DP6, DP12, DP13 and DP15 as they relate to the provision of housing, and/or "*built-up area boundaries*" which dictate the location of residential development. With this being the case, the weight to be applied to those policies is reduced.
- 4.23. This position is qualified by Criterion (i) of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, which states that planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. The relevant protected areas and assets are identified in footnote 7 of the NPPF and, in the context of this application, include the High Weald National Landscape, the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, and the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill.
- 4.24. Criterion (ii) of paragraph 11(d) further confirms that permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole. This matter is addressed in detail through the planning balance set out later in this statement.

- 4.25. The following sections therefore consider the relevant NPPF policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance, and assess whether, they provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed.

High Weald National Landscape

- 4.26. The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF confirms that *“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.”*
- 4.27. As part of this application a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by CSA Environmental has been submitted. This is discussed in more detail below, however the LVIA concludes that with appropriate mitigation, it would conserve the overall landscape character and scenic beauty of the area.
- 4.28. Paragraph 190 of the NPPF confirms that, when considering applications for major development within National Landscapes, permission should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. In reaching such a judgement, decision makers are required to have regard to the following considerations:
- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
 - b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
 - c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*
- 4.29. Footnote 67 goes on to confirm that for the purposes of paragraphs 190, whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated.
- 4.30. In support of the District Plan Review, the Council undertook an Assessment of the Impact of SHELAA Sites on the High Weald National Landscape (July 2024), which assessed the contribution of individual sites to the components of natural beauty and considered whether development would constitute “major development” for the purposes of national policy.
- 4.31. The application site (SHELAA Site 198: Land off West Hoathly Road) was assessed in that document through a desk-based review and site visit against the established High Weald character components. The assessment concluded that the site makes an overall lower contribution to the natural beauty of the National Landscape. While a higher contribution was identified in relation to the historic field and heath component and a moderate contribution to woodland, the site was found to make a lower contribution to all other components, including geology, landform and water systems, settlement, routeways, land-based economy and related rural life. No contribution was identified in respect of routeways.
- 4.32. The assessment recognised the presence of adjacent ancient and ghyll woodland, which would require appropriate buffers in accordance with policy requirements, and acknowledged the potential

loss of undeveloped land. However, it also concluded that the site does not directly impact key National Landscape character components and that potential effects could be appropriately mitigated through sensitive design, including the use of a defensible settlement edge, landscape-led layout, and materials reflective of local character, consistent with the High Weald Housing Design Guide.

- 4.33. 4.33. In parallel, the Council's Assessment of the Impact of the SHELAA Sites on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (October 2022) and Major Development in the High Weald National Landscape paper (July 2024) considered the effects of proposed allocations within the National Landscape, including DPA4, and whether they could reasonably be regarded as major development for the purposes of the NPPF. These assessments examined the scale, nature and setting of each site, together with the potential for significant adverse effects on the purposes of the AONB designation, as a matter of planning judgement to inform site selection and reduce risk at the application stage.
- 4.34. In relation to the application site, the Council concluded that an allocation of up to 45 dwellings is modest in scale when considered in the context of the settlement and does not represent major development in the ordinary meaning of the term. The site was assessed as forming a limited extension to East Grinstead, with no other nearby allocations giving rise to cumulative impacts, and with scope for landscape-led design to mitigate effects on the High Weald AONB in accordance with the AONB Management Plan and draft Policy DPC4. Having reviewed the Council's assessments, we are minded to agree with the conclusions reached.
- 4.35. Taken together therefore, the Council's evidence base demonstrates that development at the site would not, by definition, result in significant harm to the purposes of the National Landscape and would not constitute major development in the context of paragraph 190.
- 4.36. With the above being the case, the proposal does not cause harm to the High Weald National Landscape that cannot be mitigated, thus it conserves its landscape and scenic beauty, and further it does not constitute major development in the terms of paragraph 190. Therefore, there is no strong reason to refuse permission on landscape grounds.

Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

- 4.37. In accordance with the NPPF, development should avoid significant harm to designated international and national nature conservation sites and, where unavoidable impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation measures must be secured to ensure that the integrity of those sites is maintained. This requirement is particularly relevant to proposals within the zone of influence of Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which are European-designated sites of international importance for protected habitats and species.
- 4.38. Ashdown Forest lies within 7 kilometres of the application site. Mid Sussex District Council's adopted approach requires residential development within this zone of influence to mitigate potential recreational pressures arising from increased population and visitor use, which could otherwise contribute to adverse effects on the Forest's ecological integrity. Mitigation is secured through financial contributions towards:
- **Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)** - contributions towards the provision, ongoing management, and maintenance of strategic SANG sites, providing high-quality greenspace to attract recreational use away from Ashdown Forest; and

- **Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)** - contributions to fund ongoing visitor management and monitoring measures on the Forest in accordance with the established SAMM Strategy.

- 4.39. These contributions will be secured through an appropriately worded Section 106 legal agreement or planning condition where relevant.
- 4.40. The NPPF makes clear (paragraphs 57–58) that planning obligations must be 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 impacts of the development. The Ashdown Forest mitigation contributions satisfy all three statutory tests: the contributions are necessary to mitigate recreational impacts identified through the Habitat Regulations Assessment process, they are directly related to the development's location within the 7 km zone, and they are proportionate to the scale of residential development proposed. This approach aligns with both national guidance and the Council's adopted mitigation framework.
- 4.41. By committing to and securing the requisite SANG and SAMM contributions, the proposal will ensure that the potential recreational impacts on Ashdown Forest are appropriately mitigated in line with the Council's Habitat Regulations Assessment, thereby complying with national policy objectives to conserve internationally important sites and their qualifying features. The mitigation package also ensures conformity with the development plan and the Framework's overarching environmental protection aims.
- 4.42. As a result, there is no strong reason for refusing this application based on the policies in the NPPF relating to the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC.

Grade II Listed Dunnings Mill

- 4.43. Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraphs 207, 208, 210, 212, 213, 214, and 215 of the NPPF are relevant.
- 4.44. The NPPF requires decision-makers to identify, assess and give appropriate weight to the significance of any heritage assets affected by development, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of assessment should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and informed by appropriate expertise, with archaeological assessments required where relevant.
- 4.45. In this case, and as discussed in greater detail later in this statement and within the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment, the proposal would result in a degree of harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Dunnings Mill. This arises from further change to its setting and a limited impact on its historic interest. The level of harm identified is, however, clearly less than substantial and sits at the lower end of that spectrum.
- 4.46. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF confirms that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, that harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This policy does not impose a presumption against development but instead requires the decision maker to exercise planning judgement, having regard to both the extent of harm and the significance of the asset. In this instance, and for the reasons set out elsewhere in this statement, the public benefits of the scheme are considerable and include the

delivery of much needed housing in the context of a national and local housing shortfall. When these benefits are properly weighed in the planning balance, they clearly outweigh the limited heritage harm identified.

- 4.47. As a result, there is no strong reason for refusing this application based on the policies in the NPPF relating to designated heritage assets.

Summary

- 4.48. Paragraph 11(d) confirms that where the policies most important for determining an application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless, importantly, the application of policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusal. However, as set out above there are no strong reasons for refusing the development arising from the application of relevant national policy contained within the NPPF, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11(d) applies.
- 4.49. Considering the above, this development needs to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. If a development is found to be sustainable, that would weigh heavily in favour of granting permission in the paragraph 11(d) balance. If, however, the development is not found to be sustainable, that is not the end of the matter; the Local Planning Authority still needs to go through the weighing up process between the positive benefits of the scheme against any harm that may be caused, having particular regard for the key policies indicated in paragraph 11(d)(ii).
- 4.50. As part of this process, the NPPF indicates that the weight to be given to Development Plan policies should depend on the degree to which they are in conformity with the NPPF. Our assessment is set out below:

Policy	Relevance to Proposal	Weight to be Applied
DP4 (Housing)	Relates to the supply of housing. Given the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the policy is considered out of date when assessed against the tests in the NPPF.	Limited weight
DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy)	Remains relevant insofar as it assists in assessing whether a site is in a suitable and sustainable location. However, the criteria which restrict development to specific settlements, size, or location based on being adjacent to Built Up Area Boundaries, are out of date in housing supply terms.	Limited weight
DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside)	Seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. While not directly related to housing supply, the policy must be considered in the context of the NPPF objective to significantly boost the supply of housing and the absence of a five year supply.	Moderate weight
DP15 (New Homes in the Countryside)	Identifies circumstances where new homes may be permitted in the countryside. Whilst the policy's objectives are consistent with paragraphs 82 to 84 of the NPPF they could be considered overly restrictive to larger developments in the context of the NPPF objective to significantly boost the supply of housing and the absence of a five-year supply.	Moderate weight

- 4.51. The following sections of the report will consider the relevant matters associated with the proposed development in the context of the Development Plan and other material considerations, including the NPPF to undertake the necessary tilted balance assessment outlined above.
- 4.52. However, notwithstanding the assessment below, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, constituting sustainable development and with reference to the Mid Sussex Position Statement 1.

Landscape & Visual

- 4.53. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by CSA Environmental in support of the proposed development.
- 4.54. The site lies on the southern edge of the built-up area of East Grinstead and within the High Weald National Landscape. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) and has had regard to national policy and the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan, in particular Policies DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside), DP16 (High Weald AONB), DP26 (Character and Design) and DP37 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows).
- 4.55. The LVIA confirms that while the site forms part of a nationally designated landscape, its proximity to existing development on three sides, its location on a north-facing slope overlooked by housing, and the presence of existing urban influences mean that it does not exhibit the same level of tranquillity, remoteness or perceptual qualities found in more rural parts of the High Weald. Views of the site are generally limited to the immediate surroundings, including West Hoathly Road, Sunnyside Recreation Ground and nearby residential areas, with very limited intervisibility with the wider National Landscape.
- 4.56. The assessment identifies that the site has medium landscape susceptibility to a sensitively designed residential development, albeit with high landscape value due to its designation. Overall, this results in a medium–high landscape sensitivity, which is consistent with the findings of the Council’s published landscape capacity studies.
- 4.57. The proposed layout has been informed by a landscape-led approach, consistent with the requirements of Policy DP16 and paragraph 187 of the NPPF, and responds directly to the site-specific requirements of Allocation DPA4 in the emerging local plan. Development is contained within the defined allocation boundary and has been designed to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the High Weald, taking account of the site’s edge-of-settlement position and its relationship with the wider countryside. All significant landscape features have been retained, including boundary trees and adjacent areas of ancient woodland, with a minimum 15 metre buffer provided in accordance with DPA4. Existing hedgerows along West Hoathly Road are largely retained and reinforced, contributing to the strengthening of the rural approach into East Grinstead, while new tree and hedgerow planting is proposed to further soften views of the development and integrate it into its surroundings.
- 4.58. The scheme also accords with DPA4 by providing on-site public open space and enhanced pedestrian connectivity, including a direct link to Sunnyside Recreation Ground, and by taking access

from West Hoathly Road in a manner that allows for appropriate pedestrian crossing arrangements. Building heights are limited to two storeys and the development is designed using a material palette informed by local vernacular and High Weald design guidance, in accordance with Policy DP26, ensuring that the proposal does not appear visually dominant and sits comfortably within the landscape context. Infrastructure provision, including sustainable transport measures, highways works and financial contributions towards Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC mitigation, would be secured through the appropriate mechanisms, ensuring full compliance with the requirements of DPA4 and other relevant development plan policies

- 4.59. With specific regard to the hedgerow along West Hoathly Road, the LVIA identifies that two short sections of the existing frontage hedgerow will be removed to facilitate the proposed vehicular and pedestrian access points. These losses are localised and confined to the minimum extent necessary to achieve safe access arrangements and appropriate visibility splays, reflecting a balanced response to highway safety requirements. While the hedgerow makes a contribution to the roadside character and is therefore afforded protection under Policy DP37, the LVIA confirms that it is of relatively low arboricultural quality and discontinuous in places. Mitigation is integral to the scheme and includes a replacement hedge set back from the carriageway to maintain a strong vegetated roadside character while accommodating visibility requirements, together with the planting of new native hedgerows along plot frontages and the edge of public open spaces. As set out in the LVIA, this approach ensures that the proposal conserves landscape character overall, in accordance with Policy DP12 and paragraph 187 of the NPPF. The removal of these limited hedgerow sections results in a Moderate to Slight Adverse effect in the short term (Year 1), reflecting the initial change in roadside enclosure. However, as replacement planting establishes and matures, the effect reduces to Slight Adverse in the longer term (Year 15), with the frontage reinstating a coherent, well-treed and hedged character consistent with the wider approach into East Grinstead and the prevailing landscape structure of the High Weald National Landscape
- 4.60. The LVIA concludes that the development would result in the loss of a small pastoral field at the edge of the settlement; however, landscape and visual effects would be highly localised and largely confined to the site itself and its immediate urban context. Effects on the wider character of the High Weald National Landscape would be negligible, and visual effects would reduce over time as new planting matures, satisfying the moderation test set out in paragraph 190 of the NPPF.
- 4.61. Importantly, the assessment confirms that the proposed development would not constitute major development in the National Landscape for the purposes of paragraph 190 of the NPPF. Subject to the embedded mitigation measures, the proposals would conserve the overall landscape character and scenic beauty of the area, in accordance with Policies DP12 and DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan. There are therefore no landscape or visual grounds on which planning permission should be refused.

Access, Highways & Parking

- 4.62. A Transport Statement has been prepared in support of the proposed residential development of 44 dwellings on land east of West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead. The assessment confirms that the site is located in a sustainable and accessible location at the southern edge of the built-up area, with good connectivity to local services, facilities and the wider transport network

- 4.63. The proposals accord with Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, which seeks to ensure development is sustainably located, promotes alternatives to the private car, provides safe and suitable access, and avoids severe residual impacts on the highway network.
- 4.64. Vehicular access is proposed via a new priority junction onto West Hoathly Road. Visibility splays have been designed in accordance with Manual for Streets 2, informed by on-site traffic surveys, and a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been undertaken with all matters appropriately addressed. The proposals therefore provide safe and suitable access for all users, in accordance with Policy DP21 and paragraph 116 of the NPPF.
- 4.65. The site benefits from good opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport, including continuous footways linking to East Grinstead town centre, nearby Public Rights of Way, a bus stop within approximately 300 metres of the site, and access to East Grinstead railway station within a reasonable walking and cycling distance. In addition a new pedestrian crossing is proposed to ensure connectivity of the site to the pavements on West Hoathly Road in accordance with the requirements of emerging policy DPA4. These factors support the objectives of Policy DP21 to reduce reliance on the private car and promote healthier and more sustainable travel choices.
- 4.66. Car and cycle parking provision has been designed in accordance with West Sussex County Council parking standards for a Parking Behaviour Zone 2 location. The level of parking proposed is considered appropriate having regard to accessibility, dwelling mix and local car ownership, consistent with Policy DP21. Provision is also made for electric vehicle charging and secure cycle storage.
- 4.67. Trip generation associated with the proposed development has been robustly assessed using the TRICS database, supported by detailed baseline traffic surveys undertaken on West Hoathly Road. Automatic Traffic Counts (ATCs) recorded existing traffic flows of approximately 2,030 vehicles per day (AADT) along West Hoathly Road in the vicinity of the site, equating to around 2,035 vehicles over a typical 12-hour weekday period (07:00–19:00). Traffic flows during the weekday peak periods are modest, reflecting the residential character of the road, with no recorded personal injury accidents in the most recent five-year period, confirming that the local highway network currently operates safely and effectively.
- 4.68. Against this baseline, the proposed development of 44 dwellings is forecast, using a robust worst-case TRICS scenario for privately owned houses at the edge of town, to generate approximately 28 two-way vehicle movements in the weekday AM peak hour (08:00–09:00) and 26 two-way vehicle movements in the weekday PM peak hour (17:00–18:00). Over the course of a typical weekday, the development would generate approximately 266 vehicular trips, equating to an average of around one additional vehicle movement every three minutes, spread across the day.
- 4.69. When compared to existing traffic levels on West Hoathly Road, the scale of increase is modest. During peak periods, the forecast uplift equates to approximately one additional vehicle every two minutes, a level of change that is well within the operational capacity of the local highway network and would not materially alter traffic conditions, driver delay, or highway safety.

- 4.70. As such, there is no transport-based justification to resist the proposals under Policy DP21 or national policy. Overall, it has been demonstrated that the development is acceptable in transport terms, fully complies with the adopted Mid Sussex Development Plan, and meets the relevant tests of the NPPF.

Heritage

- 4.71. The site is situated circa 90m south of the Grade II Listed Dunnings Mill (List Entry 1249038). In the pre-application response, the Conservation Officer also noted the presence of the Grade II Listed Boyles Farmhouse (List Entry 1248767) which is circa 516m southeast of the site but noted that it was sufficiently separated from the site and was unlikely to be affected.
- 4.72. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared by TCMS Heritage which assesses the impact of the development on Dunnings Mill. The official list entry states '*2. Small, disused mill on the tributary of River Medway. Brick, half timber and weatherboarding. Tile roof C18. Cottage probably late C16 adjoining mill building. Position of wheel still discernible*'.
- 4.73. The HIA notes that since its listed, it has been converted into a public house which has necessitated numerous changes to the listed building and its setting. The building is a two and a half storeys constructed of timber framing and faced in a combination of hung tiles, weatherboarding and painted brick. It has a prominent chimney stack towards the southern end with irregular windows on the principal elevation. There are a series of 20th century extensions to the north and a modest single-storey outbuilding which are finished in weatherboarding.
- 4.74. The HIA identifies the significance as deriving '*from its historic interest as a post-medieval mill which illustrates historic construction techniques and the evolution of the local agricultural economy. The building possess architectural interest, tied to the construction methods and its former use, which demonstrates technological innovation. This has, however, been diminished by the conversion of the building and the provision of a replica water mill. The building also possesses archaeological interest, with the multi-phased development of the building and its adaptations over time potentially providing further evidence of historic construction techniques and technological development*'.
- 4.75. Its setting is linked to its position straddling the river and beyond this now comprises the associated car park and beer garden of the public house, surrounding residential development, the recreation ground and agricultural land beyond. Whilst there are elements of the setting of the listed building which contribute to its significance, much of the setting now makes no contribution or even detracts from the significance of the listed building as a result of the recent changes such as the conversion to a public house, its significant extension to the north and west, the construction of car parking on the historic site of the mill pond, and surrounding development. The HIA states that '*these extensive changes and the context within which the listed building is now experienced mean that the Site does not strongly contribute to the significance of the listed building and only makes a limited contribution to its historic interest as a remnant of its historic, though much changed, rural setting*'.
- 4.76. Regarding the impacts of the development, the HIA notes that the proposal will alter views from West Hoathly Road and oblique, limited views from the building itself. The removal of vegetation will also open up some views of the site, with the proposed dwellings becoming visible. It will alter one element of the listed building's historic, rural setting, however this will be seen within the context of numerous changes already seen and will not affect an element of the building's setting that appears to share a

historic function with it. The proposal will not diminish the ability to appreciate the architectural interest in the listed building and will have no impact on its value as a former water mill. Any changes to the wider, rural surroundings of the listed building will be limited.

- 4.77. The provision of native planting adjacent to the new footpath and vehicle access will minimise any potential visual impacts to help soften the impact on the listed building, but it is unlikely to be sufficient to remove harm in its entirety. The HIA concludes that *'The proposed development will result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill'*.
- 4.78. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use'*. In this case, the public benefits of the proposal include:
- Significant contribution towards the chronic shortfall in housing land supply in Mid Sussex and nationwide need for housing, including the provision of affordable housing.
 - Development in a highly sustainable location with good non-motorised access into East Grinstead.
 - Creation of jobs through the construction phase of the development.
 - Economic contributions post-development through increased local spending.
- 4.79. These substantial benefits outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and therefore the proposed development complies with paragraph 215 of the NPPF and is acceptable on heritage grounds.

Design & Layout

- 4.80. Policy DP26: Character and Design states that *'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside'*. Policy EG3 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan also seeks good design providing a number of criteria developments should meet. Further, the NPPF is also clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 sets out what decisions should ensure in design terms.
- 4.81. As part of this application a detailed Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been provided as part of the submission documents. The DAS fully sets out the design approach and rationale taken to the proposal, having full regard to the sites context, local character and constraints. It also demonstrates the constructive changes made to the proposals following pre-application discussions.
- 4.82. The design approach creates a variety of character areas within the development through the use of scale, massing and detailed design. The overall aim is to provide a scheme that sits comfortably within its context and provides a transition from the settlement edge to the countryside.
- 4.83. There is a mix of dwelling types and designs with a complementary pallet of facing materials used across the development but with differentiation per character area. Facing materials generally

comprise brick elevations, timber cladding, tile hanging, brown and red roof tiles, and various elements of architectural detailing.

- 4.84. The layout seeks to ensure legibility whilst providing suitable access for vehicles and pedestrians. Further, the layout ensures incorporation of open space, landscape and ecology enhancements to provide an inclusive design that achieves quality placemaking.
- 4.85. The proposal accords with policy DP26 and the NPPF in terms of design and layout matters, providing for a high quality residential development.

Housing & Mix

- 4.86. Policy DP31 requires *'the provision of a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing for all residential developments providing 11 dwellings or more, or a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000m²'*. It requires *'a mix of tenure of affordable housing, normally approximately 75% social or affordable rented homes, with the remaining 25% for intermediate homes, unless the best available evidence supports a different mix'*.
- 4.87. The proposed development comprises a total of **44 dwellings**, of which **13 homes (30%)** are to be provided as affordable housing. The scheme therefore meets the minimum on-site affordable housing requirement set out in Policy DP31. The affordable homes are fully integrated within the layout and are indistinguishable in design, scale and materials from the market housing, ensuring a cohesive and inclusive residential environment.
- 4.88. Policy DP30 requires development to *'provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes from new development (including affordable housing) that reflects current and future local housing needs'*. This requirement is echoed in national policy, which seeks to ensure that the housing needs of different groups in the community are addressed through an appropriate mix of homes.
- 4.89. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies an ongoing need for smaller homes, family housing and affordable accommodation across the district, reflecting demographic trends, affordability pressures and household formation rates. The proposed housing mix has been informed by this evidence base and calibrated to respond to identified needs while also reflecting the site's edge-of-settlement context and landscape sensitivities.
- 4.90. The development delivers a carefully considered and balanced mix of dwelling sizes and types across the site, comprising a total of 44 homes ranging from 1-bedroom apartments to 4-bedroom houses. The market housing element comprises 31 dwellings, predominantly focused on meeting local family housing needs, including 9 two-bedroom houses (29%), 19 three-bedroom houses (61%), and 3 four-bedroom houses (10%). This mix reflects the identified demand for smaller and medium-sized family homes within East Grinstead, while also providing a limited number of larger dwellings to support housing choice and flexibility. The inclusion of a meaningful proportion of 2-bedroom homes also supports opportunities for first-time buyers and downsizers, enabling residents to remain within the local area as their housing needs change over time, in accordance with Policy DP30
- 4.91. The affordable housing provision comprises 13 dwellings (30%), fully compliant with Policy DP31, and is delivered as an integrated mix of dwelling sizes and tenures. The affordable homes include 6 one-bedroom apartments, 5 two-bedroom homes (comprising apartments, houses and a flat-over-garage

unit), and 1 three-bedroom house, providing a strong emphasis on smaller homes to meet identified local needs. All homes meet or exceed national space standards. The affordable housing will be delivered across a mix of tenures, and is distributed throughout the site, indistinguishable from market housing in terms of design, scale and materials.

- 4.92. The affordable housing will be delivered across a mix of tenures that is both policy-compliant and deliverable. Marketing and engagement undertaken to date indicates that there is currently limited appetite from Registered Providers to take on units of this nature. In recognition of this, the precise tenure mix and delivery mechanism will be secured through a planning obligation in consultation with the Council's Housing Authority, ensuring that the affordable housing provision is capable of being implemented in practice and reflects local housing need and market conditions at the point of delivery. Overall, the proposed housing mix and tenure are policy-compliant and responsive to identified needs, delivering 30% affordable housing (13 homes) alongside a balanced market mix. In doing so, the scheme will provide meaningful choice across different household types and life stages, whilst securing the affordable homes through a planning obligation. The proposals therefore accord with Policies DP30 and DP31 and attract positive weight in the paragraph 11(d) planning balance.

Residential Amenity

- 4.93. In considering the proposals impact on residential amenity specific regard is to be had to loss of light, loss of privacy, and overbearing impacts. Issues around noise and other wider impacts, such as air quality, are considered separately.
- 4.94. The closest residential dwelling to the application site is 145 West Hoathly Road which abuts the northern corner of the site. Given the location of this neighbour, it is potentially most closely affected by the development. However, the layout has been designed to maintain sufficient distance between it and the proposed dwellings (specifically plots 1-8) and the design and scale of the building carefully considered such that there is no obvious amenity impacts in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy or overbearing impacts. The only windows in the flank wall of plots 1-8 closest to this neighbour are obscure glazed windows serving bathrooms and therefore pose no privacy concern.
- 4.95. Although there are further dwellings on Streatfield Place, (opposite side of West Hoathly Road) and further north along West Hoathly Road/Dunnings Road, none of these dwellings directly adjoin the application site and are a sufficient distance away such that there are no material amenity impacts..
- 4.96. Also, within close proximity of the site are Toybox Day Nursery (directly opposite the site on West Hoathly Road) and the Tobias School of Art & Therapy, however these are clearly not in residential use and are not considered sensitive or adversely affected from an amenity perspective.
- 4.97. Given the above, the proposal leads to no direct residential amenity impacts on any existing neighbouring dwelling.
- 4.98. It is also necessary to consider the amenity levels for future occupiers of the proposed development. Here consideration is again given to loss of light, loss of privacy or overbearing impacts, as well as the provision of private garden space and public amenity areas.

- 4.99. The layout of the scheme has ensured that there is no harmful overlooking between dwellings. It has also ensured that no overbearing impacts occur and that there is no harmful loss of light to either dwellings or private garden spaces. All the proposed houses have private garden space with the proposed flats having communal areas. There is also an area of informal open space provided to the fronts of plots 43 and 44 for the benefit of all future occupants.
- 4.100. Overall, the scheme ensures that the proposed dwellings have suitable amenity levels.

Trees / Arboriculture

- 4.101. A Tree Survey and Impact Assessment produced by Keen Consultants in accordance with BS5837:2012 was undertaken in December 2025. It forms part of the suite of documents provided within the application submission.
- 4.102. The report confirms that there are no protected trees on site either by way of Tree Preservation Orders or being within a Conservation Area. There is Ancient Woodland located along the eastern boundary of the site but no veteran trees recorded on it.
- 4.103. Whilst the proposal results in the loss of a small section of roadside hedgerow to create the site access, no other trees or hedgerows are proposed to be removed. Replacement hedge planting is proposed together with new native tree planting to complement the treed character of West Hoathly Road which is a feature of the approach into East Grinstead.
- 4.104. The report confirms that the proposed layout is remote from retained trees, and outside a buffer allocated to the ancient woodland; it can therefore be achieved without material harm to the tree features around the site. In places hard surfaces coincide with root protection areas but specialist measures can be deployed to minimise harm to trees. Services and utility installation can be sited in the majority remote from trees but where they do need to be located within root protection areas specialist measures can be deployed for their installation to minimise harm to retained trees. New and replacement tree and hedge planting can be provided as part of these development proposals. This new cohort of trees can provide a diverse portfolio of tree cover to ensure sustainability of green infrastructure in the future.
- 4.105. The development clearly recognises the important contribution trees make to the character and quality of built environments, and the role they play to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. The proposals seek to retain existing trees and integrate new trees in accordance with the requirement of local and national planning policy.

Ashdown Forest

- 4.106. As set out earlier in this Statement, the application site lies within the 7 kilometre zone of influence of the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In accordance with the Council's adopted approach and the findings of the Habitat Regulations Assessment, the proposal will secure the requisite mitigation to address potential recreational impacts on the Ashdown Forest. Appropriate financial contributions towards Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) will be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement. These measures are necessary to make the development

acceptable in planning terms and will ensure that the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC is maintained.

- 4.107. With the agreed mitigation in place, the proposal complies with national policy and the development plan, and there is no resulting adverse effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

Economic Impact

- 4.108. The development would deliver economic benefits at both the local and district level, consistent with the objectives of the Mid Sussex District Plan and national policy which seek to support sustainable economic growth alongside housing delivery.
- 4.109. Evidence published by the Home Builders Federation demonstrates that residential development generates significant direct, indirect and induced economic benefits. Based on the HBF Housing Calculator³, the construction of 44 new homes is estimated to support the employment of approximately 152 people across the construction sector and associated supply chains, and to provide at least one apprenticeship, graduate or trainee opportunity. This aligns with Policy DP1 and Policy DP2, which support development that contributes positively to the local economy and the creation of jobs.
- 4.110. The development would also generate substantial financial contributions to the local area, which will be agreed with the LPA over the course of determining this application. Those contributions will directly support the objectives of Policy DP20 which seeks to ensure that growth is accompanied by the timely provision of supporting infrastructure.
- 4.111. Further economic benefits include an estimated £39,600 increase in spending on open space, community sport and leisure facilities, supporting local services and community wellbeing in accordance with Policy DP25.
- 4.112. Taken together, these benefits demonstrate that the proposed development would make a positive contribution to the economic, social and infrastructure objectives of the development plan, reinforcing the role of housing delivery as a key driver of sustainable growth in Mid Sussex.

Noise

- 4.113. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted alongside the application, in line with pre-application advice from Mid Sussex District Council that such an assessment would be required.
- 4.114. The assessment has been undertaken having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Noise Policy Statement for England, Planning Practice Guidance, BS 8233:2014, ProPG, and Mid Sussex's Planning Noise Advice Document: Sussex (September 2021). These documents collectively

³ Available at <https://www.hbf.co.uk/research-insight/hbf-housing-calculator/>. Accessed on 24/12/2025

seek to ensure that new development provides a high standard of amenity for future residents and avoids significant adverse noise effects.

- 4.115. Baseline noise conditions are dominated by traffic noise from West Hoathly Road. An unattended noise survey was undertaken on the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the road, and the results were used to inform a detailed 3D noise model of the site and proposed layout. This modelling demonstrates that noise levels reduce significantly across the site with distance from the road and with appropriate layout design.
- 4.116. The proposed layout has been developed using good acoustic design principles, including setting dwellings back from West Hoathly Road to create an acoustic buffer, orientating dwellings so that buildings screen private gardens from road noise, and limiting the need for extensive acoustic barriers that would be harmful to placemaking. As a result, predicted noise levels within all private external amenity areas are below the aspirational guideline of 55 dB LAeq,16hr, consistent with BS 8233 and ProPG.
- 4.117. Internally, the assessment confirms that appropriate noise standards can be achieved across the development using standard thermal double glazing and suitably specified background ventilation. The majority of dwellings can rely on openable windows in normal conditions. For a limited number of façades closest to the road, it will not be possible to rely on partially open bedroom windows at night for overheating control only. In these cases, appropriate mechanical ventilation solutions are proposed in accordance with Building Regulations Approved Document O, and these measures can be secured by planning condition.
- 4.118. Overall, the Noise Impact Assessment demonstrates that the development will provide a suitable internal and external noise environment for future residents, that any potential noise effects can be effectively mitigated through layout design and standard building measures, and that the proposals accord with the aims of the NPPF and the amenity objectives of the adopted Mid Sussex Development Plan. There are therefore no noise or amenity grounds on which the development should be resisted.

Air Quality

- 4.119. An Air Quality Assessment produced by Omnia dated December 2025 has been submitted as part of the application. The assessment considered impacts on air quality caused during construction and from post construction traffic movements. The potential emissions were assessed in line with the requirements of the air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex.
- 4.120. With regard to impact during construction the report finds *“Potential construction phase air quality impacts from fugitive dust emissions were assessed as a result of earthworks, construction and trackout activities. It is considered that the use of the identified site-specific control measures would provide suitable mitigation for a development of this size and nature and reduce potential impacts to an acceptable level.”*
- 4.121. In terms of impacts post construction, the report finds *“Potential impacts during the operational phase of the proposals may occur due to road traffic exhaust emissions associated with vehicles travelling to and from the site. These were assessed using standard screening criteria. Due to the low number of*

vehicle trips generated by the development, road traffic exhaust emission impacts were not predicted to be significant.”

- 4.122. Given the above, the development is not considered to provide any harmful air quality impacts.

Contamination & Minerals

- 4.123. As part of the application submission a Mineral Safeguarding Assessment produced by Geo-Environmental dated 4 November 2025 and a Desk Study Report also produced by Geo-Environmental dated 22 December 2025 have been provided.
- 4.124. In relation to contamination the reports note *“The site has historically comprised agricultural land and remains so, therefore there is potential for contamination associated with agriculture and reworked land. Whilst gross contamination is considered unlikely based on the information reviewed, there is the potential for heavy metals, metalloids, sulphates, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), asbestos and pesticides. Although the potential sources of contamination have been identified by the Desk Study the likelihood of these potential sources affecting the mineral resource on site is low. Furthermore, no evidence of contamination or vegetation dieback was noted during the site walkover.”* With this being the case, it is not considered that there is any specific contamination issue affecting the site.
- 4.125. Further, the site is considered to be low risk for Asbestos (none identified on site walkover), ground gas, and unexploded ordnance (see sections 2.14, 2.16 and 2.17 of the Desk Study Report).
- 4.126. With regard to the sites mineral potential the report considered the *“possible presence of the clay of the Wadhurst Clay Formation across the site”* but that as the site *“occupies less than 3 hectares, there is no requirement to consult the Mineral Planning Authority and therefore no sterilisation. The workable area would also be significantly reduced by the requirement for a buffer on the northern, southern and western boundaries with the neighbouring residential properties, school and nursery, and also for the Ancient Woodland. Any quarrying of the clay is likely to have a negative impact on the local community both in terms of noise and air pollution. Furthermore, any quarrying or subsequent infilling operation would have a detrimental impact on traffic congestion in the local area.”*
- 4.127. It is clear therefore that the site has a very limited mineral potential and that there would also likely be negative impacts on local residents and services through any extraction. Furthermore, there has been limited responses, following consultation, from commercial extraction operators suggesting there would be a lack of commercial interest in the site for mineral purposes. The site is not therefore considered to be a viable mineral resource.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 4.128. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy has been prepared in support of the proposed development.
- 4.129. The assessment confirms that the site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Environment Agency’s Flood Map for Planning, and is therefore at very low risk of fluvial or tidal flooding, both in

the present day and taking account of climate change. Residential development is classified as “more vulnerable” development, which is wholly appropriate within Flood Zone 1 in accordance with the NPPF and the adopted Mid Sussex Development Plan.

- 4.130. Surface water flood risk mapping demonstrates that the site is almost entirely at very low risk of surface water flooding, with limited areas of higher risk confined to the corridor of the existing ordinary watercourse along the eastern boundary. No built development, access, or infrastructure is proposed within these areas. As such, the development follows a sequential approach within the site and accords with paragraph 175 of the NPPF. There is no requirement for the Sequential Test to be applied.
- 4.131. The FRA confirms that flood risk from all other sources, including groundwater, reservoirs, canals and infrastructure failure, is negligible to zero. The underlying Wadhurst Clay geology is hydraulically unproductive, and infiltration drainage is therefore not considered feasible. This position is supported by published mapping, borehole data and groundwater assessments.
- 4.132. A comprehensive surface water drainage strategy has been developed in accordance with the drainage hierarchy, the West Sussex County Council Lead Local Flood Authority policy, and the objectives of the adopted Mid Sussex Development Plan. The strategy incorporates a combination of Sustainable Drainage Systems, including permeable paving, a geocellular attenuation tank and a landscaped SuDS basin, providing a total on-site attenuation volume of approximately 747m³.
- 4.133. Surface water runoff from the development will be restricted to the greenfield runoff rate of 8.4 l/s for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100-year plus 45% climate change event, inclusive of an allowance for urban creep. Discharge will be made to the adjacent ordinary watercourse, maintaining existing baseflows while reducing flood risk during higher-order storm events. Hydraulic modelling confirms that the system can operate without flooding and within acceptable drain-down times.
- 4.134. Foul drainage is proposed to connect to the existing public sewer network in West Hoathly Road via a packaged pumping station, with Southern Water engagement to be undertaken at the appropriate stage. A detailed Drainage Management and Maintenance Plan and exceedance flow strategy have been prepared to ensure the system remains effective for the lifetime of the development.
- 4.135. Overall, the FRA and Drainage Strategy demonstrate that the site is at very low risk of flooding, that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere, and that surface and foul water can be managed sustainably. The proposals are fully consistent with the NPPF and the flood risk and infrastructure objectives of the adopted Mid Sussex Development Plan, and flood risk should not form an impediment to the grant of planning permission.

Ecology

- 4.136. An extended Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and all required protected species surveys, including bat activity surveys and targeted dormouse surveys, have been undertaken to inform the proposals in accordance with best practice and statutory requirements. The surveys were completed during the appropriate seasons and provide a robust assessment of ecological constraints, consistent with the NPPF’s requirement for proposals to be supported by proportionate and up-to-date ecological evidence.

- 4.137. The development has been designed to protect and enhance the natural environment, minimise impacts on biodiversity and deliver measurable biodiversity net gains, in line with the environmental objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme follows the mitigation hierarchy and will deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, thereby responding positively to national policy objectives relating to biodiversity conservation and enhancement.
- 4.138. At the local level, the proposals respond to the Mid Sussex District Plan's requirement to protect and enhance the countryside and its ecological assets by retaining and buffering important trees, woodland and hedgerows, and by incorporating ecological enhancement measures within the layout. In doing so, the scheme accords with the District Plan's approach to safeguarding biodiversity and green infrastructure, including the protection of trees, woodland and hedgerows and the enhancement of habitats where development occurs.
- 4.139. Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation lie more than 3 kilometres from the site and will not be directly affected by the proposals. In accordance with the District Plan's approach to protecting internationally designated sites, potential recreational impacts arising from increased population will be appropriately mitigated through financial contributions towards strategic access management and monitoring.
- 4.140. Survey results confirm that boundary trees, hedgerows and woodland edges provide foraging and commuting habitat for bats, predominantly common and widespread species. No roosts were identified within trees affected by the development. The retention and buffering of these features, alongside reinforced planting and a sensitive lighting strategy, ensures that bat activity will be maintained and that adverse effects are avoided, consistent with national and local biodiversity policy.
- 4.141. Targeted dormouse surveys found no evidence of dormice, and the species is considered likely absent from the site. As such, the development is not constrained by dormice and no species-specific mitigation is required. Other protected species are similarly addressed through proportionate precautionary measures, including timing of works to protect breeding birds and construction practices appropriate to the site's limited suitability for reptiles.
- 4.142. In summary, all necessary ecological survey work has been completed, the proposals have been informed by a clear understanding of ecological constraints and opportunities, and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures have been incorporated. Subject to planning conditions and obligations securing detailed mitigation and Biodiversity Net Gain, the development complies with the biodiversity and nature conservation objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.143. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and the statutory Biodiversity Metric. The assessment is informed by detailed habitat surveys and condition assessments and has been prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist. It should be read alongside the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report.

- 4.144. The baseline assessment identifies that the site supports 7.83 habitat units, 2.17 hedgerow units and 0.07 watercourse units. The proposed development has been designed to retain and protect higher value habitats, including woodland, tree lines and the majority of boundary hedgerows, with development focused on areas of lower ecological value. The proposals include a range of on-site habitat creation and enhancement measures, including new areas of species-rich grassland, native scrub planting, new and enhanced hedgerows, SuDS features and new tree planting.
- 4.145. The submitted metric demonstrates that the development would result in a net gain of 1.01 habitat units (equating to a 12.88% increase) and a net gain of 1.22 hedgerow units (equating to a 56.02% increase), with the statutory trading rules satisfied. No loss of watercourse units is proposed; however, a minor shortfall of 0.01 watercourse units required to achieve a full 10% net gain will be addressed through the purchase of off-site biodiversity units, in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain framework.
- 4.146. Overall, the proposals are capable of delivering the minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain required by legislation and national planning policy. Subject to planning conditions securing the delivery of the proposed habitats, long-term management and monitoring through a Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan over a minimum 30-year period, the development is considered to comply with the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and relevant development plan policy.

Energy & Sustainability

- 4.147. An Energy and Sustainability Statement prepared by Doherty Energy accompanies the application and sets out the overarching strategy for reducing the environmental impact of the development and mitigating its contribution to climate change. The approach has been developed in accordance with Policies DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and DP42 (Flood Risk and Drainage) of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031.
- 4.148. Policy DP39 seeks to ensure that development minimises energy demand, uses resources efficiently and incorporates measures that support climate change mitigation and adaptation. In response, the proposed development has been designed around a fabric-first approach, prioritising high levels of thermal performance and energy efficiency before the integration of low and zero-carbon technologies. This will be achieved through enhanced insulation, improved airtightness standards and high-performance glazing, ensuring that the dwellings exceed the requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations.
- 4.149. The scheme has also been designed to maximise opportunities for renewable and low-carbon energy use and generation. While the final energy strategy will be confirmed at the detailed design stage, the proposals allow flexibility to incorporate a combination of photovoltaic (PV) panels alongside either high-efficiency gas boilers or air source heat pumps (ASHPs), subject to technical and viability considerations. This flexible approach ensures compliance with Policy DP39 while allowing the most appropriate and deliverable solution to be secured prior to construction.
- 4.150. Water efficiency has been embedded within the design, with the development targeting internal water consumption of no more than 110 litres per person per day, in line with local policy requirements. This will be achieved through the use of water-efficient fittings and appliances, supporting the efficient use of natural resources.

- 4.151. In addressing climate change adaptation, the layout and design respond positively to the requirements of Policy DP42. Measures include the incorporation of sustainable drainage principles to manage surface water runoff, alongside design solutions that minimise vulnerability to flooding and overheating. The dwellings are arranged to encourage the use of natural daylight and ventilation, reducing reliance on mechanical cooling and contributing to occupant comfort during warmer periods.
- 4.152. The development also places a strong emphasis on sustainable construction practices. This includes minimising construction and demolition waste, maximising opportunities for recycling, and utilising responsibly sourced, recycled and low-impact materials where practicable. The design provides flexibility to allow future adaptation of internal layouts or use, supporting long-term sustainability and resilience over the lifetime of the buildings.
- 4.153. Appropriate and convenient arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials are integrated within the layout, ensuring that waste management forms an integral part of the design in accordance with Policy DP39. In addition, the landscape strategy maximises opportunities for new planting and green infrastructure, with a strong emphasis on locally appropriate native species to enhance biodiversity, provide shading and contribute to climate resilience.
- 4.154. Overall, the proposed development adopts a comprehensive and policy-compliant sustainable design approach. Through reduced energy demand, improved building fabric performance, flexibility for renewable energy technologies, water efficiency, climate adaptation measures and high-quality landscaping, the scheme will deliver reduced carbon emissions and long-term environmental benefits. The development will also encourage sustainable and alternative modes of transport, as set out within the Design and Access Statement and Transport Statement. Further detail on the sustainability credentials of the proposal is provided within the submitted Design and Access Statement and Energy and Sustainability Statement.

5. Planning Balance

5.1. As set out earlier in this statement, Mid Sussex District Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. In these circumstances, paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged and the application must be determined in accordance with the tilted balance.

5.2. Paragraph 11(d) states:

- d) 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 strong 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 combination⁷*

5.3. In relation to paragraph 11(d)(i), the assessment above demonstrates that the proposal does not give rise to any conflict with policies of the Framework protecting areas or assets of particular importance that would amount to a strong reason for refusal. That test is therefore satisfied.

5.4. Paragraph 11(d)(ii) therefore requires a careful assessment of whether any identified adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

5.5. In assessing the weight given to both benefits and adverse impacts, we have applied the following scale.

- Substantial Weight
- Significant Weight
- Moderate Weight
- Limited Weight
- No Weight

5.6. The table below fully sets out the benefits associated with the development together with a comment on the benefit and the weight attributed to them.

Benefit	Comment	Weight
Housing delivery	The proposal would deliver 44 new homes in a sustainable edge-of-settlement location. In the context of the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the provision of new housing attracts substantial weight in the planning balance, consistent with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF and established decision-making practice.	Substantial

Benefit	Comment	Weight
Affordable housing provision	The scheme would deliver 13 affordable homes (30%), fully compliant with Policy DP31. Affordable housing is a clear and substantial public benefit, and in the current housing supply context attracts significant weight in favour of the development.	Substantial
Housing mix and choice	The proposed housing mix delivers a strong range of smaller and family-sized homes, including a predominance of 2- and 3-bedroom dwellings, alongside affordable accommodation. This mix responds to identified local housing needs and supports housing choice and flexibility, attracting moderate weight.	Moderate
Sustainable location and accessibility	The site is well related to the existing built-up area of East Grinstead and benefits from good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. (East Grinstead being a Category 1 settlement within the Council's settlement hierarchy). Safe and suitable access can be achieved, and the Transport Statement confirms that the development would not result in severe residual highway impacts. These factors attract Moderate Weight.	Moderate
Design quality and placemaking	The proposals have been informed by a landscape-led and design-led approach, resulting in a coherent and high-quality residential environment that responds positively to local character and townscape. This accords with national and local design objectives and attracts moderate weight.	Moderate
Landscape enhancements and green infrastructure	The scheme incorporates extensive landscaping, retention of key features, new planting and public open space, delivering long-term environmental benefits. While these measures do not negate all landscape change, they attract moderate weight as positive aspects of the scheme.	Moderate
Biodiversity Net Gain	The proposed development provides net gain beyond that required by legislation. This benefit is considered to attract Moderate Weight.	Moderate
Economic Benefits	The development would support employment and local economic activity during construction and would generate contributions towards infrastructure and community facilities to be secured through the application process. These benefits attract Moderate weight.	Moderate

- 5.7. With regard to the potential adverse impacts, again a table is provided setting these out with a comment and the weight attributed to them:

Adverse Consideration	Comment	Weight
Conflict with spatial and countryside policies	The site lies outside the defined built-up area boundary and the proposal therefore conflicts with certain spatial strategy and countryside protection policies. However, in the absence of a five-year housing land supply, the weight to be afforded to these conflicts is reduced, noting also the support for the delivery of draft housing allocations in the Council's Delivering Sustainable Development Position Statement. Overall, this attracts moderate weight against the proposal.	Moderate

Adverse Consideration	Comment	Weight
Effects on the High Weald National Landscape	Great weight has been given to the conservation of the High Weald National Landscape. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment confirms that the development would result in localised landscape change and the loss of a small pastoral field. However, the effects would be contained, would not constitute major development in the National Landscape, and would reduce over time as mitigation planting matures. The residual harm attracts moderate weight.	Moderate
Heritage impacts – Dunnings Mill	The proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, this harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. Whilst mitigated through layout, design and planting, the harm attracts significant weight in the planning balance.	Significant

- 5.8. Other potential impacts, including general ecology matters, drainage, highways, and construction effects, can be appropriately mitigated through conditions and legal obligations and would not, beyond those matters considered above, result in substantive benefits or harm. These matters are therefore essentially neutral in the planning balance and accordingly attract no weight in the overall balance.
- 5.9. When assessed as a whole, the development would deliver substantial public benefits, most notably the delivery of market and affordable housing in the context of a persistent shortfall in housing land supply. These benefits are reinforced by the sustainable location of the site, the quality of design, and the provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements.
- 5.10. While the proposal gives rise to identified harms, including conflict with certain spatial policies, effects on the High Weald National Landscape, and less than substantial harm to heritage assets, these impacts have been carefully assessed, appropriately weighted, and mitigated where possible. Crucially, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, the adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The proposal therefore satisfies paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF and the planning balance falls in favour of granting planning permission.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed development of 44 dwellings at Land at West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead represents sustainable development when assessed against the development plan, other material considerations and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.2. The application site sits at the edge of a Category 1 settlement and has been progressed through the Council's evidence-led District Plan Review process as a draft housing allocation under Policy DPA4 (for up to 45 dwellings). The proposal aligns with that emerging allocation in both scale and content, including the delivery of market and affordable homes, a landscape-led layout, a pedestrian link to Sunnyside Recreation Ground, appropriate buffers to adjacent woodland, and a package of infrastructure and mitigation capable of being secured by condition and legal agreement. In this respect, the scheme is not speculative development in an untested location. It is the delivery of a site the Council has already identified as a suitable and sustainable option for housing growth through its plan-making evidence base.
- 6.3. Importantly, the Council has confirmed through Position Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, that decision making in the current interim period should support sustainable housing proposals, particularly on sites progressed through the emerging District Plan process and identified as Preferred Sites for growth. This Position Statement is a material consideration and provides a clear, plan-led direction to facilitate housing delivery in the most sustainable locations while the reviewed District Plan continues through examination. The application responds directly to that approach and should be assessed positively in that context.
- 6.4. The tilted balance in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged because the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land, with the result that the policies most important for determining the application are out of date. There are no policies within the Framework protecting areas or assets of particular importance that provide a strong reason for refusing the development. The proposal conserves the overall character and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape through a landscape-led design and mitigation that limits effects and embeds substantial new planting and green infrastructure. It secures the necessary Ashdown Forest mitigation through SANG and SAMM contributions. It results in a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Dunnings Mill, which is clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including the delivery of much-needed housing.
- 6.5. The public benefits of the scheme are substantial. The proposal delivers 44 new homes in a sustainable location, including 30% affordable housing, and provides a balanced mix of accommodation. It achieves high quality design and placemaking, integrates landscape mitigation and on-site open space, provides biodiversity enhancements with measurable net gain, and will generate economic activity and infrastructure contributions to support both new and existing residents. These benefits carry significant weight, particularly in the context of the acknowledged housing land supply shortfall.
- 6.6. When the benefits and adverse effects are considered in the round, the adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. The proposal therefore satisfies paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. Having

regard to the draft allocation status of the site under Policy DPA4 and the Council's Delivering Sustainable Development Position Statement, the planning balance falls clearly in favour of granting planning permission, subject to appropriate conditions and a Section 106 agreement to secure affordable housing, Ashdown Forest mitigation, and the necessary infrastructure contributions and highway works.



Planning, Development, Collaboration

South East & London Office

The Long Barn, Poplars Place
Turners Hill Road
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 4HH

01293 978 200

info@squiresplanning.co.uk

Thames Valley Office

Unit 2-3, Dorcan Business Village,
Murdock Road, Dorcan,
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN3 5HY

01793 570 830

info@squiresplanning.co.uk



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Chartered Town Planners