

**PLANNING STATEMENT AND
SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

**DEMOLITION OF FORMER ST
STEPHENS CHURCH,
REPLACEMENT RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT, PARKING,
LANDSCAPING AND ACCESS**

**FORMER ST STEPHENS CHURCH,
HAMSLAND, HORSTED KEYNES**

**ON BEHALF OF
RDP CONSTRUCTION**

APRIL 2025

Shrimplin

Planning & Development

www.shrimplin.co.uk

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Shrimplin Planning & Development on behalf of RDP Construction in support of a full planning application for demolition of former St Stephens Church, replacement residential development, parking, landscaping and access at former St Stephens Church, Hamsland, Horsted Keynes (hereafter referred to as the “Application Proposal” and the “Application Site”). The Application Proposal will deliver 3 new three bedroom dwellings.
- 1.2 The Application Site is within Horsted Keynes. It comprises the Catholic former St Stephens Church which has been vacant since 2020 and is now in a very poor state and is an eye sore in the locality.
- 1.3 The church had operated from the site since the 1970s and served a small local congregation which had seen a consistent fall in numbers in recent years. The building had come to the end of its lifespan and needed significant investment. Following the first Covid-19 pandemic ‘lockdown’ in 2020, the decision was made to permanently close the church due to the cost of repairs to the building, low congregation numbers and wider issues around the shortage of priests to service mass across the parish. There are other Catholic churches in the surrounding area, with St Paul’s Catholic Church a short drive away at Haywards Heath serving the wider parish. It has been vacant since with the site falling into further disrepair and subject to vandalism.
- 1.4 The Application Proposal has benefitted from extensive pre-app consultation with the local planning authority, including on the principle of development and design/layout as well as technical matters. The pre-app advice was broadly supportive and the feedback given has been taken into account in the Application Proposal.
- 1.5 The next chapter of this Planning Statement describes the Application Proposal and the information that forms the application submission. Chapter 3 explains the Application Site and its wider context. Chapter 4 summarises the planning history of the Application Site. Chapter 5 sets out the relevant policy framework and the

decision-making process. Chapter 6 provides an assessment of the Application Proposal against the development plan. A summary and conclusion are provided in Chapter 7.

2.0 APPLICATION PROPOSAL AND THE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

2.1 This chapter explains the Application Proposal and the information that forms the application submission.

The Application Proposal

2.2 The Application Proposal is for the demolition of the former St Stephens Church, replacement residential development, parking, landscaping and access. It will deliver 3 new three bedroom dwellings. Each unit would be provided with generous private amenity spaces and off street parking.

The application submission

2.3 The planning application submission comprises the information on:

- Application form and certificates;
- Planning Statement (Shrimplin Planning & Development) (April 2026);
- Design and Access Statement (Thrive) (April 2026)
- Location Plan, drawing number SLP.02 Rev A (Thrive) (April 2026);
- Existing Drawings (JasPlanServices) (June 2025)
 - Existing Ground Floor Plan
 - Existing Elevations
- Proposed plans and drawings (Thrive) (April 2026)
 - Site Layout 01, drawing number SL.01 - Rev A
 - HT 3B.1 - Semi-detached - Plans and Elevations, drawing number HT.3B.1-END.pe Rev A;
 - HT 3B.1 - Detached - Plans and Elevations, drawing number HT.3B.1-DET.pe Rev A
- Arboricultural Survey (Arbtech) (March 2026);
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech) (June 2025);
- Reptile Survey (Arbtech) (September 2025);
- Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey (Arbtech) (October 2025);

- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Metric (Harper Environmental) (April 2026);
- Heritage Assessment (HEA) (March 2026);
- Quiennial Inspection Report (Gould & Company) (October 2019);
- Planning Obligations Form.

3.0 APPLICATION SITE AND ITS WIDER CONTEXT

3.1 This chapter describes the Application Site and its wider context.

The Application Site

3.2 The Application Site is within Horsted Keynes. It comprises the Catholic former St Stephens Church which has been vacant since 2020 and is now in a very poor state and is an eye sore in the locality. It is located to the south of Hamsland, Horsted Keynes. The former church is a 1.5 storey brick building with a steep gable roof. It has a car park to the front of the building and mown grass to the sides. There are some trees and planting on the eastern perimeter of the site.

3.3 The Application Site is bounded by Hamsland to the north, residential dwellings to the east and west and open countryside to the south which was allocated for residential development in the Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations DPD (SA29: Land South of St. Stephens Church) and has since gained planning permission for a residential development in August 2023 (DM/20/4692) which we understand is due to commence next year.

3.4 The Application Site falls within the High Weald National Landscape, the Ashdown Forest 7km zone of influence and within Fluvial Flood Zone 1. It lies outside the Horsted Keynes Conservation Area.

The Application Site's wider context

3.5 The Application Site lies on the southern edge of the village of Horsted Keynes. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. It is within the Horsted Keynes Built Up Area boundary defined in the Mid Sussex District Plan.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 There is no planning history relevant to the Application Site.
- 4.2 As mentioned above, the field to the south and west of the site was allocated for development in the Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations DPD (SA29: Land South of St. Stephens Church) and has since gained planning permission for a residential development of 30 homes (DM/20/4692) which we understand is due to commence next year.

5.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 5.1 The chapter sets out the development plan and the decision making process.

Development plan

- 5.2 The development plan comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan (March 2018) and Policies Map (June 2022), the Site Allocations DPD (June 2022), the saved policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan (May 2004) and the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan (May 2023).

Material considerations

- 5.3 Mid Sussex District Council is preparing an update to its District Plan. The draft District Plan was submitted for examination on 8 July 2024 and Hearing Sessions took place in October 2024. However, in April 2025, the Planning Inspectorate wrote to the Council concluding that the Council had failed in its legal requirement to satisfy the Duty to Cooperate, particularly around housing need, and advised the withdrawal of the District Plan. This was challenged by the Council, culminating in a letter to the Inspector (September 2025) requesting an "opportunity to discuss the evidence and outcome further". The Inspector has written to the Council (28 October) accepting the request. Hearing took place in February – March 2026. The Inspector has published his Post Hearing Letter and the Council has published 'Proposed Modifications'. It is understood that additional housing sites will be allocated to meet identified housing needs. Given that there are unresolved objections only minimal weight can be given to the draft District Plan.
- 5.4 Relevant supplementary planning documents and guidance are material planning considerations, including the Affordable Housing SPD (July 2018), Development Viability SPD (July 2018), High Weald Housing Design Guide (November 2019), Design Guide SPD (November 2020), West Sussex Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020) and High Weald AONB Management Plan (March 2024). The Council revoked the Developer Contributions SPD (July 2018) on 14 July 2025.

Appendix 5 of the Submission Draft District Plan is now being used to calculate Section 106 Contributions.

- 5.5 The NPPF (December 2024), with additional guidance in the NPPG, is also an important material planning consideration.

Decision making process

- 5.6 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. To achieve this there are three objectives – economic, social and environmental:

a) “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.” (paragraph 8).

- 5.7 For “decision taking” this means:

“c) approving development proposals that accord with the 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 date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination” (paragraph 11).

5.8 The NPPF explains that, for applications involving the provision of housing, policies are considered out of date if:

“...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. See also paragraph 232.” (Footnote 8).

5.9 As explained in Section 6 below, the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply. As a result, the District Plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date (NPPF, footnote 8), namely District Plan Policy DP4: Housing and District Plan Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy. The way in which they are out of date is explained in Chapter 6. This means that planning permission should be granted unless “the application of policies in [the NPPF] that protect areas or assets of particular importance [in this case the High Weald National Landscape] provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed” (NPPF,

paragraph 11(d)(i)) or any harm would “significantly and demonstrably” outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF (paragraph 11(d)(ii)).

- 5.10 The next chapter assesses the Application Proposal within this policy framework and decision making process.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 6.1 This chapter assesses the Application Proposal in terms of delivering housing, Horsted Keynes being a sustainable settlement and the loss of the community facility.

Delivering housing

Policy framework

- 6.2 Chapter 5 of the NPPF deals with “delivering a sufficient supply of homes”. It begins by making clear that that new housing development will be supported:

“To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.” (paragraph 61).

- 6.3 It emphasises the contribution that small and medium sites and windfall sites can make and encourages local planning authorities to encourage these:

“Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:...

c) support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions...” (paragraph 73)

- 6.4 The updated NPPF sets out a range of measures to deliver the Government’s commitments to delivering economic growth and new homes. This includes changes to the Standard Method for calculating housing needs that will result in higher

mandatory housing targets for almost all councils, with many seeing a substantial increase.

- 6.5 As explained in Chapter 5, the District Plan is out of date. Without prejudice to this, we consider its approach to meeting housing needs. District Plan Policy DP4: Housing sets “a minimum District housing requirement of 16,390 dwellings” over the plan period between 2014 - 2031 (emphasis added). As explained above, this target is likely to increase significantly in light of the new NPPF and standard methodology.

Assessment

- 6.6 The Council’s most recent Housing Land Supply Position Statement (October 2023)¹ found that it has a deliverable housing land supply of 5.04 years. However, this is based on an old version of the Standard Method for calculating housing need (1,039 dwelling per annum) and, when using the latest version introduced through the recently updated NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (December 2024), the housing target will significantly increase to 1,356 dwellings per annum (+30%). More importantly, a recent appeal decision (dated October 2025) has found that the Council only has a 3.38 year supply². The Council therefore cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. There is therefore significant pressure on the Council to deliver new housing.
- 6.7 The Application Proposal will have the significant benefit of making a small but important contribution to meeting local housing needs, helping the Council in meeting its housing land supply requirements, which have increased significantly under the new the Standard Method. This is also in accordance with the NPPF objective to boost the supply of housing and supports the economic objective of sustainable development by delivering land for housing and to support rural communities.

Sustainable settlement

¹ https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/ra5dyvp0/housing-land-supply-statement-1-april-2023_october-update.pdf

² Land off Mill Lane, Sayers Common, BN6 9JA (APP/D3830/W/25/3361729, paragraph 26).

6.8 The NPPF specifically highlights the importance of housing in rural areas:

“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.” (paragraph 83).

6.9 As we explain in Chapter 5, the District Plan is out of date. Without prejudice to this we consider its general approach to delivering growth. In the “Vision and Objectives”, it sets out a range of “Social”, “Economic” and “Environmental” factors that define sustainable development in Mid Sussex, including development that “maximises the use of previously developed land and buildings within the built-up areas and reduces the environmental impacts of development” (paragraph 2.13).

6.10 District Plan Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy is a permissive policy that positively supports development within the built up area boundaries of the district’s towns and villages :

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

6.11 Horsted Keynes is identified as a “Category 3” village. Its suitability for development is demonstrated by the fact that District Plan Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy sets a target for Horsted Keynes of a minimum of “69” homes over the plan period and Site Allocations DPD Policy SA11: Additional housing allocations identifies two sites at

Horsted Keynes, including the site to the rear of the Application Site, totalling 55 dwellings³.

- 6.12 Consistent with District Plan Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy, the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan Policy HK1: Location of new development positively supports development within the settlement:

“New development in Horsted Keynes parish will be focused within the built-up area boundary (BUAB) of Horsted Keynes village as identified on the Policies Map, including allocations in the adopted Site Allocations DPD (sites SA 28 and SA 29). This is in order to promote sustainable development of the village and to safeguard the nationally important landscape of the High Weald AONB. Any infilling or redevelopment within the BUAB should be of an appropriate scale and nature and not harm the character and function of the village.”

- 6.13 The Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing on the basis that “the MSDC Site Allocations DPD, combined with existing completions and commitments, will meet the identified local housing requirement for the plan period in full” (paragraph 9.6). It identifies a housing land supply of “75 dwellings” as at 31 December 2021 (Table A).

Assessment

- 6.14 The Application Site comprises previously developed land within the Horsted Keynes Built Up Area boundary. This is where the District Plan and Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan direct development. Horsted Keynes is recognised as being a sustainable village. The Application Site is close to the heart of the village and is within walking distance of a range of services and facilities, including the Village Store (400m), Village Hall and Post Office (500m), recreation ground (200m), cricket and tennis clubs (220m), public house (350m), primary school (900m) and church (850m). There is a bus stop within close proximity to the Application Site (450m) from where there are

³ Site Allocations DPD Policy SA28: Land South of The Old Police House – 25 dwellings;
Site Allocations DPD Policy SA29: Land South of St. Stephens Church – 30 dwellings

regular bus services to East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Brighton. It is therefore a suitable location for a small residential development.

- 6.15 Whilst the position of the Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan is that the village already has a sufficient housing supply, this does not take into account that the District Plan, namely policies DP4: Housing and DP6: Settlement Hierarchy, is out of date. Without prejudice to this, the housing targets set out in the District Plan are expressed as “minimum” targets.
- 6.16 The Application Site has the significant benefit of accommodating development within the Built Up Area boundary of one of the District’s most sustainable villages, within walking distance of a range of services and facilities. This will reduce the pressure on the Borough’s greenfield land and more sensitive parts of the nationally important landscape (High Weald National Landscape) in providing for identified housing needs. This is in accordance with the District Plan and Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan. It also supports the economic objective of sustainable development by delivering land for housing in the right places and fulfils the environmental objective as it makes effective use of land and in safeguarding the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape.

Community Facilities

Policy framework

- 6.17 District Plan Policy DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services seeks to retain community facilities, which includes “places of worship”:

“Where proposals involve the loss of a community facility, (including those facilities where the loss would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs locally) evidence will need to be provided that demonstrates:

- that the use is no longer viable; or
- that there is an existing duplicate facility in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility; or

- that a replacement facility will be provided in the locality”

Assessment

- 6.18 As explained above, St Stephens Church has been vacant since 2020. The Church had operated from the site since the 1970s and served a small local congregation which had seen a consistent fall in numbers in recent years. The building had come to the end of its lifespan and needed significant investment, as shown in the Quiennial Inspection Report (Gould & Company) (October 2019). Broken tiles on the roof needed to be repaired and the flat roof on the front entrance lobby and single storey extension to the west needed to be replaced. The timber fascia, soffit and bargeboards and the external guttering all needed to be replaced or there would be further damp penetration into the building. All of the windows were in a poor state of repair and there was wet rot in the timber window frames and cills and in the timber door frames. All of the windows and doors needed to be replaced. The Church was warned that the electrics and drainage needed to be assessed and works might be needed. This was unviable for the Church, particularly given the low congregation numbers and capacity at other churches across the parish.
- 6.19 Following the closure of the church in the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, the decision was made to permanently close the church in 2020 due to the cost of repairs to the building, low congregation numbers and wider issues around the shortage of priests to service mass across the parish. There are other Catholic churches in the surrounding area, with St Paul’s Catholic Church a short drive away (13 minutes) at Haywards Heath serving the wider parish. The building has been vacant since with the site falling into further disrepair and subject to vandalism. It is therefore not a viable community facility.
- 6.20 Horsted Keynes is not alone. Data from the England and Wales bishops’ conference⁴ show a steady decline of numbers attending Sunday Mass since figures were first collected in 1958: from 1.8 million then, to 701,902 in 2019, to 389,960 in 2021.

⁴ <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/statistics-2023/>

Numbers jumped to 554,913 in 2023, but this is still below pre-pandemic levels. More local statistics⁵ for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton follow a similar picture with Sunday Mass attendance declined from 41,469 in 2008, to 11,739 in 2021 and rose to 25,789 in 2022. The National Churches Trust published a report titled "Every Church Counts" (January 2024)⁶ reporting that over 3,500 churches of all denominations have closed across the UK in the past decade.

- 6.21 Before its closure, the Church was used 1 – 2 times a week, typically a weekday mass service and a Saturday evening or Sunday morning service. We are not aware that any other community groups used the Church, most likely as the main hall is subject to a number of inherent constraints which significantly limit its suitability for alternative uses. In particular, the internal layout is largely fixed, with substantial areas occupied by fixed pews, resulting in a lack of flexible, open, adaptable and usable floorspace, restricting the building's ability to accommodate a range of activities. Other rooms were used for administration and storage and would not have been usable.
- 6.22 Furthermore, as explained above, Horsted Keynes has a wide range of community facilities, including an Anglican Church, Village Hall, the Martindale Centre, two public houses, recreation ground, which includes a pavilion and play area, and various sports clubs. The Village Hall and Martindale Centre are available for hire. The village is therefore well served by community facilities. The Mid Sussex Infrastructure Delivery Plan (September 2024) does not identify any infrastructure requirements for Horsted Keynes. It can therefore be concluded that there are no infrastructure requirements in Horsted Keynes.
- 6.23 In summary, the Application Site has only been used as a religious institution and is unsuitable for other community uses due to the current state and constraints of the building and the availability of more suitable facilities in the Horsted Keynes. The decision was made to permanently close the church in 2020 due to the significant cost of repairs needed to the building, low congregation numbers, wider issues around the

⁵ https://www.catholicdashboard.com/diocese/arundel_and_brighton

⁶ <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/everychurchcounts>

shortage of priests to service mass across the parish and as there were other nearby and accessible catholic churches in the local area which had capacity to accommodate its small congregation. As its current use was unviable, and as it was evidently not suitable for other community uses, it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer viable and that there are duplicate facilities in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility. The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with the NPPF, as well as District Plan Policy DP25: Community Facilities and Local Services.

Design

Policy framework

- 6.24 District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design requires new development to be “well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages” and to “not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings”.
- 6.25 District Plan Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty permits development that “conserves or enhances natural beauty” of the National Landscape.

Assessment

- 6.26 The Application Site comprises previously developed land within the Built Up Area of Horsted Keynes. As explained above, the site is in a very poor state and is an eye sore in the local area. The Design and Access Statement explains how the comments through the pre-app have been addressed, including how the layout of the site has been adjusted to follow the predominant pattern along Hamsland, the design and materials and how the flank wall to Unit 1 has been articulated. It also explains how the Application Proposal will enhance the existing site and has been sensitively designed to respect the character of the village and the High Weald National Landscape. It also explains how careful consideration has been given to ensuring that the development respects surrounding neighbours.

- 6.27 The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with the NPPF, as well as District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design and District Plan Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It also fulfils the “environmental objective” of sustainable development to protect and enhance our built environment.

Heritage assets

Policy Framework

- 6.28 District Plan Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets and DP35: Conservation Areas seek to ensure new development conserves the District’s historic environment.

Assessment

- 6.29 A Heritage Statement (HEA) (24 March 2026) has been produced which confirms that the Former St Stephens Church does not qualify for designation as a non-designated heritage asset and that the Application Proposal will not result in harm to the nearby designated heritage assets, notably Horsted Keynes Conservation Area and Wyatts (Grade II listed building).
- 6.30 It will therefore not cause harm to any heritage assets and is in accordance with District Plan Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets and DP35: Conservation Areas.

Ecology

Policy framework

- 6.31 District Plan Policy DP38: Biodiversity is an important consideration.

Assessment

- 6.32 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), including a bat roost assessment, a Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey, a Reptile Survey and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment have been submitted as part of the planning application. The PEA did not

find any constraints to development. The Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey found that there are no bat roosts on the Application Site. The Reptile Survey found there to be a 'low' population of slow works on the Application Site which are to be safely translocated to suitable receptor site. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment shows that the Application Proposal results in a net biodiversity loss of 60.03%. Off-site credits will be required to achieve a BNG of 10%.

- 6.33 The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with District Plan Policy DP38: Biodiversity.

Trees

Policy Framework

- 6.34 District Plan DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows encourages the protection and enhancement of existing trees and vegetation.

Assessment

- 6.35 An Arboricultural Survey has been submitted. This demonstrates that there will be no impact on trees on or adjacent to the site, in accordance with District Plan DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows.

Ashdown Forest

Policy framework

- 6.36 The Application Site is within the 7km zone of influence of the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). District Plan Policy DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) requires residential development to contribute mitigation through the provision of "Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)" (criteria 1) and a financial contribution towards "Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy" (criteria 2).

Assessment

- 6.37 We understand that the Council currently has capacity at the Hill Place Farm SANG and that the tariff rate is £5,253 per unit. We also understand that the SAMM tariff is currently £1,170 per unit. We have submitted a Planning Obligations Instruction Form. We agree to securing these obligations through a legal agreement.

Highways

Policy Framework

- 6.38 District Plan DP21: Transport assesses the transport impact of developments.

Assessment

- 6.39 The Application Proposal provides adequate level of off-street parking, in accordance with West Sussex County Council parking standards. Safe access is achievable to Hamsland which is a quiet residential road.
- 6.40 The Application Proposal is in accordance District Plan DP21: Transport.

Sustainability Statement

Policy Framework

- 6.41 DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction is an important consideration.

Assessment

- 6.42 As explained in the Design and Access Statement, a range of sustainability measures have been incorporated into the Application Proposal which will also be required to adhere to Building Regulations Part L:
- The site layout building orientation optimised to maximise natural daylight and enable effective cross-ventilation, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and mechanical cooling;
 - High-performance building fabric (including enhanced insulation and airtightness) to minimise energy demand;

- Efficient, low-carbon solutions incorporated, including air source heat pumps, ensuring a significant proportion of energy is derived from renewable sources;
- Materials responsibly sourced, prioritising durability, low embodied carbon, and opportunities for reuse and recycling.
- Construction waste minimised through careful specification and site management, with recycling facilities integrated for future occupiers;
- Water efficiency measures will ensure consumption does not exceed 110 litres/person/day, including low-flow fixtures and fittings;
- The scheme has been designed with climate resilience in mind, including appropriate shading, ventilation, and material choices to mitigate overheating, alongside landscape measures to support biodiversity and environmental quality.

6.43 The Application Proposal is in accordance with DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by Shrimplin Planning & Development on behalf of RDP Construction in support of a full planning application for demolition of former St Stephens Church, replacement residential development, parking, landscaping and access at former St Stephens Church, Hamsland, Horsted Keynes. The Application Proposal will deliver 3 new three bedroom dwellings.
- 7.2 The Application Site is within Horsted Keynes. It comprises the Catholic former St Stephen's Church which has been vacant since 2020 and is now in a very poor state and is an eye sore in the locality.
- 7.3 Chapter 2 explained the Application Proposal and the information that will form the application submission. Chapter 3 described the Application Site and its wider context. Chapter 4 summarised the planning history of the site.
- 7.4 Chapter 5 explains that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. As a result, the District Plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date. This means that planning permission should be granted unless "the application of policies in [the NPPF] that protect areas or assets of particular importance [which is not relevant in this case] provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed" (NPPF, paragraph 11(d)(i)) or any harm would "significantly and demonstrably" outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF (paragraph 11(d)(ii)).
- 7.5 Chapter 6 assesses the Application Proposal on this basis. It will have the significant benefit of making an important contribution to meeting local housing needs, helping the Council to meet its housing land supply requirements, which have increased significantly under the new the Standard Method. This is in accordance with the NPPF objective to boost the supply of housing and supports the economic objective of sustainable development by delivering land for housing and to support rural communities.

- 7.6 The Application Site has the significant benefit of accommodating development within the Built Up Area of the District's most sustainable villages, within walking distance of a range of services and facilities. This will reduce the pressure on the Borough's greenfield land and more sensitive parts of the nationally important landscape (High Weald National Landscape) in providing for identified housing needs. This is in accordance with the District Plan and Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan. It also supports the economic objective of sustainable development by delivering land for housing in the right places and fulfils the environmental objective as it makes effective use of land and in safeguarding the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape.
- 7.7 The Application Site comprises previously developed land within the Built Up Area of Horsted Keynes. It is in a very poor state and is an eye sore in the local area. The Application Proposal has benefitted from detailed pre-app discussions with Mid Sussex District Council. The Design and Access Statement explains how the Application Proposal will enhance the existing site and has been sensitively designed to respect the character of the village and the High Weald National Landscape. It also demonstrates how consideration has been given to ensuring that the development respects surrounding neighbours. It is in accordance with the NPPF as well as District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design and District Plan Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It also fulfils the environmental objective of sustainable development as it will provide a high quality design that "conserves and enhances" the High Weald National Landscape. The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with the District Plan and NPPF.
- 7.8 The Former St Stephens Church does not qualify for designation as a non-designated heritage asset and that the Application Proposal will not result in harm to the nearby designated heritage assets. It is therefore in accordance with District Plan Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets and DP35: Conservation Areas.
- 7.9 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), including a bat roost assessment, a Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey, a Reptile Survey and a Biodiversity Net Gain

Assessment have been submitted as part of the planning application. The PEA did not find any constraints to development. The Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey found that there are no bat roosts on the Application Site. The Reptile Survey found there to be a 'low' population of slow works on the Application Site which are to be safely translocated to suitable receptor site. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment shows that the Application Proposal results in a net biodiversity loss of 60.03%. Off-site credits will be required to achieve a BNG of 10%. The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with District Plan Policy DP38: Biodiversity.

- 7.10 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan has been submitted. This demonstrates that there will be no impact on trees on or adjacent to the site, in accordance with District Plan DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows.
- 7.11 The Application Proposal provides adequate level of off-street parking, in accordance with West Sussex County Council parking standards. Safe access is achievable to Hamsland which is a quiet residential road. The Application Proposal is in accordance District Plan DP21: Transport.
- 7.12 As explained above, St Stephens Church has been vacant since 2020. The building had come to the end of its lifespan and needed significant investment. The decision was made to close the church in 2020 due to the cost of repairs to the building, low congregation numbers and wider issues around the shortage of priests to service mass across the parish. There are other Catholic churches in the surrounding area, with St Paul's Catholic Church a short drive away at Haywards Heath serving the wider parish. It is therefore not a viable community facility. The Application Site has not been used for other community uses and it is not suitable for other uses due the constraints of the building. Horsted Heath has a wide range of community facilities. These meet the needs of the local community, as evidenced through the Mid Sussex Infrastructure Delivery Plan (September 2024) which does not identify any infrastructure requirements for Horsted Heath. The Application Proposal will breathe new life into the site, at the same time providing housing to meet local needs.

- 7.13 The Application Proposal incorporates a range of sustainability measures, including low carbon energy solutions, and represents a sustainable form of development, in accordance with DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction.
- 7.14 No harms arise from the Application Proposal.
- 7.15 Applying paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is clear that there are no adverse impacts that would outweigh the benefits of the Application Proposal when assessed against the NPPF taken as a whole. The Application Proposal should be granted on this basis.