

MME PLANNING SERVICES

Erection of 1no detached self-build rural workers dwelling, creation of new vehicular access and closing up of existing access.

at

New Barn Nursery, Broadford Bridge Road, West Chiltington, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2LF

Planning Statement

Ref: P-025

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Version 1

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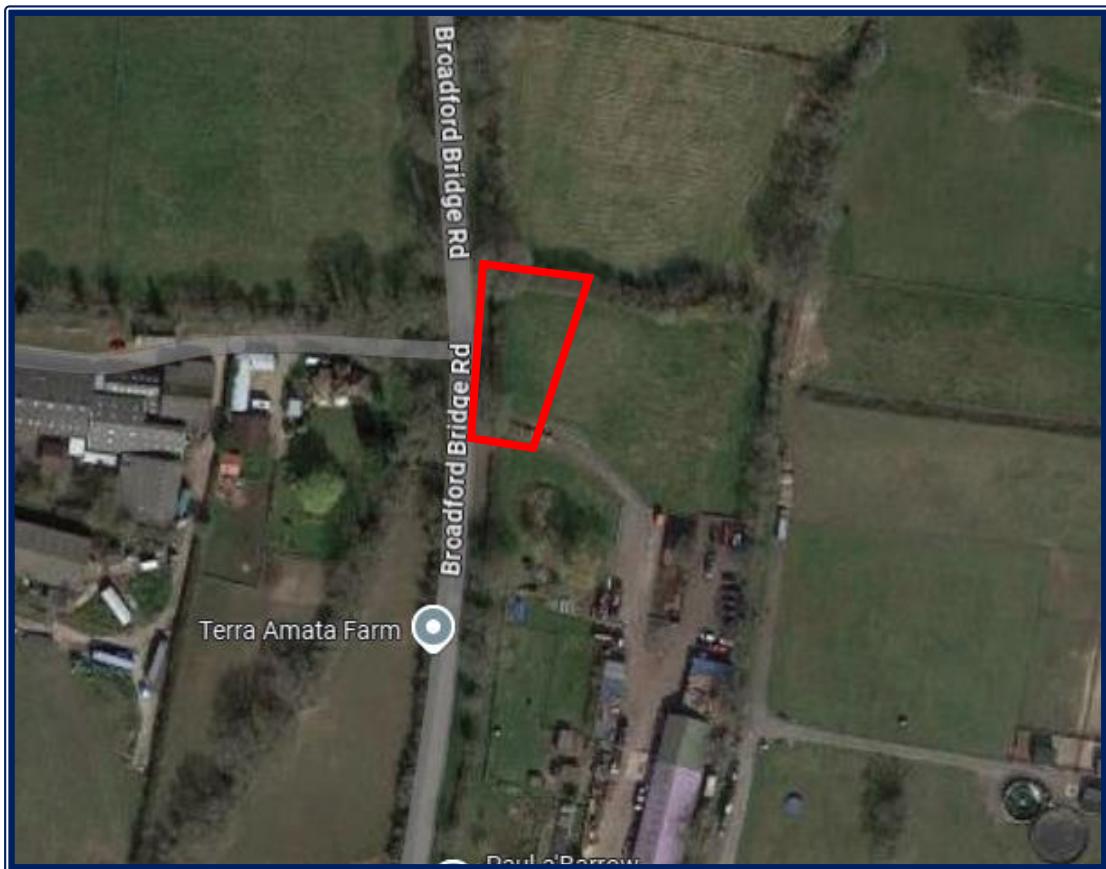


Figure 1: Site Location

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are instructed by Mr Paul a'Barrow to prepare and submit this full planning application for the erection of a detached 3-bed rural workers dwelling at New Barn Nursery, Broadford Bridge Road, West Chiltington, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2LF.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard to the following aspects: the planning history of the site, the development proposals, the relevant planning policy, the planning merits of the scheme and how the proposals comply with the Council's policies.
- 1.3 Specifically, with the Council currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, recently approved applications and appeal decisions, this statement will outline why planning permission should be granted for the proposals.

2. Site, Surroundings and Background

- 2.1 The application site relates to an area of grassland within the northern section of New Barn Nursery, on the eastern side of Broadford Bridge Road. The site is located outside of any defined built-up area boundary. The site is therefore located within a countryside setting in policy terms.
- 2.2 The site is located in a countryside setting and is currently used commercially as a saw mill, wood yard, agricultural and agricultural machinery storage, nursery, landscaping and material storage. Planning permission has been granted in recent years for the installation of 2x biomass boilers and 2x drying kiln containers on land to the south of the building. Planning permission, DC/19/2273 was granted in February 2020 for a further biomass boiler and drying container on the site.
- 2.3 The wider consists of a number of buildings and structures used in relation to the existing uses of the site. The wider site currently has 2no vehicle accesses, one of which is not currently used. It is noted that a borehole has recently been installed on site, as indicated on the submitted plans

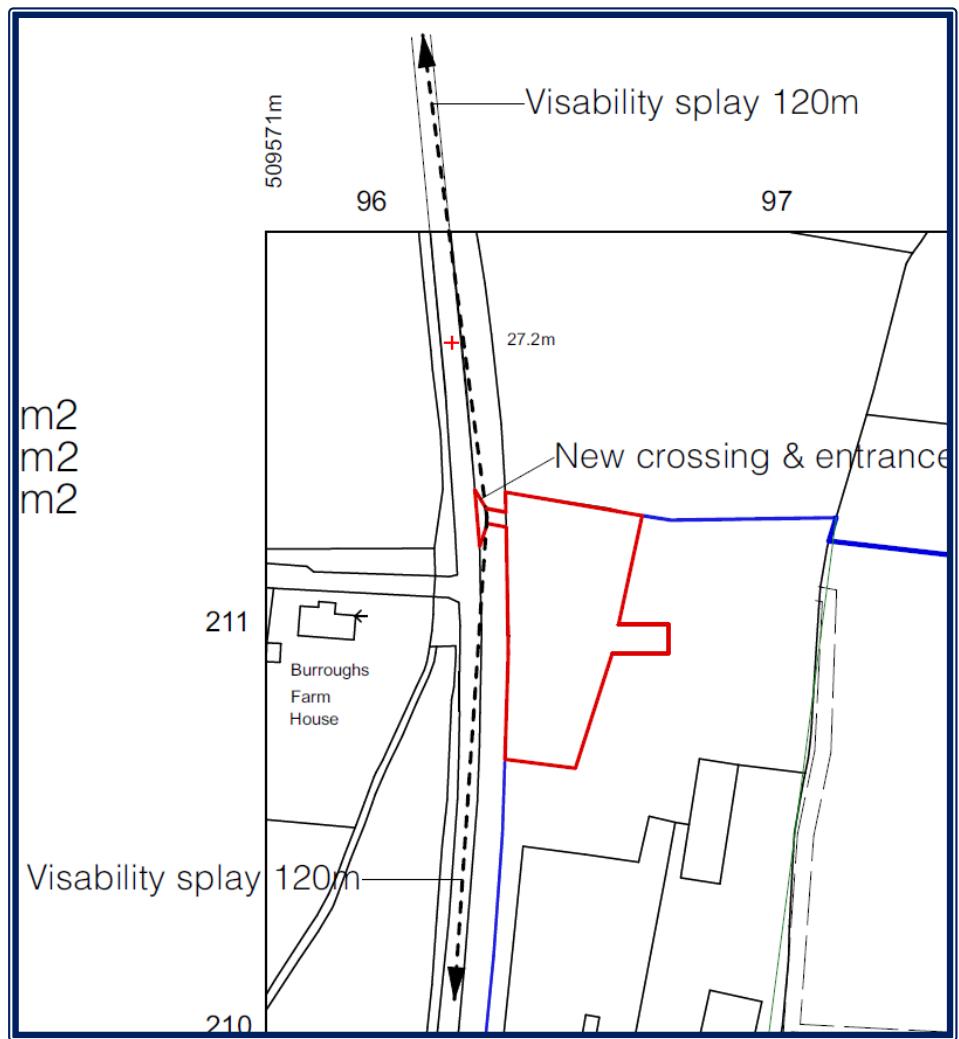


Figure 2: Site Location Plan

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Planning Application – Ref: DC/18/0851 – Retrospective application for the installation of 2x biomass boilers and 2x drying kiln containers – Decision: Approval, 16/10/2018.
- 3.2 Planning Application – Ref: DC/19/2273 – Description: Installation of 1x biomass boiler and drying container – Decision: Approval, 05/02/2020.
- 3.3 Planning Application – Ref: DC/20/2129 – Description: Prior notification for the change of use from an agricultural building to 5No. dwellings (Class C3) – Decision: Prior Approval Refused, 22/12/2020.
- 3.4 Planning Application – Ref: DC/21/0251 – Description: Prior notification for the change of use from an agricultural building to five dwellinghouses – Decision: Prior Approval Refused, 26/03/2021.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 As detailed above, planning permission is sought for the erection of a 3-bed chalet bungalow style detached rural workers dwelling to be positioned on an area of grass at the northern end New Barn Nursery.
- 4.2 The proposed dwelling would have an overall width of approximately 11.6m, a depth of approximately 7.6m and an overall height to the ridge measuring approximately 7.1m. The proposed dwelling would have a gabled roof design with a number of dormers to the front and rear and a rear gabled feature. The proposed dwelling is designed to reflect that of a traditional and modest countryside dwelling which would be commensurate with the rural setting.
- 4.3 As per the proposed description for the application, the proposal would provide a dwelling for a rural worker, where the applicant currently operates a rural business from the wider site. The applicant would be happy for an occupancy condition to be attached to this application / permission should the Council deem the proposals to be acceptable.

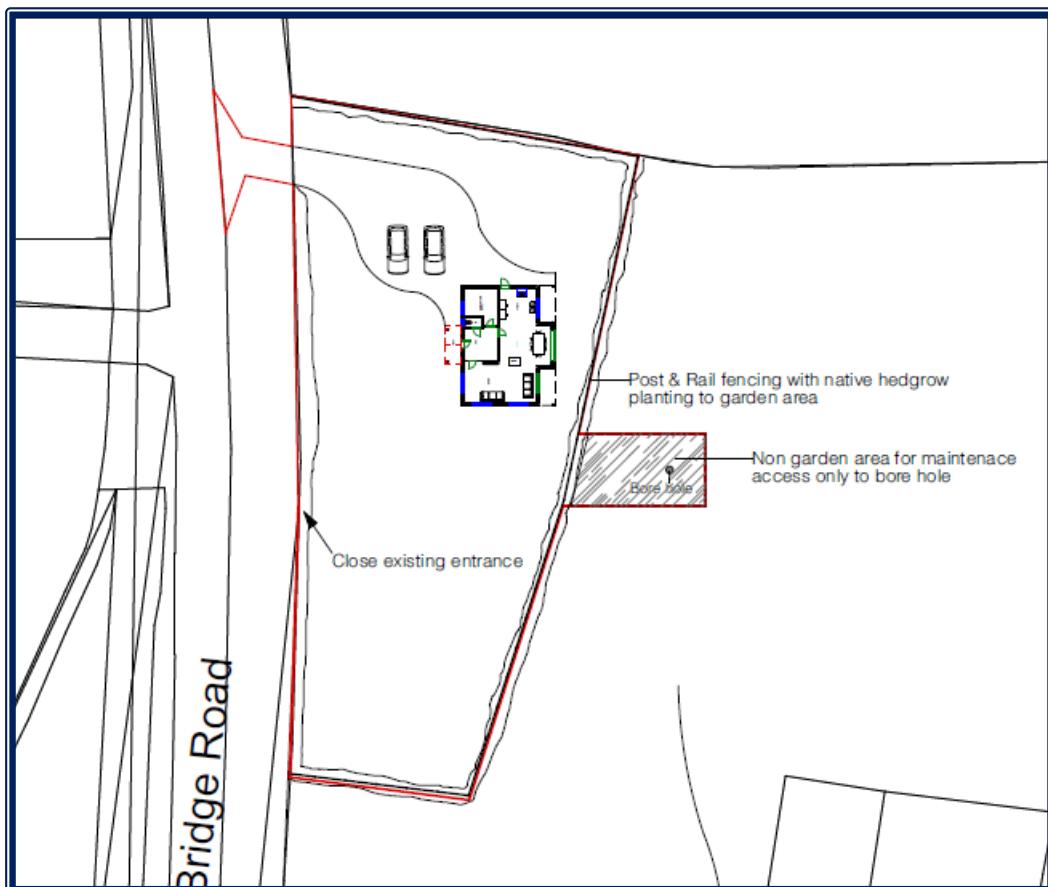


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan

4.4 The proposals also include the creation of a new vehicular access on to Broadford Bridge Road. It is noted that there is an existing vehicular access on to Broadford Bridge Road, however this is currently not in use, and there is a tree next to the entrance which restricts visibility. This access would be permanently blocked up, and as detailed on the submitted plans, appropriate visibility splays would be available to ensure that a safe access is created by the new access.

4.5 The proposals would consist of a brick and oak cladding to the external walls and a clay tiled roof. The proposed dwelling would have a GIA of approximately 156sqm.

4.6 The proposed design is considered to be in keeping with the setting and the overall scale would be comparable to existing development within the immediate vicinity, and appropriate in terms of the size of the plot. It is also viewed that given the overall design, size of the plot and existing extensive soft landscaping to the site boundaries, the proposed development would appear prominently within this setting.

4.7 The proposed development is considered to be appropriately separated from neighbouring properties to avoid any impact on amenity and would provide a good level of accommodation for future occupiers. Sufficient parking would also be provided to serve the proposed development with the site served by the proposed access as detailed above.

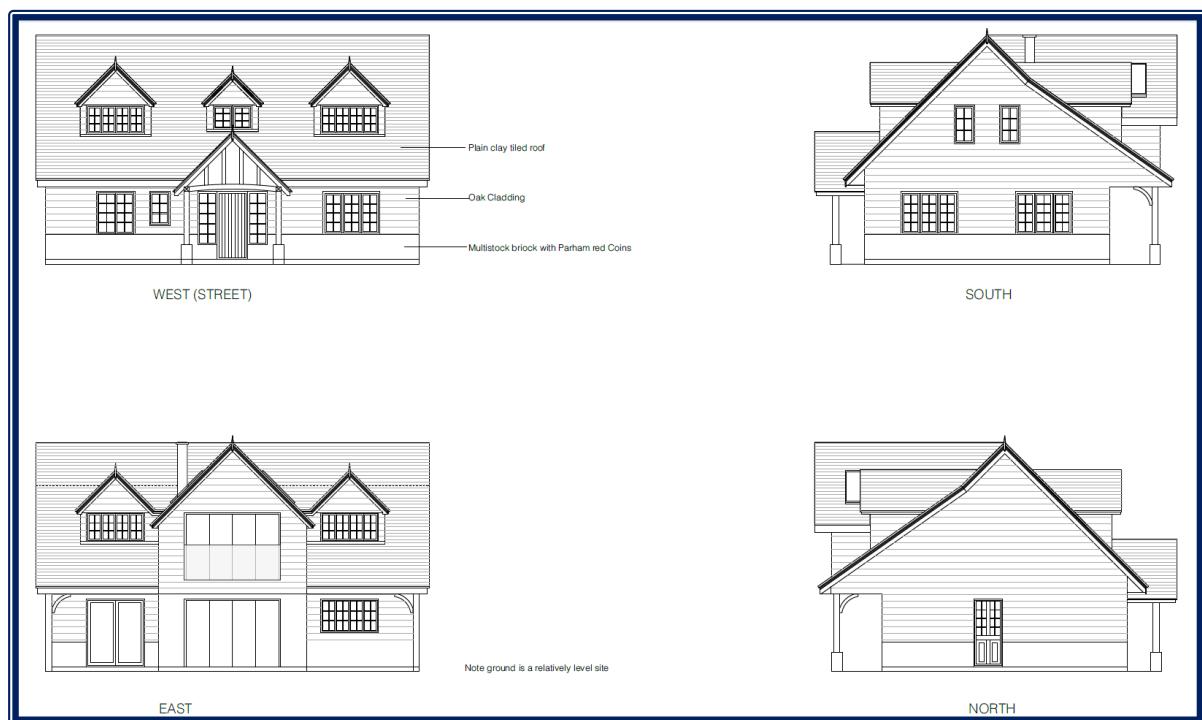


Figure 4: Proposed Elevations

4.8 The proposed development would be partly screened from views along Broadford Bridge Road due to extensive existing soft landscaping along the boundary of the site. While some of this would be removed to facilitate the proposed new access, the retained hedging and trees would still serve to provide appropriate screening, with the roof area of the proposed dwelling partly visible. Notwithstanding this, the small scale and appropriate design of the proposed dwelling would ensure that it does not appear as a prominent addition in this location.

5. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and National Guidance

5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and Wales and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.

5.2 Running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is achieved through three main objectives which are – economic, social and environmental.

5.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that for decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or, any adverse impact of doing so would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits' when assessed against the policies of the NPPF when taken as a whole (NPPF paragraph 11(d)).

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

5.4 Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than five years from their adoption. Horsham District Council (HDC) has submitted its new local plan for examination, however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight.

5.5 This position is further highlighted given that the Horsham District Local Plan examination hearing dates in January 2025 were cancelled by the appointed Inspector, as confirmed in their letter dated 16 December 2024, which is available on the Council's website.

5.5 Taking the above into account and as the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015) is now over five years old, the key policies for determining this application are now considered to be 'out of date'.

5.6 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District, with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying limited weight in decision making.

5.7 While considered to be out of date, the main HDPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
- Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 20 - Rural Workers Accommodation
- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles
- Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
- Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
- Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 - Parking

Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

5.8 Relevant PAN's to this application are as follows:

- Facilitating Appropriate Development
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

6. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 The spatial development strategy of the HDPF, as outlined in policies 2, 3, and 4, directs development to sites within built-up area boundaries, encourage the effective use of brownfield land, and aim to manage development around the edges of existing settlements in order to protect the rural character and landscape.

6.2 The site is located outside of the built-up area and is not allocated within Horsham's adopted development plan (comprising in this case the HDPF), while it should be noted again that the HDPF is now out of date. As a result, residential development in this location would conflict with the requirements of Policies 2 and 4 (Settlement Expansion) of the HDPF. In addition, the development would conflict with Policy 26 owing to its siting outside the built-up area where the proposed development is not considered to be essential to this countryside location. Further, the site, given that the context and existing dwellings and buildings within the immediate vicinity, is not in an isolated location, and therefore, Paragraph 84 of the NPPF does not apply in this instance.

6.3 Notwithstanding the above, the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with the latest Authority Monitoring Report (January 2024) detailing a supply of only 2.9 years. Therefore, the tilted balance contained in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged. While the Council has submitted the New Horsham District Local Plan for examination, as detailed above, the examination hearing dates in January 2025 were cancelled by the appointed Inspector due to significant concerns with the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan. As such, the weight given to the above policies and the New Local Plan is therefore limited at this stage.

6.4 Limited weight is attached to the conflict with Policy 26 in respect of development outside of built-up area boundaries given that the deficient housing supply position dictates that these boundaries are out of date. As such, the fact that the site may lie outside of the built-up area boundary does not, in and of itself, constitute a reason to refuse planning permission.

6.5 Furthermore, it is noted that there are a number of recent decisions which have granted residential developments outside of the defined built-up areas in other parts of the District. Examples include reference numbers DC/22/0495, DC/22/2250 and DC/23/0627 which each sought permission for 1no dwelling and were granted at appeal in August 2023, March 2024 and December 2024 respectively; DC/23/2278 which sought permission for 8no dwellings and was granted by the Council's planning committee North in April 2024; and DC/24/1710 which sought permission for 1no dwelling and was granted under delegated powers by the Council in January 2025. It is highlighted that these permitted dwellings were located a significant distance away from any defined built-up areas. The above examples clearly show, that notwithstanding the distances to the respective settlement boundaries, given the lack of 5-year housing supply, the tilted balance is engaged and the principle of residential development in this location is acceptable.

6.6 While it is acknowledged that every application and site context should be considered on its own merits, taking into account the current situation of the Council in terms of its 5-year housing supply and the above examples, there is an expectation that a consistent approach is applied to decision making.

6.7 The dwelling contributes towards the much-needed supply of houses. There are economic benefits arising from the development in the local ecology, with the applicant providing a valuable service in the community. Although these benefits are tempered by the small contribution that 1no dwelling makes in the context of the current circumstances, the additional dwelling is valuable.

6.8 In addition to the above, justification and further information is provided in relation to the need for the applicant to live on site given the nature of the business and specific needs. The wider site is in an agricultural / forestry use. The applicant has operated his businesses from the wider site for a significant number of years. The applicant produces logs as part of a forestry business and is also a tree surgeon, providing a 24-7 call out service. The applicant also produces hay with approximately 20,000 bales produced per year.

6.9 As detailed above, there have been recent permissions granted by the Council on for 3no biomass boilers and drying containers for the production of appropriate logs which are sold for heating and energy purposes. The boilers are generally working 24 hours a day to support production and are refuelled throughout the day, including at around 10pm every night. The facilities on site require constant attention and the applicant is constantly travelling to and from the site to ensure the equipment is operational and working properly. The proposed dwelling is therefore considered to be essential in this location to support the needs of the business.

6.10 The applicant's businesses are viable and profitable and account details and projections for the previous three years and next three years are provided in support of this application. In addition, information relating to comparable companies offering the same services is also provided, highlighting the limited provision of such services within the surrounding area (20 miles of the application site).

6.11 Furthermore, the need for a dwelling on the site is justified on security grounds given the value of machinery and tools that the applicant has on site and uses as part of the businesses. This application is supported by a comprehensive list of the applicant's machinery and their value. There have been a number of burglary attempts on the site over the last few years and this is a general trend across the District and Sussex as a whole. Living on site would help to ensure that the machinery used is more secure, aiding this established rural enterprise.

6.12 As per the application description, the applicant is happy for a condition to be imposed by the Council restricting to the use of the proposal as a rural workers dwelling. The primary need for the dwelling is to secure and support the needs of the business and as such, there are no reservations in this regard.

6.13 Further to this, while it is again highlighted that the needs of the business dictate that the applicant needs to live on site, research has been carried out with regards to available 3-bed dwellings for sale within the surrounding areas. As is evident from the attached information, the cheapest property is priced at £585,000. In addition, this property is located over 3km away from the application site. Given the pricing which is considered to be beyond the budget of the applicant and the distance away from the business, there are no properties available within the surrounding area which are affordable and close enough to ensure that the needs of the business are not compromised.

6.14 In summary, given the lack of a 5-year housing supply; relevant recent examples of housing developments permitted outside of settlement boundaries within the District; the clear need for the applicant to now live on site given the nature and needs of the businesses and equipment in use and the lack of affordable properties within the surrounding area close enough to the site, the principle of residential development in this instance is therefore acceptable.

Design, Appearance and Character

6.15 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including the landform, development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats. Development will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation. In addition, development will be supported where it maintains and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network.

6.16 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built-surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.

6.17 As detailed within the submitted plans, the current proposal has been considered and developed with regard the overall context of the site and immediate surrounding character. The provision of 1no dwelling would be in keeping and would be commensurate with the prevailing character of dwellings and would be appropriately sited and scaled when viewed against the overall site area, and proposed curtilage.

6.18 The proposed design and use of natural materials are highly appropriate in this context and given the rural setting. Given the modest design and overall height, the proposed dwelling would not appear prominently in this location or out of keeping.

6.19 Given the size of the proposed dwelling and the plot, which are reflective of neighbouring properties, the proposal is therefore considered to sit comfortably within the site and the proposal would not result in a cramped form of development or an overdevelopment of the site.

- 6.20 The proposals also include the creation of a new vehicular access to serve the site from Broadford Bridge Road. The proposed access would be of a modest width with a small section of boundary foliage to be removed. As detailed above, an existing access already serving the site would be closed up. The proposed access would be similar to that of the access to be removed and would therefore not appear out of keeping in this context
- 6.21 Overall, the proposals would represent appropriate development within this setting and would be in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Water Neutrality

- 6.22 The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.
- 6.23 Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.
- 6.24 The application is supported by a detailed Water Neutrality Statement which sets out through the provision of a borehole on site which has been appropriately tested and verified, that the proposed development would be water neutral. Full details are set out within the Water Neutrality Statement and supporting information and are not repeated in this statement to avoid duplication of the information.
- 6.25 As such, the grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with Policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 180 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Neighbouring Amenity

6.26 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

6.27 The proposed dwelling would be located approximately 60m away from the closest residential property, located to west on the opposite side of Broadford Bridge Road. Given the design of the proposed dwelling and the distance maintained, no concerns would be raised by way of harmful overlooking, overbearing impact or loss of light or outlook to neighbouring residential properties.

6.28 The internal floor area and proposed garden area associated with the proposed dwelling would also be of an appropriate size. In addition, it is contended that there would be no significant issues in terms of harmful noise or disturbance generated as a result of the proposed development.

6.29 Overall, the proposed development would not result in demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity and would therefore be in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF.

Parking and Highways

6.30 Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework relates to transport and parking, and states that more transport choice including community transport where appropriate will be encouraged, as well as a reduction in private car use and greater accessibility to more sustainable modes of transport. The district has a good rail network so the increased use of stations will be encouraged through better pedestrian and cycle links. Adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

6.31 As detailed within the submitted plans, the proposed dwelling would be served by a new vehicular access from Broadford Bridge Road. The plans indicate sufficient visibility splays would be provided, and as detailed above. There do not appear to be any reported or apparent issues or accidents in relation to the existing accesses serving the site and as such, it is considered that the proposals would not result in any highway safety concerns.

6.32 The provision of 1no additional dwelling in this location would not result in a marked increase in trips to and from the site which would be detrimental to the function of the highway network. In addition, a sufficient number of parking spaces would be provided on site for a dwelling of this size. Overall, the proposals would be acceptable in this regard.

Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations / Enhancements

6.33 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that –

“Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks”.

6.34 The application is supported by a detailed Ecological Impact Assessment. The Ecological Impact Assessment sets out that no habitats or species would be impacted upon as a result of the proposals with precautionary and mitigation measures and recommendations made to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact, as well as enhancements and measures for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on site.

6.35 It is noted that the Ecological Impact Assessment was a carried out some time ago, however this is supplemented by an Ecological Technical Note produced in February 2025. The technical note confirms that that the findings and recommendations of the Ecological Impact Assessment carried out are still valid and applicable.

6.37 As such, the submitted details provided clearly indicate that there would be no detrimental impact on habitats or protected species, in accordance with Policy 31 of the HDPF.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, given the position of the Council with regards to its 5-year housing supply, recent decisions relating to residential development outside of built-up areas, and a lack of affordable dwellings for sale in close proximity to the site the proposal represents an appropriate form of development in this location. The proposals for 1no dwelling would be commensurate with the prevailing character of the vicinity and would be comfortably contained within the site / plot. The proposals would also be acceptable when considered against all other materials matters, as detailed within this statement.
- 7.2 There are no adverse impacts of granting permission which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of an additional dwelling when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and Paragraph 11(d) indicates that permission should be granted.
- 7.3 As such, while now considered to be out of date, the proposals would be in accordance with Policies 4, 25, 26, 31, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to grant permission accordingly.