

**ECE Planning**

**Planning Statement**

(Including Sustainability and Water Neutrality)

**Church Farm, Upper Beeding**

**December 2025**



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Project Name: Church Farm, Upper Beeding

Location Land at Church Farm Walk, Upper Beeding,  
West Sussex

Client: Fairfax Acquisitions Limited

File Reference: P2310

Issue	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
Rev A	12.11.2025	S Lower	S Sykes	Initial Draft
Rev B	16.12.2025	S Lower	S Sykes	Final Issue

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. This Planning Statement has been produced by **ECE Planning** on behalf of the applicant, **Fairfax Acquisitions Limited** in support of a Full Planning Application for the development of the Land at Church Farm Walk, Upper Beeding, West Sussex ('the Site') to provide residential development. The description of the development for the proposal reads:

*Erection of 4 No. detached dwellings with associated amenity space, car parking spaces, detached carports, access road and other associated infrastructure.*

1.2. This application follows application reference DC/22/0618 which was withdrawn in July 2022 for a variety of matters. All matters have been addressed in full and a robust and supported application has been presented at this stage.

1.3. This Statement sets out the relevant background for the determination of the planning application, including a description of the site and its surroundings, the planning history, the relevant planning policy, details of the proposed development and an assessment of relevant planning conditions.

1.4. The proposals have also been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance, and local planning policy.

1.5. This application for Full Planning Permission is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

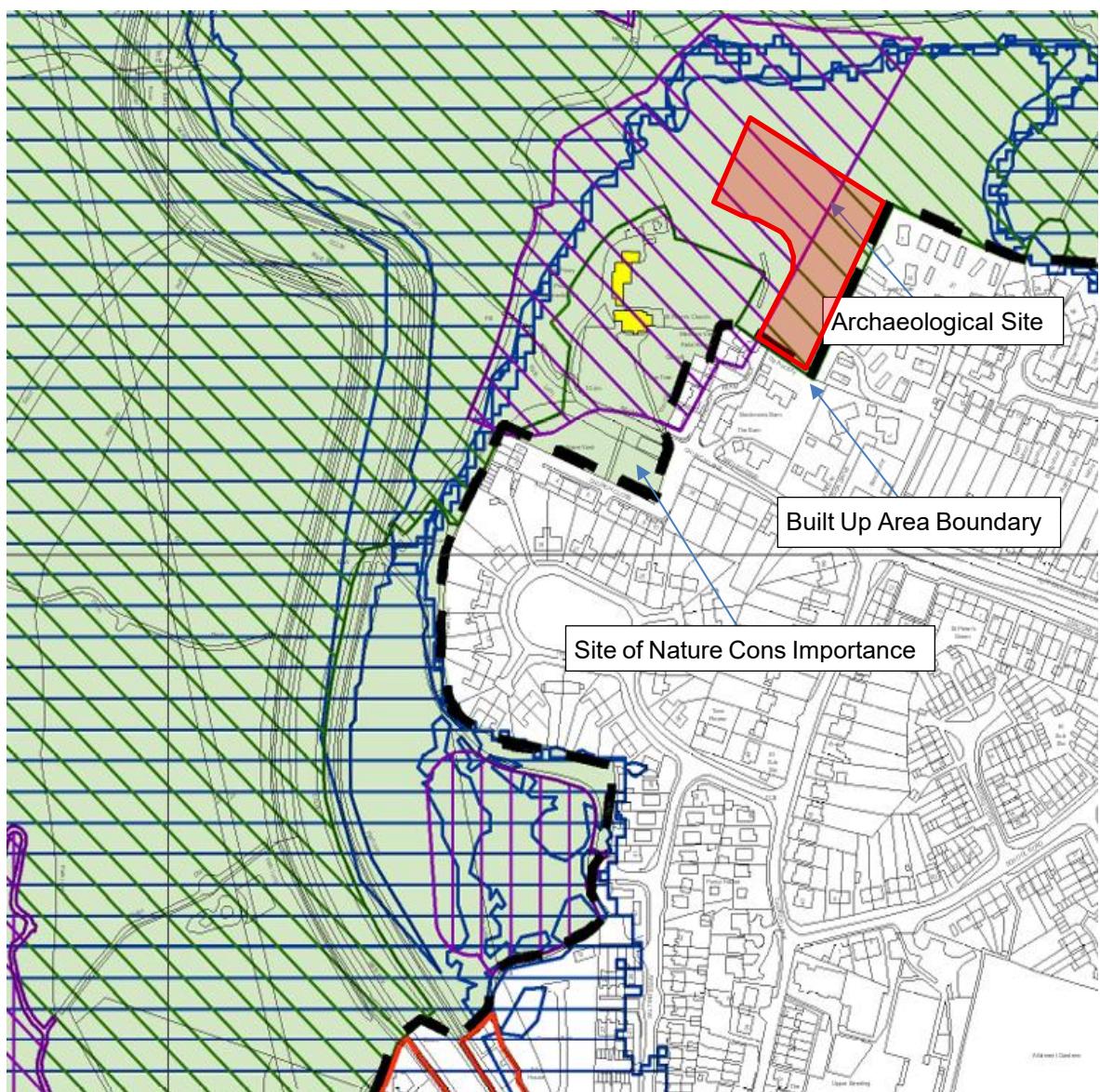
- **Application Forms, Notices and CIL Forms**
- **Planning Statement**
- **Architectural Drawings comprising Location Plan, Block Plan and Proposed Elevations and Floor Plans**
- **Design and Access Statement**
- **Landscaping Proposal and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**
- **Transport Statement**
- **Ecological Impact Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Assessment Letter and Biodiversity Net Gain Metric**
- **Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement**
- **Land Quality Desk Study**
- **Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy**
- **Archaeological Desk Based Assessment**
- **Heritage Impact Statement**

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## 2. The Site

2.1. The site is located on the north-western fringe of Upper Beeding, within the jurisdiction of Horsham District Council in West Sussex. Positioned directly beside the established built-up area boundary, it represents a logical and clearly defined infill plot between existing properties and the adjoining open countryside. Covering roughly 0.485 hectares, the land consists of unmanaged pasture.

2.2. Access to the site is proposed via Church Farm Walk, which links to Church Lane. This route currently serves a range of residential properties, including two barn conversions and a mix of modern detached dwellings. The wider area is predominantly residential in character, displaying a varied architectural vernacular. Properties range from historic dwellings and barn conversions to 20th-century bungalows and more contemporary housing.



**Figure 1- Steyning, Bramber & Upper Beeding (Inset Map 17)**

2.3. The site lies within the boundary of the River Adur Water Meadows and Wyckham Wood Local Wildlife Site; an area identified for its ecological interest. This designation indicates that parts of the surrounding landscape have recognised environmental value.

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2.4. The western part of the site lies within an area designated for archaeological interest, indicating the potential presence of heritage features within this part of the landscape.

2.5. The site is bounded to the east by residential properties and the adjacent caravan park, to the west by the Grade II\* listed St Peter's Church and the Grade II listed Priory, and to the south by the Rectory. Open countryside lies to the north, offering a soft edge to the settlement. While the site is not itself designated for its landscape quality, it lies in proximity to the South Downs National Park, which begins to the south of the village.



Figure 2- Historic Maps for Planning

2.6. The site's southern and western boundaries are defined by mature vegetation, including a dense line of trees and underplanting that provides effective visual screening from the adjacent listed buildings. This natural buffer plays an important role in maintaining the setting of these heritage assets and has been acknowledged within the local Neighbourhood Plan. In contrast, the eastern boundary with the caravan site is more open, with limited hedging present.

2.7. The site is set within an area that benefits from a strong network of public footpaths. These routes run around and beyond the site, providing direct pedestrian links to nearby residential areas, open fields, and the surrounding countryside. This network offers convenient and accessible walking connections in all directions. Refer to Figure 4 below.

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2.8. Along these footpaths, a wide range of glimpsed views towards the site can be experienced. The degree of visibility changes noticeably along the routes, influenced by variations in ground level, hedgerows, woodland edges, and openings in the landscape. As a result, certain stretches offer clearer sightlines, while others provide only partial or momentary views of the site.



**Figure 3- Public Right of Way Map**

2.9. The site is well placed in terms of local amenities. Upper Beeding supports a good range of facilities including a primary school, convenience shops, cafes, public houses, and community buildings. All are accessible within a 10-minute walk, and the village benefits from established public transport connections to larger settlements such as Shoreham-by-Sea, approximately 4 miles to the south

2.10. The land gently slopes northwards. It is located outside the designated flood zones linked to the nearby River Adur to the west. As illustrated in Figure 4, the proposed development lies within Flood Zone 1, while areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 surround the wider locality; however, the red line boundary itself remains entirely outside these zones. There is also no surface water present on the site.

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**Figure 4- Flood Maps for Planning**

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## 3. Planning History

### 3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. A review of the Horsham District Council online register reveals the following relevant planning history pertaining to the site and immediate area.

### 3.2. The Sites Planning History

3.3. **Reference DC/22/0618.** Erection of 4 No. detached dwellings with associated amenity space, car parking spaces, detached carports, access road and other associated infrastructure. Land at 519396 111237 Church Farm Walk Upper Beeding West Sussex. Withdrawn 7 July 2022.



**Figure 5- Site Layout (2112/PL.04, C)**

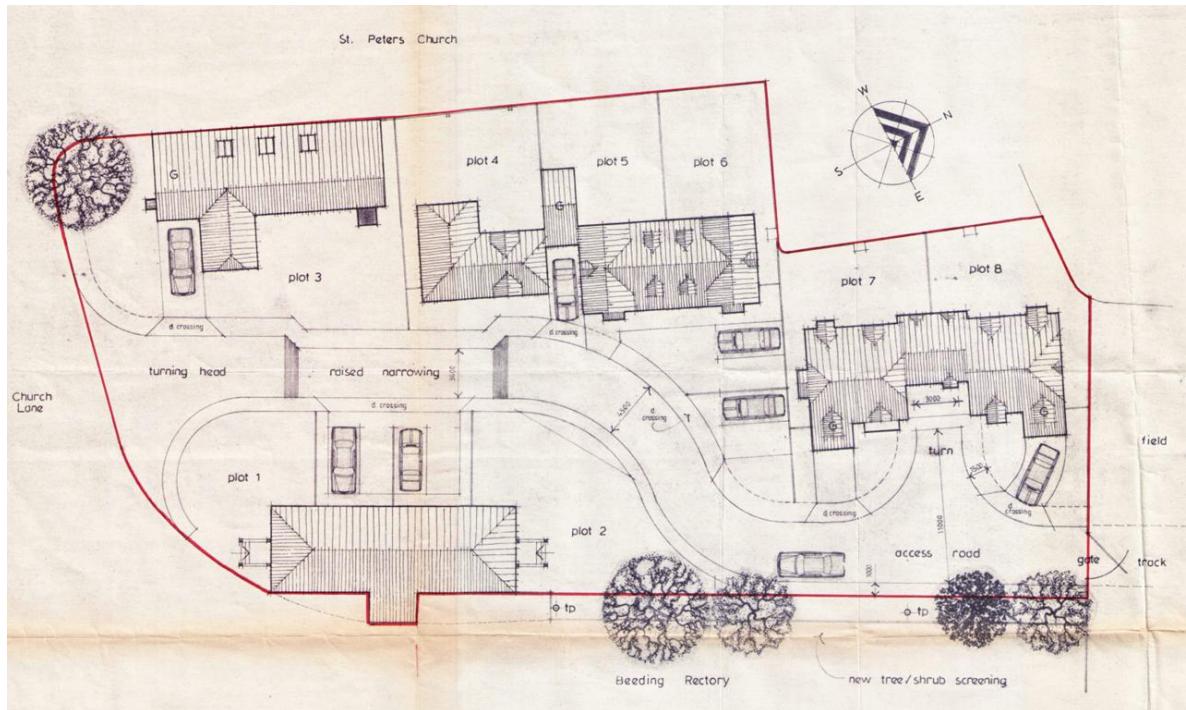
3.4. **Reference DC/19/0494.** Installation of anti-climb prevention measures on a mains gas pipe (Certificate of Lawful Development - Proposed). Land at Church Lane Church Farm Walk Upper Beeding West Sussex. Approved 25 April 2019.

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## 3.5. Surrounding Area

3.6. The properties along Church Farm Walk were granted planning permission between 1994 and 1195 for the following development.

3.7. **Reference UB/18/94.** Conv. of barns to two 2-bed. houses, one 3-bed. bungalow & erection of five 2-bed. houses with garaging, parking spaces & altns. to accesses Site: 75 Church Lane Upper Beeding at 75 Church Lane, Upper Beeding, West Sussex. Approved 21 September 1994.



3.8. **Reference UB/30/95.** Conversion of barn to dwelling and erection of 5 houses (plots 3-8) Site: 75 Church Lane Upper Beeding at The Old Granary, Church Farm Walk, Upper Beeding, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3HD. Approved 5 December 1995.

3.9. There is no other relevant planning history for this site

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## 4. The Proposal

4.1. This full planning application seeks permission for the erection of four detached open-market homes. Each dwelling provides four bedrooms and benefits from two dedicated parking spaces, including a two-bay car port. Please refer to Figure 6.



**Figure 6- The Site Plan**

4.2. The four houses are arranged around a central access road, creating a cohesive and sympathetic extension to the existing settlement pattern. The dwellings are comfortably positioned within their respective plots, with generous private gardens, particularly along the northern and western boundaries, reinforcing the site's edge-of-village character. Their orientation ensures an attractive frontage to the extended driveway and maintains appropriate separation from neighbouring development.

4.3. Access to the site will be taken via an upgraded extension of Church Farm Walk. A new turning head has been incorporated into the layout, enabling refuse vehicles, fire appliances and other service vehicles to manoeuvre safely and exit in forward gear. This represents a clear improvement on the current arrangement and ensures compliant and efficient servicing.

4.4. Given the quiet, low-speed nature of the new cul-de-sac, no additional footway infrastructure is required within the site. The development connects directly with the existing pedestrian network serving Church Farm Walk and its surrounding residential streets.

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- 4.5. In addition to the allocated parking for each dwelling, informal space for visitor parking is provided within the entrance area of the access road. This ensures that short-stay parking can be comfortably accommodated without impacting the amenity or accessibility of residents.
- 4.6. All dwellings benefit from private rear gardens and are supported by new landscaping throughout the site. Mature trees that contribute to the character of the area are retained wherever possible and enhanced with additional planting along the boundaries, particularly to the north and east where the site transitions to open countryside. The resulting low-density layout is appropriate for this rural edge location and helps maintain the softness of the village boundary.
- 4.7. A traditional palette of materials is proposed, including brick, clay tiles and complementary vernacular detailing, ensuring that the appearance of the homes relates well to the varied but generally traditional character of Upper Beeding. This approach helps anchor the development within its setting and supports a high-quality, context-responsive design.
- 4.8. Further architectural, landscape and technical details are provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

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## 5. Policy Overview

### 5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. At the heart of the planning framework are Statutory Development plans, which seek to guide the decision-making process. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires, that where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.1.2. In this case, the relevant Development Plan comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

5.1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and Supplementary Planning Guidance are material considerations, together with local guidance documents.

5.1.4. It should be noted that the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework is currently out of date by reason of it being over 5 years old. The Government require all Local Authorities to review the Local Plan every five years and therefore the Council are currently in the midst of preparing a new Local Plan for the District. Please refer to the below paragraph for further information.

### 5.2. Emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023 – 2040 (Regulation 19 Version)

5.2.1. The Regulation 19 Local Plan was published for a six-week period of representation from 19 January 2024 to 1 March 2024. The Regulation 19 Local Plan was then formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 26 July 2024 and the examination hearings commenced in December 2024.

5.2.2. At the time of writing this Statement, the Local Plan hearings have been cancelled by the Inspector due to 'significant concerns about the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan in respect of a number of areas'.

5.2.3. On 7 April 2025, a Letter was published by the Inspector which recommended to Horsham that the Local Plan should be withdrawn from examination, and a new Local Plan should be prepared.

5.2.4. We understand that Horsham are in the midst of responding to this Letter but as it currently stands, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is shortly to be withdrawn and is not considered to hold any weight in the determination of this application.

### 5.3. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.3.1. The NPPF was adopted in 2012 with many revised versions, the most recent of which being updated in February 2025. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The relevant sections of the NPPF in relation to this application are summarised below and explored in further detail later in this Statement.

- Chapter 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development)
- Chapter 5 (Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes)
- Chapter 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- Chapter 11 (Making Effective use of Land)

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- Chapter 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places)
- Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change)
- Chapter 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment)

## 5.4. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

5.4.1. The PPG was published by the Government in March 2014 and is updated regularly. The PPG supplement those overarching objectives of The Framework. The guidance provided by the PPG has been fully considered in the creation of this application and the proposals are seen to be fully compliant with it.

## 5.5. Strategic Planning Policy – Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

5.5.1. The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted in November 2015 and is the overarching planning document for Horsham District outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and replaces the Core Strategy and General Development Control Policies documents which were adopted in 2007.

5.5.2. Although the HDPF is out of date by reason of it being over 5 years old, the following policies are considered to be relevant to the application and have been given full consideration in the preparation of this application, as explored in further detail later in this Statement.

- 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 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
- 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

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- Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
- Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 - Parking

## 5.6. Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

5.6.1. The Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021. The following policies are of relevance:

- Policy 1: Spatial Plan for the Parish
- Policy 8: Design Standards for New Development

## 5.7. Shaping Development in Horsham District

5.7.1. The Council has produced the Shaping Development in Horsham District (SDPAN) document which is a material consideration in planning applications. The document sets out the Council's aspirations and the weight that can be given to current policy within the context of current legislation, national policy and guidance. The SDPAN document was endorsed at Cabinet on 17 September 2025 and has been reviewed in detail in the preparation of this application, as discussed in Section 6.

## 5.8. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

5.8.1. CIL was adopted by HDC in October 2017 and is a charge placed on new residential development and 'large format' retail development (A1 to A5).

5.8.2. The site falls within Zone 1 and therefore, in accordance with Horsham's CIL rate calculations table, new residential development is charged at £184.56 per sqm for 2025. This will be subject to change in accordance with the appropriate index figure which is amended in January every year.

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## 6. Planning Appraisal

### 6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. This section of the statement details how the proposed development complies with the policies set out within the Development Plan. The following matters are the principal considerations with regards to the proposal:

**Principle of Development**

**Design, Form and Appearance**

**Heritage**

**Residential Amenity**

**Landscape Character and Visual Impact**

**Trees**

**Ecology and BNG**

**Transport and Highways**

**Flooding and Drainage**

**Water Neutrality**

**Archaeology**

**Energy and Sustainability**

### 6.2. Principle of Development

6.2.1. The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of 4no. residential dwellings with associated amenity space, car parking spaces, detached carports.

6.2.2. Policy 3 of the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015) states that *"development will be permitted within towns and villages which have defined built-up areas. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain the characteristics and function of the settlement."*

6.2.3. The site is located outside of, but adjacent to the built-up area of Upper Beeding which is categorised as a "Small Town and larger Village" within Policy 3 of the Local Plan. The site is therefore located adjacent to a settlement which has a moderate level of services and facilities and community networks, together with some access to public transport.

6.2.4. By definition of Policy 3, Small Towns and Larger Villages are *"settlements with a good range of services and facilities, strong community networks and local employment provision, together with reasonable rail and/or bus services. The settlements act as hubs for smaller villages to meet their daily needs but also have some reliance on larger settlements or each other to meet some of their requirements."*

6.2.5. Policy 4 of the adopted Local Plan states that the growth of settlements across the District will continue to be supported in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs. Outside built-up area boundaries, the expansion of settlements will be supported where;

1. The site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge.

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2. The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type.
3. The development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs and/or employment needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services.
4. The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development, in order not to conflict with the development strategy; and
5. The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary, and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

6.2.6. The application site, as noted above, immediately adjoins but is outside of the built-up area boundary of Upper Beeding. It is not allocated in the HDPF or the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore does not comply with Policy 4. Neither does it accord with Policy 26 (Countryside Protection) of the HDPF in terms of housing considered appropriate in the countryside.

### Five-year housing land supply, FAD and the emerging local plan

6.2.7. The council is currently only able to demonstrate a 1-year supply of housing (as of May 2025). This is a significant shortfall in housing land supply which, when considered with the age of the adopted local plan, significantly reduces the weight which can be applied to Policies 4 and 26 of the HDPF. This position has been confirmed by planning inspectors at a number of appeals within Horsham District.

6.2.8. In addition, the Council has failed its most recent Housing Delivery Test. An updated Housing Delivery Test was published in December 2024 and demonstrates that HDC only delivered 62% of its housing target.

6.2.9. In such cases the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development as set out in Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged. It states that:

*'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 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.'*

6.2.10. Footnote 7 of the NPPF notes that the policies referred to in 11(d)(i) are those relating to: "habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194 of the NPPF) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

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6.2.11. The documents submitted in support of this application demonstrate that the Application Site is not located within any of the protected areas outlined in Footnote 7. Further, policies relating to matters such as heritage and flood risk do not indicate a reason for refusal.

6.2.12. Footnote 8 of Paragraph 11(d) notes that a development plan policy is considered out of date where:

*'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.'*

6.2.13. It is clear that the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and its failure to meet the housing delivery test trigger the presumption under Paragraph 11 and the application of the tilted balance. The proposed development of up to 4no. dwellings would make a significant and valuable contribution towards meeting the district's significant housing need and weighs heavily in favour of approving the application upon application of the tilted balance

6.2.14. The Council's Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) document is also a material consideration in the determination of this application.

6.2.15. The FAD recognises that the Council is likely to receive applications outside of defined BUAB and on unallocated sites given its poor housing land supply position. The FAD confirms that applications which meet all the following criteria will be positively considered where all of the following are met:

- *The site adjoins the existing settlement edge as defined by the BUAB.*
- *The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement the proposal relates to;*
- *The proposal demonstrates that it meets local housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services.*
- *The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development; and*
- *The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary, and the landscape character features are maintained and enhanced."*

6.2.16. The application site directly adjoins the BUAB of Upper Beeding and is well placed for access to village facilities, including local shops, community services, public transport connections and recreational spaces within walking distance. The location and scale of the proposed four dwellings are appropriate to the settlement's role as a Small Town/Larger Village within the HDPF, where a moderate level of growth is supported.

6.2.17. Future occupiers would be able to access local recreation opportunities, day-to-day services and employment provision within the village and the surrounding area.

6.2.18. The development would be contained by established defensible boundaries, with existing field edges and vegetation forming strong limits. Proposed landscape enhancements along all boundaries would strengthen the site's enclosure and ensure it sits comfortably within the wider landscape.

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6.2.19. The scheme would not, either individually or cumulatively, undermine the potential for coherent long-term development around Upper Beeding. Given the district's acute housing shortfall, the site represents an appropriate and sustainable opportunity to contribute to identified needs without conflicting with any wider strategic intentions.

6.2.20. The proposal therefore satisfies the relevant criteria for settlement expansion set out in the FAD.

## Housing Need and Neighbourhood Plan

6.2.21. Although the proposal would deliver only four dwellings, its contribution must be assessed in the context of the acute and persistent housing shortfall across Horsham District. The proposal is intentionally small-scale, low density and sensitively designed, resulting in limited and localised effects, while nonetheless making a meaningful contribution to meeting identified housing need.

6.2.22. The Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (UBNP) remains within its five-year period following adoption. However, its housing requirement is derived from an evidence base prepared in 2017, itself founded on the housing figures within the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). These figures significantly predate the introduction of the national Standard Method for assessing housing need and do not reflect more recent demographic pressures or worsening affordability trends. As such, the housing requirement underpinning the UBNP is no longer robust or up to date.

6.2.23. The Standard Method now identifies a substantially higher level of housing need for Horsham District as a whole, and by implication for Upper Beeding. This increase is reflected in the Council's inability to maintain a five-year housing land supply and its failure to meet the Housing Delivery Test. The emerging Horsham Local Plan is not currently on track to meet this updated requirement. In combination, these circumstances demonstrate that the scale of housing planned for in Upper Beeding through the neighbourhood plan does not align with current or emerging needs.

6.2.24. This position is directly supported by the recent appeal decision at Land East of Wandleys Lane, Fontwell (APP/C3810/W/24/3349836). In that case, the Inspector considered the application of paragraph 14 of the NPPF in circumstances where the neighbourhood plan was less than five years old but relied upon housing figures derived from outdated evidence. At paragraphs 65–71, the Inspector identified “uncertainty as to whether the indicative housing requirement... was properly formulated, underpinned by adequate evidence and informed by the methodology in the PPG”, concluding that the neighbourhood plan's housing requirement lacked robustness

6.2.25. Crucially, the Inspector went on to confirm that, in such circumstances, paragraph 14 should be applied only “as a precaution” and with reduced weight, notwithstanding the plan's age. This finding directly reflects the wording of paragraph 14 itself, which states that development conflicts are “likely to” significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits only where the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement. Where that requirement is founded on outdated or superseded evidence, this test cannot reasonably be satisfied.

6.2.26. The Inspector further acknowledged that conflict with a neighbourhood plan is ordinarily a matter of considerable importance, but made clear that this can be displaced where there has been a material change in district-wide housing needs or where the neighbourhood plan no longer reflects current circumstances. In the Wandleys Lane case, the appeal was allowed because of a significant and persistent housing land supply shortfall and substantial past under-delivery, which together outweighed neighbourhood plan conflict.

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- 6.2.27. The circumstances in Upper Beeding are directly comparable. The neighbourhood plan relies upon pre-2018 housing evidence, does not reflect the Standard Method requirement, and has not planned for the scale of housing now required. In these circumstances, paragraph 14 cannot be applied rigidly or as a decisive bar to development. Instead, its “likely to” test must be interpreted flexibly and proportionately, with reduced weight afforded to neighbourhood plan conflict where identified housing needs are not being met.
- 6.2.28. Given the schemes limited scale, restrained design and containment by defensible boundaries ensure that adverse impacts are modest and controllable. When balanced against the clear and pressing need for additional housing delivery in the district, including within sustainable settlement-edge locations such as Upper Beeding, the benefits of the proposal attract significant weight.
- 6.2.29. Accordingly, consistent with the approach taken by the Inspector in the Wandleys Lane appeal, paragraph 14 should not be relied upon to automatically preclude development in this instance. The proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable response to current housing pressures in circumstances where the neighbourhood plan has not identified sufficient or up-to-date housing allocations to meet objectively assessed need.
- 6.2.30. Further support for this approach is provided by the appeal decision at Land West of Bilsham Road, Yapton (APP/C3810/W/24/3343922). In that case, the Inspector acknowledged that the Yapton Neighbourhood Plan was less than five years old and that the proposal conflicted with it. However, notwithstanding this, the Inspector attributed substantial weight to the delivery of housing due to the Council’s inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and its failure against the Housing Delivery Test.
- 6.2.31. The Inspector accepted that increases in housing need arising from changes to the Standard Method were likely to further exacerbate supply issues and concluded that a rigid application of neighbourhood plan policies would unduly constrain housing delivery. Ultimately, permission was granted notwithstanding paragraph 14, as the benefits of housing delivery did not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the adverse impacts. This confirms that the presence of a recently made neighbourhood plan does not, of itself, justify decisive weight being given to paragraph 14 where housing needs have materially changed or are not being met.
- 6.2.32. Notwithstanding this, the draft Horsham Local Plan has revised housing targets, incorporating an increase in housing numbers under the new policy, alongside additional units expected from windfall sites. The proposed scheme will deliver four additional family homes, in line with this policy, outside the allocations specified in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

## Conclusion in Principle

- 6.2.33. In summary, the Council’s inability to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and its failure against the Housing Delivery Test significantly reduce the weight that can be afforded to restrictive policies within the adopted HDPP, including Policies 4 and 26. In these circumstances, and as confirmed by recent appeal decisions, the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged, subject to the satisfaction of any relevant technical matters.
- 6.2.34. The proposed development would deliver up to four new dwellings in a sustainable, settlement-edge location adjacent to Upper Beeding, a Small Town/Larger Village with an established range of services and facilities. The proposal is modest in scale, sensitively designed, well contained by defensible boundaries and would not give rise to significant or demonstrable harm. It would therefore make a positive contribution towards meeting identified housing needs in a manner consistent with national policy objectives.

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- 6.2.35. Furthermore, the proposal accords with the principles set out in the Council's Facilitating Appropriate Development document, satisfying the relevant criteria relating to settlement adjacency, scale, sustainability, landscape containment and the avoidance of prejudice to long-term development objectives. When considered alongside the outdated nature of the neighbourhood plan housing evidence and the acute housing shortfall across the district, there is no policy basis for a rigid or determinative application of paragraph 14 to resist development.
- 6.2.36. Accordingly, and having regard to the development plan read as a whole, national planning policy, material considerations and relevant appeal decisions, the principle of residential development on this site is acceptable. The proposal should therefore be supported in principle, subject to detailed assessment of site-specific matters and compliance with other relevant development management policies.

## 6.3. Design, Form and Appearance

- 6.3.1. The proposal has been informed by the design objectives set out within the National Design Guide (2021), as well as Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and Policy 8 of the Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan. Together, these require development to demonstrate a clear understanding of its context and deliver a high-quality built environment that respects and enhances local character. The following paragraphs assess the scheme against the recognised components of good design: layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing.
- 6.3.2. The layout responds directly to the established settlement pattern of Church Farm Walk and nearby residential streets such as Tudor Close and Tudor Drive. These areas are characterised by small cul-de-sac arrangements, modest clusters of dwellings, and gently curving access lanes. The proposed scheme adopts this local grain, creating a natural and logical continuation of the existing built form.
- 6.3.3. The four dwellings are arranged around an extended private drive with a new turning head that enables safe servicing by refuse and emergency vehicles. This arrangement reflects the pattern of development immediately south and east of the site and makes efficient use of land at the village edge. The two western plots are orientated to provide an attractive termination to the new cul-de-sac, while the remaining properties address the central shared surface, presenting an active and coherent frontage.
- 6.3.4. Each dwelling benefits from clearly defined private gardens and convenient on-plot parking, including covered cycle storage, ensuring the scheme functions well in practice while reinforcing a sense of spaciousness appropriate to this rural edge location.
- 6.3.5. The form of the proposed dwellings, encompassing their size, shape, massing and building lines has been carefully developed with due regard to the site's sensitive context. The western boundary adjoins the setting of the Grade II\* listed St Peter's Church and the Grade II listed Priory; accordingly, the design has been shaped to minimise visual impact on these heritage assets.
- 6.3.6. The dwellings adopt a modest two-storey form similar to neighbouring properties, helping them sit comfortably within the existing settlement character. Building lines and spacing reflect those found along Church Farm Walk, albeit with greater separation between plots to deliver a lower-density, softer grain that is more appropriate at the edge of the village where built form transitions to open countryside.

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- 6.3.7. The context plan and supporting visuals demonstrate that the existing dense tree belt along the western boundary provides effective screening, significantly reducing visibility of the development from the listed buildings. Additional planting to the north and east further assists in assimilating the scheme within the landscape.
- 6.3.8. The scale of development, considering massing, building height and the relationship between built form and surrounding space, has been carefully judged to ensure the scheme sits comfortably within its plot and wider surroundings. The proposed dwellings reflect the prevailing two-storey height of nearby houses and present a balanced rhythm of rooflines.
- 6.3.9. Given the generous plot sizes and expansive landscaped boundaries, the development maintains a sense of openness and avoids any perception of overdevelopment. This results in a scale of built form entirely consistent with the role of this site as a well-contained extension to the settlement.
- 6.3.10. To further reduce the visual and landscaping impact of the proposed development, the eaves of plots 1–3 (the plots located on the northern boundary of the site) have been designed to be dropped. This modification ensures that the overall mass and height of these dwellings are lower, thereby helping them to blend more effectively into the surrounding landscape. This design approach also softens the transition between the built form and the adjacent countryside to the north.
- 6.3.11. The lowered eaves contribute to reducing the visual prominence of these properties from key viewing points, particularly from Footpath 2776 and Church Farm Walk, where distant views of the site are possible. By maintaining a more modest profile, the development better responds to the character of the rural edge and ensures that the properties do not appear overly dominant in the landscape.
- 6.3.12. This modification, combined with the overall landscape-led approach, ensures the development remains in harmony with the surrounding environment, reinforcing the rural setting and maintaining a sensitive transition between the built form and the open countryside.
- 6.3.13. Upper Beeding exhibits a wide range of architectural styles, materials and detailing, reflecting its varied evolution and the differing eras of construction. There is no single dominant style; instead, the area is defined by an eclectic but predominantly traditional character, with brickwork, render, hanging tiles, and clay roof coverings all visible within the immediate townscape.
- 6.3.14. The proposed dwellings take cues from this traditional vernacular, adopting a mellow, restrained and rural appearance that is well suited to this sensitive location beside the South Downs National Park. Elevation treatments include brickwork of complementary tones, clay tiles, simple gables and considered proportions. Windows and doors are arranged with balanced symmetry and traditional detailing to reinforce the development's coherence.
- 6.3.15. This approach ensures the new dwellings integrate seamlessly with their surroundings, delivering high-quality design without introducing an overly assertive or contemporary aesthetic that might compete with the nearby heritage assets.
- 6.3.16. The proposed development delivers a high-quality and contextually appropriate design that accords with both local and national planning policy. The scheme responds positively to the established character of Church Farm Walk and the wider settlement, reflecting the layout patterns, modest building forms and traditional vernacular seen throughout Upper Beeding. The dwellings are well proportioned, arranged in a coherent and legible layout, and supported by a robust landscape strategy that reinforces defensible boundaries and maintains the rural edge of the village.

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- 6.3.17. The development satisfies the requirements of Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework by providing an attractive, functional and inclusive environment, respecting local distinctiveness and ensuring a strong sense of place. It also aligns with Policy 8 of the Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan and with the design principles set out within the National Design Guide, including layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing.
- 6.3.18. Overall, the scheme represents a well-considered and policy-compliant design solution, and the design, form and appearance of the development are fully acceptable.

## 6.4. Heritage

- 6.4.1. In support of the application, a Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by WS Heritage Ltd. The assessment provides a detailed review of the historic evolution of Upper Beeding, identifies all designated and non-designated heritage assets with the potential to be affected, and evaluates the contribution the application site makes to their significance. It also assesses the likely impact of the proposed development on the setting of these assets and considers how the design has been informed by relevant heritage policy and guidance.
- 6.4.2. The Heritage Impact Assessment explains that Upper Beeding has developed gradually from its origins as an ecclesiastical settlement into the predominantly suburban village seen today. Historic mapping shows limited development before the twentieth century, with growth occurring incrementally along the main thoroughfares and later infilling between established routes.
- 6.4.3. Over time, this expansion has extended up to the boundaries of the application site, which is now enclosed on three sides by modern residential development. As a result, the site forms a contained gap within the existing settlement, visually and functionally read as part of the village rather than the wider rural landscape.
- 6.4.4. The application site lies near three designated heritage assets: St Peter's Church (Grade II\*), The Priory (Grade II), and the Upper Beeding War Memorial (Grade II). These buildings derive their significance primarily from their architectural, historic, and group value, reflecting the long-standing ecclesiastical importance of this part of Upper Beeding. The Heritage Impact Assessment identifies that the application site is separated from these assets by mature vegetation, intervening land and modern development, resulting in very limited intervisibility. As such, the site is assessed as making only a neutral contribution to the assets' setting and significance.
- 6.4.5. The proposed development of four detached dwellings has been shaped by a detailed understanding of the site's relationship with the nearby heritage assets. The scheme adopts modest scale and massing, generous spacing between buildings, and a layout that reflects the established pattern of suburban development to the south and east.
- 6.4.6. Existing mature vegetation between the site and the listed buildings is retained and enhanced with additional planting, reinforcing the natural buffer and ensuring the continued physical and visual separation between new development and the historic ecclesiastical group. These measures ensure the proposals assimilate into their context while preserving the character and openness of the assets near setting.

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6.4.7. Given the limited visibility between the site and the designated heritage assets, the already evolved suburban context surrounding them, and the sensitive nature of the proposed design, the Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the development will result in no harm to the significance of any listed building or its setting. The scheme maintains the ability to appreciate the assets, respects the established pattern of development, and does not erode those characteristics that positively contribute to their historic or architectural interest. The resulting effects are therefore assessed as neutral.

6.4.8. The assessment demonstrates full compliance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposals respond positively to paragraph 197 of the NPPF, which encourages new development to contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and paragraph 206, which states that proposals preserving those elements of setting that make a positive contribution should be treated favourably. The scheme also accords with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework by sustaining the historic environment through high-quality, contextually sensitive design.

6.4.9. Overall, the Heritage Impact Assessment confirms that the application site represents a logical and well-contained location for development that sits comfortably within the established settlement pattern of Upper Beeding. Through careful attention to layout, scale, massing and landscaping, the proposals preserve the significance of nearby designated heritage assets and maintain the area's historic character. There are therefore no heritage grounds on which to resist the proposed development.

## 6.5. Residential Amenity

6.5.1. The proposed development has been designed with careful consideration for the amenity of both existing neighbouring residents and future occupiers. The layout, separation distances and orientation of the dwellings ensure that the scheme does not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing effects.

6.5.2. The four detached dwellings sit within generous plots, with meaningful spacing retained between buildings and between the new homes and the existing properties on Church Farm Walk, Meadow View and the adjoining residential areas to the east. The orientation of the dwellings avoids direct window-to-window relationships, thereby safeguarding the privacy of existing and future residents. Where gardens back onto existing boundaries, the depth of private amenity space and the presence of mature vegetation ensure that the development remains unobtrusive.

6.5.3. To the west, the substantial tree belt and understorey planting provide a robust visual buffer between the development and the adjacent heritage properties. This existing screening, supplemented by additional landscaping, effectively prevents any harmful visual intrusion or reduction in outlook. Similarly, the proposed planting along the north and east boundaries softens the interface with nearby residential areas and the caravan site, ensuring a sensitive transition and maintaining a sense of separation.

6.5.4. Given the low-density form of the scheme, the two-storey scale of the dwellings, and the considerable distances maintained from neighbouring buildings, the development will not result in overshadowing or an overbearing presence. The orientation and spacing of plots also secure high levels of natural light and outlook for future residents, with all dwellings benefiting from ample, usable private garden space.

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- 6.5.5. Noise and disturbance are expected to be minimal, reflecting the limited number of dwellings proposed and their position within an established residential environment. The internal access road is designed as a slow-speed cul-de-sac, ensuring low vehicle movements and maintaining a quiet residential character.
- 6.5.6. Overall, the proposal achieves a high standard of residential amenity, consistent with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. The design ensures that the scheme integrates harmoniously with its surroundings without detriment to neighbouring occupiers, while providing attractive and comfortable living conditions for future residents.

## 6.6. Landscape Character and Visual Impact

- 6.6.1. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by CSA Environmental in support of the application. The LVIA provides a detailed review of the site's existing landscape character, its visibility within the wider setting, the relevant national and local policy context, and the likely landscape and visual effects arising from the development of four dwellings.
- 6.6.2. The LVIA identifies that the site occupies a small parcel of land at the north-western edge of Upper Beeding, adjoining existing built form to the south and east and enclosed by the mature grounds of St Peter's Church to the south-west. The assessment confirms that the site sits comfortably within the established settlement fringe and does not extend development beyond the northern limits formed by Countryside Farm Park and dwellings on The Driftway.
- 6.6.3. The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. It lies within Landscape Character Area O3 (Steyning and Henfield Brooks) and within Landscape Setting Area 5 as defined in the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. This area is described as having few intrinsic landscape qualities, low visual prominence and low inter-visibility with the wider countryside, resulting in a low sensitivity to small-scale development of the type proposed.
- 6.6.4. The LVIA confirms that visibility of the site is constrained by existing development, mature tree cover and localised landform. Near-distance views are limited to glimpses from the head of Church Farm Walk, parts of the adjacent park homes site, and isolated points along Footpath 2776 to the north. From the surrounding floodplain, vegetation and hedgerows largely screen the site, with only intermittent views of rooflines possible in combination with existing residential development.
- 6.6.5. Long-distance views from key locations on the South Downs, including the South Downs Way at Beeding Hill, demonstrate that the site forms a very small component of a broad panorama dominated by the wider settlement of Upper Beeding and the valley landscape. Any perceived change would be minor, read within the context of existing development, and would not affect the special qualities of the National Park.
- 6.6.6. The proposals incorporate a landscape-led layout, including new native hedgerow, tree and thicket planting along the northern and north-western boundaries, reinforcing the settlement edge and strengthening the transition to the open countryside. Additional planting along the eastern boundary will soften views from adjoining park homes. No trees of notable value require removal and the landscape scheme enhances overall green infrastructure and biodiversity value.
- 6.6.7. The LVIA concludes that the development will result in the loss of an area of low-quality bramble scrub which does not reflect the characteristic wet pasture of the wider floodplain. The introduction of four dwellings in this location would relate well to the established settlement pattern, avoid encroachment into the wider open countryside, and maintain separation between built development and the river valley floor.

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6.6.8. Given the containment of the site, the scale of development, and the proposed landscape mitigation, the LVIA identifies only limited landscape and visual effects, principally localised to the remainder of the adjoining field. Effects on the setting of St Peter's Church are negligible due to the extensive mature screening. Effects on the setting of the South Downs National Park are judged to be barely perceptible and not harmful.

6.6.9. Overall, the LVIA demonstrates that the site can accommodate a small-scale residential development without giving rise to any material harm to landscape character, visual amenity, or the setting of designated landscapes. The proposals accord with national policy, the Horsham District Planning Framework and the relevant Neighbourhood Plan requirements.

## 6.7. Trees

6.7.1. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement were prepared by Arbortrack Systems Ltd to assess the impact of the proposed development on the existing tree resources, as well as to establish a clear methodology for the protection and management of these trees during the development process.

6.7.2. A tree survey was conducted in June 2021 and updated in October 2025, in accordance with BS5837:2012, which categorises trees according to their quality and retention value. The survey identified 53 trees and groups of trees, with the following categorisation:

- Category A (High Quality): None
- Category B (Moderate Quality): 3 trees
- Category C (Low Quality): 43 trees
- Category U (Unsuitable for Retention): 7 trees

6.7.3. Several trees and tree groups will be removed as part of the proposed development. Specifically, the following trees are proposed for removal:

- Tree 18 (Elder): Category U – unsuitable for retention due to its poor structural condition.
- Tree Group G12 (Blackthorn): Category C – removal required to facilitate development.
- Tree Group G19 (Blackthorn): Category C – removal required for development.
- Tree 20 (Hawthorn): Category C – removal required to facilitate development.
- Tree 21 (Sycamore): Category C – removal required for development.

6.7.4. These trees are considered to be of low or unsuitable quality, and their removal is unlikely to result in significant loss of amenity or ecological value. The proposed development has been designed to minimise the impact on retained trees, with the majority of the works taking place outside of the tree protection zones and Root Protection Areas of retained trees.

6.7.5. To ensure the protection of the retained trees during the development process, a comprehensive tree protection plan has been established.

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- 6.7.6. Once construction is complete, the trees and surrounding landscape will be carefully managed to ensure their long-term health. Soft landscaping will be conducted within the guidelines set by the arboriculturist, and any changes to ground levels within the RPAs will be avoided unless prior approval is given by the local authority.
- 6.7.7. The proposed development has been carefully designed to minimise the impact on existing trees, with protective measures in place to safeguard retained trees throughout the construction process. The removal of certain low-quality and unsuitable trees will not significantly affect the visual amenity or ecological value of the site, and the implementation of the tree protection plan will ensure that the remaining trees are preserved for the long term.
- 6.7.8. Therefore, it is concluded that the development proposal, with the proposed tree protection measures, is acceptable and can proceed with minimal harm to the existing trees.

## 6.8. Ecology and BNG

- 6.8.1. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) has been prepared by The Ecology Co-operation Ltd in support of the application. This assessment draws upon survey work conducted in 2021, 2022, and 2025, including updated habitat appraisals, bat activity surveys, and reptile presence/absence surveys. The EcIA provides an up-to-date assessment of the site's ecological baseline, reviews relevant legislation and policy, and evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed development, alongside appropriate mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.
- 6.8.2. The site covers approximately 0.46 hectares of bramble scrub, situated within the River Adur Water Meadows & Wyckham Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS). It is bordered immediately to the south-west by a small parcel of deciduous woodland, designated as a priority habitat. The surrounding landscape features additional scrub areas, improved grassland, and extensive floodplain grazing marsh, all of which are part of the broader LWS designation.
- 6.8.3. Updated surveys confirm the presence of 'low' breeding populations of slow worm and grass snake at the site. The site boundaries, particularly the western edge adjacent to the woodland, are frequently used by common and widespread bat species.
- 6.8.4. The EcIA identifies that, without mitigation, the proposed development could result in adverse effects due to habitat loss, construction-phase disturbance, increased artificial lighting, and potential impacts on protected species. To address these risks, a range of mitigation measures is proposed, including a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), best-practice pollution prevention methods, sensitive lighting design in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, and a two-phase supervised vegetation cut to safeguard reptiles.
- 6.8.5. The development is supported by a comprehensive programme of habitat creation and enhancement, including the planting of new native species-rich hedgerows throughout the site, a hedgerow buffer to protect the adjacent woodland, and the creation of a small wildflower meadow in the south-east corner. Opportunities to integrate bat and bird nesting features within the new dwellings have been identified and will contribute to long-term biodiversity enhancement.
- 6.8.6. Subject to the implementation of the mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures outlined in the EcIA, the development is not expected to result in significant residual ecological effects. The assessment concludes that the impacts can be fully addressed, and the scheme will deliver ecological benefits through habitat creation and the incorporation of features for wildlife.

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- 6.8.7. The proposed development is located within the River Adur Water Meadows & Wyckham Wood Local Wildlife Site, a non-statutory designation recognised for its mosaic of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, extensive ditch networks supporting notable wetland flora, and an area of ancient semi-natural woodland at Wyckham Wood.
- 6.8.8. Although the application site falls within the mapped LWS boundary, the bramble scrub on the site does not form part of the features of conservation interest for which the designation is recognised. The EclA therefore concludes that the habitat to be lost is of limited relevance to the LWS's qualifying features.
- 6.8.9. Ecologically, the development will result in the direct loss of habitat within the LWS and, without mitigation, could contribute to localised indirect pressures such as dust deposition, disturbance, or minor increases in recreational use of the surrounding meadows and woodland.
- 6.8.10. The mitigation strategy, including pollution controls within the CEMP, woodland buffering, responsible lighting design, and replacement habitat provision, ensures that these indirect risks are effectively managed. The anticipated increase in footfall associated with the four dwellings is expected to be negligible in the context of the wider LWS and is not considered significant beyond the site level.
- 6.8.11. When combined with on-site habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement measures, the development is considered capable of proceeding without undermining the integrity or functioning of the wider LWS.
- 6.8.12. In addition, in line with the latest requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain, the proposed development has been designed to ensure there is no net loss to biodiversity, and it will in fact deliver a measurable net gain, in accordance with the statutory requirements. 10%. This has been demonstrated through the submitted metric and landscaping plans.
- 6.8.13. The ecological impact assessment and proposed mitigation measures demonstrate that the development is acceptable, ensuring no significant residual ecological effects and delivering a measurable net gain in biodiversity in line with statutory requirements.

## 6.9. Transport and Highways

- 6.9.1. In support of the application, a Transport Statement has been prepared by SDP. This report provides a comprehensive review of the existing transport conditions, relevant planning policy, accessibility by all modes, trip generation, and the suitability of the proposed access arrangements.
- 6.9.2. The Transport Statement confirms that the site lies at the northern edge of Upper Beeding and is accessed from the termination of Church Farm Walk, an existing cul-de-sac serving a small cluster of homes. Church Farm Walk connects to Church Lane and then to the wider network via Priory Field, Saltings Way and the High Street. The Statement demonstrates that the local road network is lightly trafficked, operates without capacity issues, and has an established pattern of safe operation.
- 6.9.3. A review of the most recent five years of recorded personal-injury collision data reveals no incidents in the immediate vicinity of the site, indicating the absence of any existing highway safety concerns that could be exacerbated by the development.

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6.9.4. Walking, cycling and public transport accessibility have been assessed in detail. The site benefits from several public rights of way, including Footpath 2777 which runs directly past Church Farm Walk and provides a convenient connection to Upper Beeding and onwards towards Steyning. Footpaths 2778 and 3203 offer additional pedestrian routes to the High Street. The local High Street, convenience shops and services are all reachable on foot within approximately ten minutes.

6.9.5. Cycling conditions in the village and surrounding area are considered favourable, with a network of quiet local roads and access to National Cycle Network Route 223 (Downs Link), which provides an off-road link between Steyning and Shoreham-by-Sea. Steyning and Small Dole can be reached in 10–15 minutes by cycle, and Shoreham-by-Sea in around 20–24 minutes.

6.9.6. Public transport provision is within convenient walking distance. Bus services on the High Street (less than ten minutes from the site) provide regular weekday and Saturday connections to Shoreham, Hove, Brighton, Burgess Hill, Storrington, Pulborough and Horsham. Shoreham-by-Sea railway station offers frequent services to London Victoria, Brighton, Littlehampton, Portsmouth and Southampton, and can be reached by cycle or by bus.

6.9.7. The proposed access via Church Farm Walk is confirmed to operate safely. No visibility or capacity issues arise from the arrangement, and the submitted swept-path analysis shows that refuse vehicles are able to enter, turn within the site, and exit in a forward gear. West Sussex County Council (WSCC), in its earlier consultation response (Appendix A of the Transport Statement), confirmed that it was satisfied with the access design, servicing arrangements and the expected level of vehicle movement.

6.9.8. Car and cycle parking have been designed in accordance with WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (2020). Each dwelling provides sufficient on-plot car parking to meet anticipated demand, including allowance for visitor parking. Provision for electric vehicle charging can be accommodated for all homes in line with national and local expectations. Minimum cycle parking standards are met for all proposed units.

6.9.9. Trip generation has been calculated using the latest TRICS database (version 8.25.6). The assessment concludes that the development of four dwellings will generate only two vehicle movements in each peak hour, resulting in no material impact on the operation of the local road network. WSCC has already confirmed acceptance of these trip rates and advised that the scheme would not result in any 'severe' residual cumulative impact, in accordance with national policy.

6.9.10. Overall, the Transport Statement demonstrates that the site is suitably accessible by a range of sustainable modes; that the proposed access and servicing arrangements are safe and appropriate; and that the modest scale of development will not adversely affect the local highway network. There are therefore no highways or transport reasons to withhold planning permission.

## 6.10. Flooding and Drainage

6.10.1. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Aqua Terra Consultants in support of the application. The assessment follows the requirements of the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and the Environment Agency's published data, and evaluates flood risk from all sources together with the suitability of the proposed surface water and foul drainage arrangements.

6.10.2. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, where the probability of river or tidal flooding is low. Flood zones associated with the River Adur extend across the northern part of the wider landholding but do not affect the area proposed for built development. When climate change allowances are applied, the proposed dwellings remain outside all modelled flood extents.

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- 6.10.3. Topographic levels fall northwards from approximately 9.5m AOD to 6.08m AOD within the developable area. Modelled Environment Agency flood levels for the most extreme scenario tested (1% AEP + 107% climate change) remain below the lowest proposed finished floor levels, ensuring the homes remain flood free even in the upper-end climate change allowance event.
- 6.10.4. Updated 2025 surface water flood mapping shows no surface water flood risk within the development footprint, with only minor low-risk isolated areas present elsewhere within the ownership boundary. There are no records of historical flooding and no reservoir flood risk affecting the site.
- 6.10.5. The sole identified potential source of flood risk relates to groundwater, due to the site's transitional position between chalk and mudstone geology. The FRA recommends that all finished floor levels are raised a minimum of 150mm above adjacent external ground levels, alongside standard measures such as impermeable floor slabs and foundation design suited to high water tables. These measures ensure the development remains safe for its lifetime.
- 6.10.6. As all proposed built development is located within Flood Zone 1 and outside any identified areas of future flood risk, the FRA concludes that, in accordance with the NPPF, the Sequential Test is not required.
- 6.10.7. A SuDS-led drainage strategy has been designed to ensure that the development does not increase flood risk on or off site. Due to likely shallow groundwater levels, infiltration has not been relied upon at this stage. Instead, surface water is attenuated on site and discharged at a controlled rate to a land drain on the eastern boundary, which ultimately connects to the River Adur.
- 6.10.8. A combination of porous paving and a series of swales along the northern boundary provide the required attenuation volumes. The drainage network has been modelled using Causeway Flow and demonstrates that peak discharge can be restricted to 3 l/s/ha, consistent with national SuDS standards and below the greenfield equivalent rate. Storage has been shown to be sufficient for the 1% AEP + 45% climate change event.
- 6.10.9. In an extreme event or in the unlikely event of temporary blockage, exceedance flows would follow existing natural fall towards the north, where they would discharge into open land. This routing avoids any risk to property and reflects the natural topography of the area.
- 6.10.10. Water quality treatment is achieved through the SuDS system, with permeable paving and swales providing adequate pollutant removal for a low-intensity residential use, in accordance with CIRIA SuDS Manual guidance. A management company will be responsible for long-term maintenance.
- 6.10.11. Foul drainage will connect to the public sewer in Church Farm Walk, subject to confirmation of capacity by Southern Water. Given local gradients, a pumped connection is expected. No surface water will be discharged to the foul system.
- 6.10.12. The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy demonstrate that the site is at low risk from all sources of flooding and that the proposed homes will remain safe for their lifetime with the recommended mitigation in place. Surface water can be effectively managed on site without increasing flood risk elsewhere, supported by a SuDS scheme that meets national standards.
- 6.10.13. Taken together, the evidence confirms that there are no flood risk or drainage considerations that would justify withholding planning permission.

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## 6.11. Water Neutrality

- 6.11.1. Recent changes to national and local guidance confirm that the development is not required to provide a Water Neutrality Statement. On 31 October 2025, Natural England formally withdrew its 2021 Water Neutrality Position Statement following agreement with Southern Water and the Environment Agency that a reduction in the abstraction licence cap will address the link between new development and impacts on the Arun Valley protected habitats. Horsham District Council has subsequently confirmed that all development within the district may proceed without demonstrating site-specific water neutrality, supported by Southern Water's 2024/25 efficiency savings which provide sufficient strategic capacity for growth from 1 November 2025.
- 6.11.2. Although the licence modification itself is expected in March 2026, Horsham District Council will continue to undertake an Appropriate Assessment for each application to ensure continued compliance with the Habitats Regulations. However, applicants are not required to supply mitigation, financial contributions, or bespoke water neutrality obligations.
- 6.11.3. In line with the Council's updated requirements and Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, the proposed dwellings will comply with the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical Standard of 110 litres per person per day. The measures embedded within the design including modern fittings and water-efficient technologies to ensure the development achieves high levels of efficiency and accords with current district-wide policy.
- 6.11.4. As such, the scheme satisfies all relevant requirements relating to water use and no further mitigation is necessary.

## 6.12. Archaeology

- 6.12.1. In support of the application, an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared by Archaeology South-East. The report reviews the archaeological and historic context of the site, examines available HER data and historic mapping, considers geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential, and assesses the likely effects of the proposed development together with proportionate recommendations for further work.
- 6.12.2. The assessment confirms that the 1km study area contains heritage assets from all periods, although settlement across much of the landscape was historically constrained by its position within the tidal estuary of the River Adur. The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area relating to Sele Priory and St Peter's Church, but mapping and documentary evidence indicate the land remained undeveloped meadow, pasture and arable land from at least the mid-19th century onwards.
- 6.12.3. The site is assessed as having a low potential for remains from most archaeological periods, with the moderate potential restricted to medieval activity owing to the proximity of Sele Priory, St Peter's Church and known medieval salt-working landscapes in the Adur Valley.
- 6.12.4. The underlying River Terrace Deposits, together with areas of alluvium, head deposits and Holocene colluvium, provide a moderate potential for preserved palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological sequences. Earlier investigations within the Adur floodplain have recovered significant organic-rich sediments, peat and laminated silts capable of yielding information on past environments, river evolution and climatic change, and similar deposits may survive beneath undisturbed parts of the site.
- 6.12.5. No Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic or Bronze Age activity is recorded within the site, and the assessment finds low potential for these periods due to the site's historic estuarine setting. Iron Age and Romano-British activity is represented only by isolated finds elsewhere in the study area, and potential on the site is again low.

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- 6.12.6. Early medieval evidence is similarly limited. By contrast, the medieval period shows significantly greater activity in the surrounding landscape, including the Priory, the parish church and extensive salt-working sites; consequently, the site has a moderate potential for dispersed medieval features such as boundary ditches, agricultural remains or salt-working residues. Post-medieval and modern potential is low, aside from routine agricultural activity and the temporary presence of Church Farm buildings in the southern part of the site between 1993 and 2001.
- 6.12.7. The southern part of the site contains disturbed ground associated with the construction and subsequent demolition of the short-lived Church Farm buildings. Elsewhere, disturbance appears limited to agricultural activity, and the northern and central areas remain predominantly undeveloped.
- 6.12.8. Groundworks associated with the proposed dwellings, gardens and access roads have the potential to disturb any surviving archaeological or geoarchaeological deposits. As these resources are finite and irreplaceable, any direct physical impact is considered adverse. However, the assessment notes that if archaeological remains are present, they are unlikely to be of more than local to regional significance.
- 6.12.9. The assessment advises that further proportionate investigation is required to establish, with greater certainty, the presence or absence of archaeological or palaeoenvironmental remains in areas subject to intrusive works. This is likely to comprise archaeological monitoring of ground investigations and/or targeted archaeological and geoarchaeological evaluation. Where significant remains are identified and cannot be preserved in situ, a suitable mitigation strategy, such as excavation and recording would secure preservation by record. The scope of this work would be agreed with the archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.12.10. In summary, the site holds low archaeological potential for most periods, with areas of moderate potential restricted to medieval and palaeoenvironmental remains. Subject to proportionate archaeological evaluation secured by planning condition, the assessment concludes that archaeological matters can be appropriately addressed and that no archaeological constraints exist that would preclude planning permission being granted.

## 6.13. Sustainability

- 6.13.1. The development incorporates a comprehensive package of sustainability measures responding to Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, which seek to reduce carbon emissions, promote responsible use of resources and secure high standards of environmental performance in new development.
- 6.13.2. The dwellings have been designed to minimise energy demand through a fabric-first approach, including high levels of insulation, efficient glazing and airtightness measures that collectively reduce heat loss and support comfortable internal environments. Energy-efficient fittings and building services will further reduce operational energy use, while the installation of photovoltaic panels ensures that a proportion of the scheme's energy requirement is met through on-site renewable generation.
- 6.13.3. Water efficiency is achieved through compliance with the Building Regulations Part G Optional Technical Standard of 110 litres per person per day, supported by low-flow fixtures, dual-flush systems and other water-saving devices. Opportunities for rainwater harvesting and recycling are also incorporated within the design approach, reducing pressure on potable supply and supporting sustainable resource use.

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- 6.13.4. Sustainable drainage principles (SuDS) are integrated into the layout to manage surface water responsibly, improve water quality and enhance site resilience to climate change. The scheme also employs sustainable construction methods and materials with lower embodied impacts, contributing to long-term durability and reduced waste.
- 6.13.5. The development provides biodiversity enhancements through habitat creation, native planting and ecological features that support local wildlife. These measures, combined with green infrastructure improvements, ensure that the proposal contributes positively to ecological value and accords with the environmental aims of Policy 31.
- 6.13.6. Taken together, the measures embedded in the design ensure the development performs strongly against local and national sustainability objectives. The proposal therefore represents a responsible, forward-looking and policy-compliant approach to energy efficiency and climate resilience.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application for the erection of four detached dwellings with associated parking, car ports, access road, landscaping and all ancillary works on land at Church Farm Walk, Upper Beeding. The proposals represent a modest, well-contained extension to the settlement edge on a site that adjoins the built-up area boundary and forms a logical and defensible infill opportunity.
- 7.1.2. The principle of development is strongly supported when assessed against the current planning context. Horsham District Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing and has failed the Housing Delivery Test, triggering the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. The scheme accords with the Council's Facilitating Appropriate Development guidance, meeting all criteria relating to settlement relationship, scale, landscape integration and proximity to local facilities. In this context, the provision of four new homes in a sustainable village location weighs significantly in favour of the application.
- 7.1.3. Technical assessments confirm that none of the constraints identified within Footnote 7 of the NPPF apply to the site. It lies outside all nationally protected landscapes, heritage designations and areas of fluvial or surface water flood risk. No technical evidence identifies a policy-based reason to restrict development, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development remains fully engaged.
- 7.1.4. The proposals exhibit a well-considered and contextually responsive design. The layout follows the established pattern of cul-de-sac development along Church Farm Walk, with dwellings arranged around a modest, legible access road that reflects the grain and character of nearby housing. Architectural treatments draw on the traditional vernacular of Upper Beeding, incorporating brick, clay tiles and pitched roof forms that sit comfortably within their surroundings. Generous landscaped boundaries, particularly to the west, ensure an appropriate transition to the adjoining countryside and heritage assets.
- 7.1.5. The development aligns with the design principles of the HDPF, the Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan and the National Design Guide. It respects the character of the settlement edge, strengthens defensible boundaries and provides a low-density layout that is appropriate to its rural context. The overall approach represents a well-integrated, policy-compliant and high-quality design solution.
- 7.1.6. The Heritage Impact Assessment demonstrates that the site makes only a neutral contribution to the setting of nearby listed buildings, including St Peter's Church and The Priory. Existing mature vegetation provides strong visual separation, and additional planting reinforces this buffer. The modest scale, sensitive massing and traditional materials ensure that the proposals preserve the significance of designated heritage assets in accordance with the NPPF and HDPF Policy 34.
- 7.1.7. Neighbouring and future residential amenity are fully safeguarded. The dwellings are positioned within generous plots that maintain meaningful separation from surrounding homes, avoiding harmful overlooking or overshadowing. Mature trees and hedgerows are retained and enhanced to provide robust visual screening and a soft interface with the wider landscape. For future residents, the layout secures good natural light, privacy and ample private amenity space. The quiet, low-speed cul-de-sac arrangement ensures a tranquil residential setting in line with Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF.
- 7.1.8. All technical considerations have been robustly addressed. The Transport Statement confirms that the scheme will generate only minimal traffic and that access, parking and servicing arrangements are safe and appropriate.

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- 7.1.9. Flood risk matters have been fully resolved; the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and a SuDS-led strategy manages surface water at greenfield-equivalent rates. Ecological surveys identify no significant adverse effects, with mitigation and habitat enhancements delivering a net ecological benefit. Archaeological potential can be appropriately managed through proportionate investigation secured by condition. No technical discipline identifies any reason to withhold consent.
- 7.1.10. Recent changes to national and local guidance confirm that site-specific water neutrality is no longer required. Nonetheless, the dwellings will be designed to meet the 110 litres per person per day water efficiency standard, ensuring compliance with HDPF Policy 37 and supporting wider sustainability objectives.
- 7.1.11. A strong sustainability strategy has been embedded throughout the scheme, including a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency, photovoltaic panels, SuDS measures, water-efficient fixtures and the use of lower-impact construction materials. These features ensure a resilient, energy-conscious and policy-aligned development consistent with HDPF Policies 35, 36 and 37.
- 7.1.12. When taken as a whole, the proposals represent a sustainable, sensitively designed and well-evidenced residential scheme that accords with the Development Plan when read alongside the NPPF. The development makes a valuable contribution to meeting local housing needs in a district with a significant supply deficit, and does so in a manner that preserves local character, protects heritage assets and meets all technical and environmental requirements.
- 7.1.13. For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.