



## DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

### APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/1584  
Barnards Nursery, Rock Road, Washington, West Sussex, RH20 3BH

### DESCRIPTION:

Permission in Principle for the demolition of existing structures / buildings and erection of up to 4no. dwellings.

### RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/23/2194	Certificate of Lawfulness to confirm that the property is not subject to an agricultural workers occupancy condition (Lawful Development Certificate - Existing)	Application Permitted on 21.02.2024
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### DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located to the east of Rock Road, outside of any defined built-up area boundary. The site is therefore located within the countryside in policy terms.

The site is currently occupied by redundant nursery infrastructure, including several large glasshouse frames and ancillary outbuildings, many in poor structural condition. The site has a made access track leading into the site from Rock Road to the west. The site is bound by tall conifer trees on the western and southern boundaries, and established trees to the east.

The existing glasshouse structures are substantial and occupy a significant proportion of the site. Land beyond the application site is comprised of agricultural land and farm buildings, with some residential dwellings to the north and south arranged sporadically. The defined built-up area of Storrington and Sullington is located some 450m away to the west.

There are no statutory or locally designated heritage assets on the site. Whilst the site lies outside of the South Downs National Park, it lies circa 160m to the east of the boundary.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the redevelopment of the former Barnards Nursery site following the demolition of existing horticultural buildings and glasshouses.

The indicative plans suggest a mix of no1 x 2 bedroom bungalow, no.2 x 3 bedroom bungalows and a 4 bedroom house.

The site comprises a former commercial nursery use and includes a number of dilapidated glasshouse structures, associated sheds, and hardstanding. The proposal seeks to establish the principle of redevelopment for the demolition of these buildings and residential development of up to 4 dwellings, with matters of layout, access, design and landscaping reserved for a later Technical Details Consent stage should Permission in Principle be granted.

## RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

### **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024**

#### **Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):**

- 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 17 - Exceptions Housing Schemes
- 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
- Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41 - Parking

#### **Storrington and Sullington Neighbourhood Plan (2019):**

- Policy 1 – A Spatial Plan for the Parishes
- Policy 8 – Countryside Protection
- Policy 14 – Design
- Policy 15 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 17 – Traffic and Transport

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1.0 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

#### **Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):**

- Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
- Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
- Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
- Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
- Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
- Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
- Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection

Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes  
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity  
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality  
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles  
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport  
Policy 25: Parking  
Policy 32: Conversion of Agricultural and Rural Buildings to Commercial, Community and Residential Uses  
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision  
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs  
Policy 41: Rural Exception Homes

As the emerging Local Plan is not yet adopted, its policies carry only limited weight in decision making.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance:**

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)  
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

**Parish Design Statement:**

**Planning Advice Notes:**

Facilitating Appropriate Development  
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

**REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES**

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at [www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk)

**Consultations:**

**OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

**Southern Water:** Comment 28/10/2025  
Conditions advised

**WSCC Highways:** Comment 29/10/2025

The LHA is limited in its ability to comment on an application for PIP. In principle, the LHA would not raise any objections to an application at this site, subject to the submission of sufficient information at Technical Details Stage.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:**

**Representations:**

15 letters of Objection have been received from 7 addresses. At the time of writing, 8 were recorded from 1 address. The objections were made on the following grounds:

- Conflict with Local Plan spatial strategy and countryside protection policies.
- Unsustainable location with poor accessibility to local services.
- Highway safety and access concerns.
- Parking
- Adverse impact on local character and appearance of the area.
- Over development of the site
- Amenity impacts (noise, privacy, light pollution).
- Ecological and drainage considerations.

0 letters for Support have been received

### Parish Comments:

#### **Washington Parish Council:** Objection (04/11/2025)

The Parish Council considered the proposal to represent an inappropriate form of development, not in conformity with the adopted Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan, and expressed concern that it could create an unfortunate precedent for further development. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate the site for development and identifies the surrounding area as countryside, where new residential development is generally resisted other than in accordance with specific policies. The proposal would therefore conflict with the spatial strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Officer Comment:**

The Parish's concern regarding "precedent" is not a material planning consideration, as each application must be assessed on its individual merits and against adopted policy.

### Member Comments:

Initial Comments 12/11/2025

The Ward Councillor for Storrington and Washington has requested that the application be referred to Planning Committee. The Councillor notes the number of objections received and the range of issues raised by residents, including concerns relating to highways access, parking, overdevelopment, design, landscaping, trees, residential amenity, privacy, light, noise, habitat disturbance and the potential impact on adjacent horses. The Councillor also refers to comments regarding precedent for further development, and notes that Washington Parish Council has objected on grounds of inappropriateness and non-conformity with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Councillor further highlights comments from WSCC Highways and Southern Water regarding the need for technical confirmation of parking, cycle parking and drainage arrangements, and suggests that a Planning Committee setting would allow for consideration of potential mitigation measures.

Subsequent Comments 19/11/2025

To be dealt with under delegated authority if refusal is recommended.

#### **Officer Comment:**

The Ward Councillor's comments are noted. As this application seeks Permission in Principle, only matters relating to location, land use and amount of development can be considered at this stage. Detailed issues relating to highways design, parking, access, landscape, trees, drainage, lighting, amenity and construction management fall outside the scope of a PiP determination and, if Permission in Principle were granted, would be considered in full at the subsequent Technical Details Consent stage. The Parish Council's comments regarding the Neighbourhood Plan are addressed within the planning assessment. Concerns relating to precedent are not a material planning consideration. Most of the concerns raised relate to detailed design, access and amenity issues that cannot be considered at the Permission in Principle stage.

### MATTERS RAISED THAT ARE NOT FOR CONSIDERATION AT PIP STAGE

A number of representations, including those from local residents and the Ward Councillor, raise concerns relating to highways safety, parking, access, design, landscaping, trees, residential amenity (privacy, light and noise), habitat disturbance, drainage, lighting, and construction management.

It is important to note that this application has been submitted as a Permission in Principle (PiP). In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017, only the location, land use and amount of development can be considered at this stage.

All detailed technical matters, including access arrangements, parking, layout, scale, design, landscaping, ecology, drainage, and construction impacts, fall to be considered at the subsequent Technical Details Consent stage, should Permission in Principle be granted.

These concerns are therefore not determinative for this application but will require full assessment if a Technical Details Consent application is submitted.

### HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

### PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The Permission in Principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for residential development, which separates the consideration of matters of "principle" for the proposed development, from the "technical details" of the development. As such, the Permission in Principle route has two stages: the first being the "Permission in Principle" stage (subject of this current application), which establishes whether the site is suitable in-principle; and the second being the "Technical Details consent" stage which is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

The scope of the Permission in Principle application (being the first stage) is limited to location, land use, and amount of development.

#### **Location:**

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) sets out the overarching growth strategy, focusing development within the District's main settlements. The adopted settlement hierarchy represents the most sustainable approach to accommodating growth, directing the majority of new housing to Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst, with only limited development elsewhere, and only where it accords with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 3 seeks to retain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations possible. Policy 4 supports limited settlement expansion outside built-up area boundaries only where: the site is allocated in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the scale of growth is appropriate to the settlement; the proposal meets identified local needs; and the development is contained within defensible boundaries that respect landscape character.

In this countryside location, Policy 26 is also engaged. It seeks to protect the rural area against inappropriate development unless it is essential to a countryside location and meets one of the following criteria: supporting agriculture or forestry; enabling mineral extraction or waste disposal; providing for quiet informal recreation; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas.

Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) similarly advises that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless specific exceptions apply—such as for rural workers, heritage benefits, the reuse of redundant buildings that enhance their setting, subdivision of existing dwellings, or design of exceptional quality.

The application site lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary, and therefore in planning policy terms forms part of the countryside, where new development is strictly controlled. The proposal seeks permission in principle for up to four dwellings following demolition of former nursery buildings.

Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with the spatial strategy of Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the HDPF, which direct new growth to the most sustainable settlements to minimise reliance on the private car and promote access to services.

The Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate the site for development, and it does not adjoin an existing settlement edge. It is identified within the NP as countryside where only limited forms of development are supported. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies 1 and 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The site, however, constitutes previously developed (brownfield) land as defined by the NPPF. The reuse of such land is supported in principle where it can assist in regenerating underused or derelict sites. The dilapidated condition of the existing glasshouses carries modest weight in favour of redevelopment, given the potential for visual and environmental improvement.

Nevertheless, the site is located in an unsustainable rural location, remote from day-to-day services and public transport connections. Any residential redevelopment would be heavily dependent on the private car and would not represent a sustainable pattern of growth.

Although it is recognised that the Council currently cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, recent appeal decisions for single dwellings outside built-up area boundaries (e.g. DC/20/2086 – Lancasters Cottage, Partridge Green; and DC/20/2128 – Marringdean Barn, Billingshurst) confirm that such shortfall does not automatically justify development in unsustainable locations. In those cases, Inspectors acknowledged limited economic and housing benefits, but found these outweighed by conflict with the adopted spatial strategy.

In this context, the proposal does not satisfy the criteria for countryside development under Policy 26, nor does it meet the exceptions listed in NPPF paragraph 84. While the proposal would make limited contribution to housing supply through the reuse of brownfield land, these benefits are insufficient to outweigh the significant conflict with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan.

It is therefore concluded that the principle of development is unacceptable, as the proposal would constitute unsustainable residential development in the countryside, contrary to Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Policies 1 and 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan and the overarching principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

#### **Land Use:**

The application relates to the demolition of existing commercial nursery buildings and the provision of 4no. dwellings on the site. From the information available, it is understood that these dwellings would consist of private market dwellings.

The indicative plans suggest that the dwellings would be to the east of Rock Road, with incidental residential curtilage positioned to the south and east of each dwelling respectively. The development site would be located to the south of a residential dwelling known as Newlands, with the wider land to the east in agricultural use.

During the site visit it was observed that the existing glasshouse buildings are substantial in scale and occupy a significant proportion of the site. These structures are of a commercial horticultural nature and are therefore considered to fall within the definition of previously developed (brownfield) land as set out in the NPPF (2024). While their removal and the redevelopment of the site could offer some visual and environmental improvement, this consideration is not sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the adopted spatial strategy and the unsustainable location of the site.

The former commercial nursery use does not constitute an agricultural unit for the purposes of the GPDO, and therefore no fall-back position exists under Class Q or related permitted development rights.

As outlined above, residential development within the countryside location, on a site not allocated for development within the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, would be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy expressed through Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF and Policy 1 of the Storrington and Sullington Neighbourhood Plan. The provision of residential dwellings on the site is therefore considered to result in inappropriate development within an unsustainable location, with the proposed land use not considered appropriate for these reasons.

### **Amount of Development**

Policies 25 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances landscape character and ensures that proposals reflect the locally distinctive character of settlements. Policy 32 requires high quality design. Proposals should consider landscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of up to four dwellings following the demolition of the existing nursery buildings and glasshouses. While the proposal would remove a notable extent of redundant built form, the resulting quantum and arrangement of new development must still be considered in the context of the site's countryside location and surrounding settlement pattern.

The site currently contains extensive, low-profile glasshouse structures associated with the former horticultural use. These buildings, although substantial in coverage, are of lightweight construction and have a limited visual presence in the wider landscape. Their removal could offer a modest improvement in visual terms. However, the introduction of four new permanent dwellings—served by a shared access road and arranged in a cul-de-sac formation—would represent a material change in the type, permanence, and character of built development on the site.

The area to the north of the site is characterised by sporadic, well-separated residential properties, interspersed with open fields and rural plots. This dispersed pattern contributes to the area's rural character and sense of openness. The introduction of four dwellings within an inward-facing layout would result in a more suburban form of development, inconsistent with the established linear and low-density character of the locality.

While the overall footprint of built form may not substantially exceed that of the existing glasshouses, the domestic scale, regular spacing, and cumulative visual impact of four new dwellings would significantly alter the appearance and character of the site. The proposal would therefore amount to an over-suburbanisation of the plot, eroding the rural qualities of the area and failing to reflect the surrounding settlement pattern. As such, the amount and configuration of development proposed would introduce a suburban built form inconsistent with the open and dispersed character of this rural location.

Although layout is a reserved matter at Technical Details stage, the indicative arrangement demonstrates that accommodating four dwellings would require a suburban cul-de-sac form, which is material to the assessment of 'amount' at the PiP stage.

Accordingly, the amount and configuration of development proposed would be inappropriate in this countryside setting and would not respect the prevailing character or spatial pattern of nearby development, contrary to Policies 25 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the design principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

### **Water Neutrality:**

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching.

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day. Natural England standing advice raises no objection to this approach.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with s.70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

### **Other Environmental Considerations:**

#### Sustainable Transport

The site lies in a location where walking and cycling to key services would be impractical for most residents, and there are no realistic public transport options. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy 40 of the HDPF.

#### Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) require that development mitigates the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reduced flood risk, lower water consumption, enhanced biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which requires that local plans and decisions support the transition to a low carbon future and minimise vulnerability to climate impacts.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, limited technical detail has been provided at this stage. However, the applicant has submitted a Water Neutrality Report and Water Management Plan (Promethean Planning, dated 6 September 2025), which sets out how the proposed dwellings would meet their water demand entirely through rainwater harvesting and high-efficiency fittings, thereby achieving a water-neutral outcome and mitigating potential effects on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

At the detailed design stage, it is anticipated that the following measures could be incorporated to ensure the development builds resilience to climate change and reduces carbon emissions:

- Water consumption limited to 110 litres per person per day, in line with Policy 37 and Building Regulations Part G;
- Integration of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable surfacing to manage surface water runoff;
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling;
- Refuse and recycling storage incorporated within the layout;
- Opportunities for biodiversity net gain, to be delivered through new landscaping and habitat creation; and
- Improved energy performance of the dwellings in accordance with, or exceeding, Building Regulations Part L requirements.

Full details of these measures would be expected at the Technical Details Consent stage, where conditions can be imposed to secure their implementation. Subject to these future provisions, the proposed development could suitably reduce its impact on climate change and would accord with Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

### **Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):**

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, detailed ecological information has not been submitted at this stage. Should the principle of development be supported, ecological survey work and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures would be required at the Technical Details Consent stage to ensure compliance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the NPPF (2024), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The site also falls within the scope of the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime. A minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value will be required to be demonstrated at the Technical Details Consent stage, through submission of a habitat baseline assessment and Biodiversity Metric calculation in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (General) Regulations 2024.

At this stage, it is considered that the site provides scope to deliver BNG through appropriate landscaping and habitat creation as part of any detailed design, and that the requirements of Policy 31 and national BNG legislation could reasonably be met.

The matters of scale, design, layout, and access for the proposed development are reserved for consideration under the subsequent "Technical Details" application.

### **Employment / Former Commercial Use**

The site was formerly in commercial horticultural use but has been vacant for a considerable period (estimated at around 20 years). No supporting evidence has been provided concerning the loss of employment use; however, given the longstanding redundancy of the site and the absence of any current economic activity, it is considered that the proposal would not result in the loss of an active or viable employment site. The site is not safeguarded for employment use in the HDPF or the Neighbourhood Plan. Detailed consideration of economic impact would therefore not be proportionate or necessary at this Permission in Principle stage, which is limited to the assessment of location, land use, and amount of development.

### **Housing Land Supply and Tilted Balance**

At present, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and its adopted Local Plan (the Horsham District Planning Framework, 2015) is more than five years old. Consequently, paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) is engaged, which establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF does not apply in this case, as the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan is more than five years old

In these circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

The proposed development would make a modest contribution to the District's housing supply, utilising previously developed land and improving the visual appearance of a disused site. These factors weigh in favour of the proposal.

However, the site lies within the open countryside, well outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary, and in a location that is remote from day-to-day services and facilities. The introduction of up to four dwellings in this location would represent an unsustainable pattern of development, contrary to the spatial strategy of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the sustainability principles of the NPPF.

The site is also not identified within the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan, and the proposal would therefore conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan's spatial approach to directing development

Having regard to the scale of the proposal, the limited contribution it would make to housing supply, and the identified harm to the rural character and sustainable spatial pattern of the District, the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole.

Accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case, and the proposal is not acceptable in principle.

## **Conclusions**

The proposal seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of up to four dwellings following the demolition of existing nursery structures at Barnards Nursery, Rock Road, Washington. While the site comprises previously developed land, the proposal would introduce new residential development in a countryside location, remote from existing settlements, services, and transport infrastructure. The proposal would therefore conflict with the spatial strategy for growth set out within Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

As this application seeks Permission in Principle only, the refusal relates solely to the principle of the proposed development, with detailed matters reserved for consideration under any future Technical Details application. Only matters relating to location, land use and amount have been assessed.

It is acknowledged that the existing glasshouse structures are substantial and lend the site a degree of previously developed character. Their removal could modestly improve the visual appearance of the site. However, these considerations do not alter the fundamental conflict with the adopted spatial strategy, nor do they overcome the site's unsustainable location within the open countryside where residential development is strictly controlled

The suburban layout and quantum of development proposed would not reflect the established rural character or dispersed pattern of housing within the locality, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the countryside, contrary to Policies 25 and 33 of the HDPF.

While the applicant's submission demonstrates that water neutrality could be achieved and biodiversity net gain could be secured at the Technical Details Consent stage, these environmental considerations carry limited weight and would not outweigh the fundamental policy conflict and locational unsustainability of the proposal.

Accordingly, the proposed development would not represent a sustainable form of growth and is contrary to the spatial strategy and sustainability objectives of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which took effect on 1st October 2017.

**It is considered that this development constitutes CIL liable development.**

In the case of Permission in Principle applications the CIL charge will be calculated at the relevant Technical Details stage.

Please note that exemptions and/or reliefs may be applied for up until the commencement of a chargeable development.

In the event that planning permission is granted, a CIL Liability Notice will be issued thereafter. CIL payments are payable on commencement of development.

### **Recommendation: Application Refused**

#### Reason for refusal:

1. The proposed development would be sited within an unsustainable location in the countryside, outside of a defined built-up area boundary, and on a site not allocated for housing development within the Horsham District Planning Framework, or a made Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policies 1 and 8 of the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019).
2. The proposal, by reason of the introduction of up to four dwellings on this rural site, would result in a suburban form and intensity of development that would not reflect the dispersed and low-density pattern of built development in the surrounding countryside. The amount of development proposed would require a layout and residential presence that would appear at odds with the rural character of the area and would erode the open, transitional qualities of the site. The development would therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and would fail to conserve or enhance the landscape character of the locality, contrary to Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the design and character principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

### POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

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**Plans list for: DC/25/1584**

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Drawing Number</b>	<b>Received Date</b>
Location & Block plan		PAS 388 / 100 REV A	26.09.2025

**DELEGATED**

Case Officer sign/initial  Daniel Holmes Date:  08.12.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial  Tamara Dale Date:  08.12.2025