

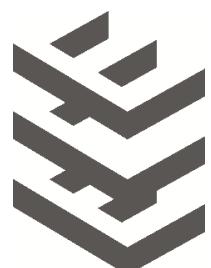
ECE Planning

**Planning and Affordable Housing
Statement**

**(including Minerals Resource Assessment and
Lighting Assessment)**

**Land East of Mousdell Close,
Ashington**

August 2025



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Project Name: Land East of Mousdell Close

Location Land East of Mousdell Close, Ashington,
Pulborough, RH20 3GS

Client: Penn Gardens Limited

File Reference: P2228

Issue	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
PL 1	07/08/2025	J Chan	M Smith	Initial Draft
PL 2	13/08/2025	J Chan	H James	Client Issue
PL 3	15/08/2025	J Chan	H James	Planning Issue

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been produced by ECE Planning on behalf of the applicant, Penn Gardens Limited in support of a Full Planning Application for the development of 74 dwellings at Land East of Mousdell Close, Ashington, Pulborough, RH20 3GS ('the Site'). The description of development for the proposals reads:
- 1.2. '*Erection of 74 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping*'
- 1.3. The Applicant has previously undertaken Pre-Application discussions with Horsham District Council which culminated in a response dated 23 July 2025 (reference PE/25/0096). The detailed response of the Pre-Application Advice can be found at **Appendix A**.
- 1.4. This statement sets out relevant background for determination of the planning application, including a description of development of the Site and its surroundings, the relevant planning history and planning policies, details of the proposed development, and an assessment of the planning merits of the site.
- 1.5. The proposals have also been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (2024 version), the Planning Practice Guidance, Horsham Local Plan, and Ashington Neighbourhood Plan.

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2. The Site

- 2.1. The site is located immediately adjacent to the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) of Ashington village, which lies approximately 10 miles to the South of Horsham. The A24 lies to the east of the village and connects the village to both Horsham and the coastal settlements of Worthing and Brighton.
- 2.2. Ashington is identified in the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) Settlement Hierarchy as a 'Medium Village'. The village has a local shop which services the village, a primary school and recreational facilities such as the scout hut, Multi-Use Games Area, a community centre and a pub. The site lies close to facilities and services within the village, being located just to the north of the 'Village Cluster' as defined by the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3. The site, itself, is located to the south of Rectory Lane, at the western edge of the village of Ashington. A band of mature woodland and a drainage ditch forms the southern boundary of the site. To the west lie the developments of Penn Gardens and Mousdell Close.
- 2.4. The eastern boundary abuts the property named Winders, and the under construction development at the Chanctonbury Nursery Site. While sitting outside the BUAB of Ashington, the site is contained within an existing defensible boundary of housing and trees/hedgerows.



Figure 1 - Site Location

- 2.5. Notably, the site was identified for a Site Allocation within the now withdrawn Draft Horsham Local Plan 2023-2040 (Regulation 19), by virtue of draft policy HA5 (Site Allocation ASHN1). Horsham District Council has asserted that the evidence base for this allocation was considered sound, and therefore will continue to support this site allocation through future local plan preparation (see Section 6.5 of this Statement).

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- 2.6. The site is approximately 2.19 hectares in size and comprises an open field. The site does not contain any significant trees or landscape features. The site is not in agricultural use and is classified as being agricultural grade 4 land, being of poor quality. Adjacent land is identified as grade 3 (moderate to good).
- 2.7. The site is well placed to access local amenities and is within reasonable walking distance to access key services such as the school and pharmacy. There is a bus service providing some connectivity to other settlements which offer wider services. The site is therefore particularly well placed in terms of locational sustainability, close of the heart of the village and to a range of community facilities.
- 2.8. The site is not in proximity to any heritage assets such as listed buildings or conservation areas.
- 2.9. The site lies within Flood Zone 1, meaning that there is a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The site is also not identified as being at risk of surface water flooding, both now and in the future modelled scenario of 2040-2060.
- 2.10. The topography of the site gently slopes to the south and northwest, with the ridge of the slope running from northeast to southwest through the site. At the low point of the site, along the southern boundary, runs a drainage ditch.

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3. Planning History

3.1.1. A review of Council's planning register reveals no relevant applications on the site itself. However, there are several applications of relevance on adjacent land surrounding the site. These are detailed below:

3.2. Chanctonbury Nurseries



Figure 2 - Relationship of Chanctonbury Nurseries (Red Line) with the Pre-App Site (Blue Line)

3.2.1. **DC/22/0372** – Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 74 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping at Chanctonbury Nurseries Rectory Lane Ashington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3AS - **Approved 5th September 2023**.

3.2.2. This application, granted September 2023, comprises land directly to the east of the site. Permission was granted for a development of 74 dwellings on a former horticultural nursery. The permission has subsequently been amended under several Variation of Condition Applications and Non-Material Amendment Applications.

3.2.3. **DC/24/0977** – Variation to condition 1 to approved application DC/22/0372 (Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 74 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping) To enable a substation to be provided - **Approved 13th September 2024**.

3.2.4. **DC/24/1081** – Variation of condition 1 of previously approved application reference DC/22/0372 (Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 74 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping) amendment to the affordable housing plans and to the approved site layout to include a sub-station - **Approved 4th October 2024**

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3.2.5. **DC/24/1920** – Non Material Amendment to previously approved application DC/24/0977 (Variation to condition 1 to approved application DC/22/0372 (Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 74 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping) to enable a substation to be provided) to amend house types – **Approved 3rd February 2025**

3.2.6. The most up-to-date Site Layout as approved under **DC/24/1920** is shown below:



Figure 3 - Plan of Proposals at Chanctonbury Nurseries

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3.3. Land To The West of Ashington C of E School, Park Lane



Figure 4 - Relationship of Land West of Ashington (Red Line) with the Pre-App Site (Blue Line)

- 3.3.1. **DC/23/0406** - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 152 dwellings, all-weather sport pitch, sports pavilion and allotments; with associated access, landscaping, open space and infrastructure (amended plans including reduced housing numbers and modified access off Church Lane) – **Pending Decision**
- 3.3.2. This application was validated in March 2023, and is awaiting determination. Both of these sites are allocated within the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan, as shown below with the application site immediately adjacent.

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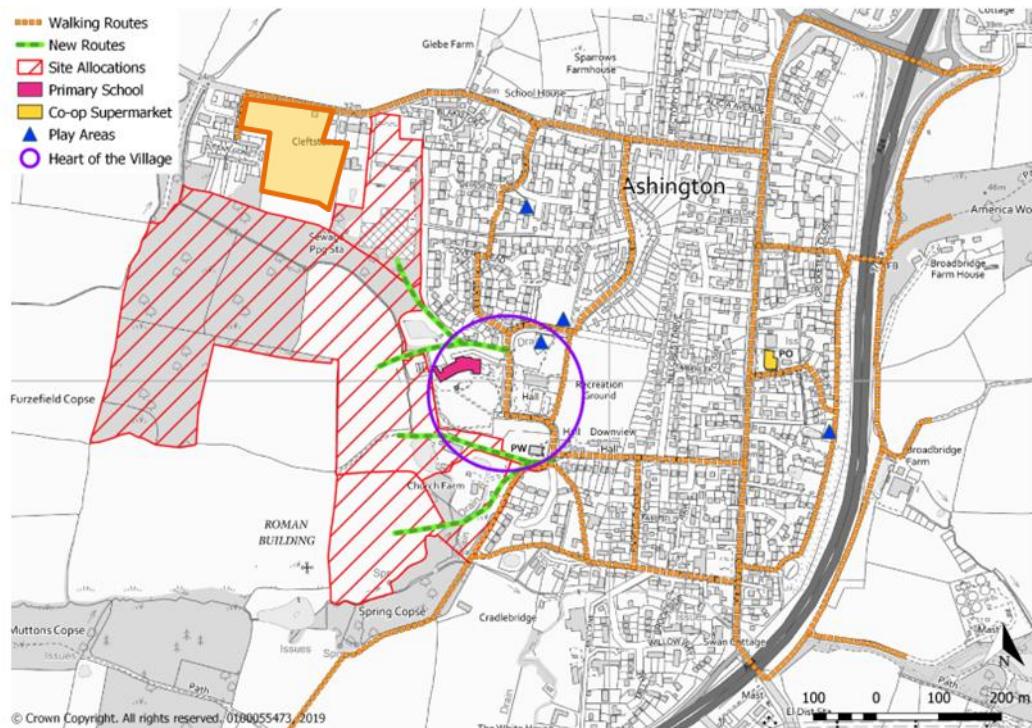


Figure 5 - Map of Ashington Neighbourhood Plan Site Allocations

3.4. Pre Application

3.4.1. Pre Application discussions were held with Horsham District Council, with an initial meeting on 11th June 2025, culminating in a written response on 23rd July 2025. A series of 3 layout options were presenting during discussions, providing variation in the location of the main public open space and the configuration of units along Rectory Lane.

3.4.2. The officer indicated that the scheme could be supported at officer level in principle, particularly in reference to Horsham District's current Housing Land Supply Position. Feedback given on the detailed design is summarised as follows:

- A low roof profile along Rectory Lane was considered be more suitable to help the new development sit more comfortably within the rural setting.
- The design and massing of the proposed townhouses and flats were considered overly dominant in the street scene. A more sensitive approach was suggested.
- The configuration of the central open space was recommended to maximise its useable area and setting, avoiding being overwhelmed by parking.
- A pedestrian and cycle link to the adjacent development to the south, at Land West of Ashington, was highlighted as a positive feature that would be well received.
- Locating new and retained trees outside of private gardens was recommended to ensure their long-term health and management.
- The parking strategy was recommended to be reviewed against WSCC guidelines. Car ports were recommended as a more rural and practical solution than garages.
- The back-to-back distances between some proposed units and the existing dwellings at Penn Gardens was considered a point of contention.

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3.4.3. For further details see Appendix A.

3.5. Stakeholder Engagement

3.5.1. Stakeholder engagement took place in the form of a Public Exhibition event held on 10th July 2025 at Ashington Community Centre. Leaflets were distributed prior the event inviting local residents and interested parties to attend. Consultation Boards detailing the scheme were on display, as well as members of the project team available to answer questions. Feedback was collected via feedback forms at the event. An online consultation page was also available from 20th June to 3rd July 2025, allowing consultees to review the proposals and give feedback remotely.

3.5.2. Full details of stakeholder engagement undertaken can be found in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement.

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4. The Proposal

4.1. The proposal is for a development of 74 residential dwellings, including 26no. affordable units (35%). These are to range from 1 to 4 bedroom units, with a mix of flats and houses.

4.2. The proposed housing mix is set out in the table below:

Unit Type	Market		Affordable		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1-Bedroom Flat	-		8		8	11%
1-Bedroom Maisonette	4		2		6	8%
2-Bedroom Flat	-		8		8	11%
2-Bedroom House	8		2		10	13%
3-Bedroom House	23		6		29	40%
4-Bedroom House	13		-		13	17%
Total	48	64.9%	26	35.1%	74	100%

Table 1 - Proposed Housing Mix



Figure 6 - Proposed Site Plan

4.3. Two buildings at the western boundary of the site are proposed to house a series of 1 and 2-bed flats. These are to be 2 full storeys with additional accommodation within the roof space, with catslide roofs on the northern and southern elevations to minimise their visual impact. The rest of the site is proposed to accommodate detached, semi-detached, or a terraces of 3 dwellings. These are to be primarily of 2-storeys, with some of 2.5-storeys (2 storey with accommodation in roof) within the interior of the site.

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4.4. Parking is to be provided in line with the following standards set out in Table 2, alongside 23no. visitor spaces.

Dwelling Type	No. Parking Spaces
1-bedroom flat / maisonette	1
2-bedroom flat	1.5
2/3-bedroom house	2-3 (incl. open car barns)
4-bedroom house	3 (incl. garages)

Table 2 - Parking Schedule

4.5. The proposal is to provide a total of 4,344m² of public open space, with a Central Open Space located at the heart of the development. Additional green spaces are to be positioned to the south, adjacent to the off-site woodland, and along the site's boundaries. These areas will be designed to provide recreational space for residents, contribute to biodiversity, and enhance the overall landscape of the development.

4.6. The development is to include sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) featuring underground crates and a retention pond to manage surface water runoff. This system will ensure that surface water discharge from the site is restricted to the greenfield runoff rate, effectively managing flood risk. The SuDS features will be integrated within the green spaces, combining functionality with landscaping to provide additional ecological and amenity value.

4.7. Access is to be via a new junction on Rectory Lane, providing both vehicular and pedestrian access. The primary access road will lead into the development and transition into an internal loop road. An existing access point at the northeast corner is to be retained and repurposed to serve two dwellings. A shared surface design is to be used in the southern portions of the site.

4.8. The development is to adopt a design that reflects the local vernacular, utilising traditional materials such as red brick, white render, and buff brick detailing. The dwellings will predominantly be two-storey, with some 2.5-storey homes placed centrally and in the north-western corner of the site. The two proposed flat blocks will be positioned in the north-western corner of the site, screened by enhanced boundary planting. Key design features will include gable frontages, projecting bay windows, and barn hip roofs.

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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) and the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (2021).
- 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. In the interim prior to a new plan being adopted, the Facilitating Appropriate Development Document (2022) sets out advice on the Council's priorities in decision-making. Please refer to the below paragraphs for further information.

5.2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2.1. The NPPF was adopted in 2012 with many revised versions, the most recent of which being updated in February 2025.
- 5.2.2. As explored in further detail later in this Statement, the National Housing Target has recently been increased from 300,000 new homes a year to 370,000 new homes a year. As a result, the NPPF has been heavily updated to try and boost the delivery of housing to try and meet the newest target.
- 5.2.3. 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 3 – Plan-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-design places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.3. Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 5.3.1. 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 proposed development is seen to be fully compliant with it.

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5.4. Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

5.4.1. The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) makes up the adopted Local Plan. The main policies of relevance for this application are:

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Settlement Expansion
Policy 15 - Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 24 - Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Countryside Protection
Policy 27 - Settlement Coalescence
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Climate Change
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

5.5. Withdrawn Horsham District Local Plan 2023 – 2040 (Regulation 19 Version)

5.5.1. Within the draft Local Plan, the site was allocated for housing under allocation **ADN1 of Policy HA5**. This designated the site for delivery of up to 75 residential units.

5.5.2. The Regulation 19 Local Plan has been published for a six week period of representation from 19 January 2024 to 1 March 2024. The Regulation 19 Local Plan has since been formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 26 July 2024 and the examination hearings commenced in December 2024. The Facilitating Appropriate Development Document (2022) was published prior to the submission of the Draft Local Plan and established the Council's priorities and clarified the weight of the Draft Plan in the period prior to adoption.

5.5.3. 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*'.

5.5.4. 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.

5.5.5. A report from Horsham District Council (presented to committee on 23rd July and to be presented to cabinet in September 2025) recommended withdrawal of the local plan. As such, it is considered to hold very limited weight in the determination of this application.

5.5.6. Despite this, in Paragraph 5.7 of Appendix A of the report (Shaping Development in Horsham District: Planning Advice Note), the council asserts that they will continue to support site allocations identified within the withdrawn plan. The report states that:

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'It is the Council's view that the proposed site allocations were based on robust evidence, most notably site assessment work and were capable of accommodating sustainable development. For this reason, the Council will consider positively proposals on sites identified in the wLP, which accord with such evidence and are in accordance with (non-housing supply) HDPF or Neighbourhood Plan policies. Therefore, the Council would encourage applicants to have regard to site-specific matters identified in the wLP, including the quantum of development.'

5.5.7. Horsham District Council's position on the matter has therefore been made clear and this application has been prepared on the assumption that the Council continues to support these previously identified site allocations. Therefore allocation ADN1 remains relevant.

5.6. Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031

5.6.1. A neighbourhood plan was adopted for Ashington in June 2021. This sets out the strategic spatial strategy for the village up to 2031. The following policies are considered to be of relevance to this application:

ASH1 – Overall Spatial Strategy For Ashington

ASH2 – Increasing Walking In Ashington

ASH3 – Parking Provision

ASH5 – Landscaping And Countryside Access

ASH8 – Ashington Community Cluster

ASH10 – Chanctonbury Nursery

ASH11 – Land West Of Ashington School

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6. Planning Appraisal

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. The principle areas of policy interest in relation to this development are identified as follows:

Principle of Development

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

Design, Form and Appearance

Landscape and Visual Impact

Open Space

Residential Amenity

Highways and Transport

Flood Risk and Drainage

Water Neutrality

Ecology

Arboriculture

Heritage and Archaeology

Ground Contamination

Noise

Air Quality

Sustainability

Lighting Assessment

Minerals Resource Assessment

6.2. Principle of Development

6.2.1. As set out in paragraph 72 of the NPPF, it is a requirement for Local Planning Authorities to identify sufficient sites for the delivery of at least 5 years of housing supply. Paragraph 79 further elaborates on the consequences of failing to maintain the supply of housing, with Part (c) stating that:

6.2.2. *'Where delivery falls below 75% of the requirement over the previous three years, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, as set out in footnote 8 of this Framework, in addition to the requirements for an action plan and 20% buffer.'*

6.2.3. In a recent appeal within Horsham District (ref. APP/Z3825/W/24/3355546), it was noted by the inspector and agreed by the Council that, as of June 2025, Horsham's current housing land supply stands at 1 year. Furthermore, the most recent Authority Monitoring Report (2023-24) notes only 452 net completions that year, as compared to the identified need of 1,357 per year. This equates to meeting only 33.3% of demand. Given the extreme undersupply of homes, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply as set out by Paragraph 11.d.ii of the NPPF.

6.2.4. The proposal, as outlined in section 5 of this report, is to deliver 74 new homes for the district. This would make a notable contribution to address the shortfall of some 905 units as identified for the year 2023-2024.

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6.2.5. The site is considered a sustainable location, directly adjacent to the built-up area boundary of Ashington. Development in this location would also abut two existing developed sites, connecting the development of Penn Gardens and Mousdell Close to the main built-up area of Ashington. In this way it may be considered infill development, especially given the approval of the Chanctonbury Nurseries site to the east.

6.2.6. Ashington itself is considered a 'Medium Village' within the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), providing a moderate level of services. Policy 4 of the Local Plan identifies that the expansion of settlements (including medium villages) will be supported where:

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

6.2.7. Regarding part 3, the development is considered to be fully policy compliant, given the housing situation in Horsham District as outlined above. The development is also to be fully enclosed by an existing and enhance hedge boundary and woodland area to the south, aligning with part 5.

6.2.8. It should also be noted that the site received a draft allocation within the (to be withdrawn) Horsham District Local Plan 2023 – 2040. The allocation, labelled ADN1 within Policy HA5, identified the site as suitable for a development of '*at least 75 dwellings*'. Despite the withdrawal of the plan being imminent, as mentioned in paragraph 5.5.5 of this statement, the council has made clear its position of continuing to support draft allocations made in the plan. The fact that the inspector '*did not indicate any specific concerns with proposed site allocations in his Initial Findings Letter*' demonstrates that these allocations are likely to be carried forwards in any future Local Plan submitted for examination.

6.2.9. With this in mind, the site should be considered to not prejudice comprehensive long-term development or conflict with the development strategy. It should also be considered an appropriate level of expansion for the scale and function of Ashington, as the Council were clearly of this opinion when making the draft allocation. In this way, the development aligns with parts 2 and 4 of Policy 4 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

6.2.10. While the site is not allocated within an adopted Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, the exceptional circumstances of Horsham's housing land supply situation, as well as the considerably out of date Local Plan, should make allowance for the development on this point. As demonstrated in paragraph 5.5.6 of this statement, the Council has set out their position, clarifying that draft allocations within the withdrawn plan will continue to be supported. Therefore, the proposal should be considered to, for all intents and purposes, be complaint with part 1 of Policy 4.

6.2.11. In this regard, a development of 74 homes in this location is considered compliant with all relevant policy and the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note, and is therefore acceptable in principle.

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6.3. Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

6.4. The proposed development seeks to deliver high quality homes in the form of one, two, three, and four-bedroom dwellings to meet projected future household needs for the local area, and with particular focus on the crucial affordability need in this area. The proposed mix of dwellings is as follows:

Unit Type	Market		Affordable		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1-Bedroom Flat	-		8		8	11%
1-Bedroom Maisonette	4		2		6	8%
2-Bedroom Flat	-		8		8	11%
2-Bedroom House	8		2		10	13%
3-Bedroom House	23		6		29	40%
4-Bedroom House	13		-		13	17%
Total	48	64.9%	26	35.1%	74	100%

Table 1 - Proposed Housing Mix (repeated for reference only)

6.5. Policy 16 of the HDPF stated that development should provide a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the district's communities to create sustainable and balanced communities. On this basis, an edge of settlement appropriate mix has been proposed with a proportion of smaller 1 and 2-bedroom dwellings, and several larger family sized units that would be expected in this type of location.

6.6. Policy 16 also requires developments of 15 dwellings or more to provide 35% affordable housing. The proposed development is considered to be policy compliant, providing 26 affordable dwellings which equates to 35% on site provision.

6.7. It is considered that with regards to the affordable housing provision and housing mix, the proposed development is compliant with policy requirements and the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note.

6.8. Design, Form and Appearance

6.8.1. Policy 32 of the Horsham District Planning Framework sets out the Council's expectations for the quality of new development within the district. In particular, this suggests that development should:

'Contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings'

6.8.2. As explained within the accompanying Design and Access Statement, the design draws from the local context through its use of materials, style, and notably its massing. Pre Application discussions have led to an evolution of the scheme, with a number of amendments made to better integrate the development with its surroundings in line with comments from the Officer.

6.8.3. The overall design strategy places a public open space centrally, clearly visible from the entrance of the development and overlooked to provide passive surveillance. The overall massing generally concentrates taller elements of 2.5 stories into the centre of the site, with lower 2 story buildings along the northern, southern, and eastern boundaries. Back-to-back distances have been maximised to reduce overlooking whilst delivering a scheme of sufficient housing to meet the needs of the district. The development utilised a built form and massing that takes cues from both Ashington as a whole, as well as its immediate context, including the under construction development at Chanctonbury Nurseries.

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- 6.8.4. Within Pre Application discussions, the case officer expressed some concerns regarding the visual impact and massing orientation of some plots, particularly of flat blocks A and B; plots 33 to 44; and plots 1, 2, and 53 to 58. This proposal made several amendments to address these concerns and achieve a scheme that is deemed acceptable.
- 6.8.5. Firstly, to address the concerns of the 'dominant' massing of flat blocks A and B, the configuration of the roof form has been amended. The introduction of catslides on the northernmost and southernmost elevations will create a more understated form, and gentler visual impact on the street scene.
- 6.8.6. In a similar manner, the other plots along Rectory Lane have been reduced in scale. Plots 53 to 58 have eliminated the accommodation within the roof space, and reduced the number of dwellings in this stretch from 7 to 6, enabling a sympathetic transition to the rural edge to the north.
- 6.8.7. Lastly, the back-to-back distances of plots 40 to 42 with 5 to 6 Penn Gardens has been increased to more than 21 metres. The shifting of plots 33 to 44 has enabled this, as well as allowing a landscape to be created between the proposed dwellings and the properties at Penn Gardens.
- 6.8.8. The above changes have resulted in a sensitive scheme that responds positively to its surroundings and makes the most of the site.
- 6.8.9. It is considered that with regards to the design, form and appearance, the proposed development is fully compliant with The Horsham District Planning Framework, Ashington Neighbourhood Plan, and Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note. Please refer to the Design & Access Statement and accompanying drawings for more information.

6.9. Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.9.1. As established above, the scheme has been developed to respond sensitively to its edge of settlement location. The accompanying Landscape and Visual Appraisal from Lizard establishes the full impacts of the development of the visual character and amenity of the local area.
- 6.9.2. Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 25 and 27 set out how development in a location such as this should respond to the visual characteristics of the area. Policy 27 states that '*landscapes will be protected from development which would result in the coalescence of settlements*'. The proposals will not cause the coalescence of Ashington with any other settlement, with the site merely linking the main built-up area of Ashington to the development at Mousdell Close and Penn Gardens. This neighbouring development is not considered a settlement in its own right, instead functioning as satellite development of Ashington.
- 6.9.3. Policy 25 establishes that development will be supported where it '*protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance*'. As discussed above, the Officer during Pre Application discussions considered the boundary along Rectory Lane to be particularly important for its contribution to the landscape character of this edge of settlement location, and the scheme has been designed to address this. Reducing the density in this area compared to the proposals presented at Pre Application stage has helped to create a scheme that makes a sensitive transition to the countryside.
- 6.9.4. The conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal identify that while the development will have a '*moderate adverse effect*' on the localised rural character, the effects on other landscape and visual elements would be minor to negligible. The nature of the site being fully enclosed by mature trees and hedgerow boundaries helps to contain the visual impact of the development to mostly within the site itself.

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6.9.5. The development is therefore fully compliant on the grounds of landscape and visual impact and aligns with all relevant policy and the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note. Please see the accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for further details.

6.10. Open Space

6.10.1. A total of a total of 4,344m² of public open space is proposed. This is to take the form of an 834m² Central Open Space, 1867m² of semi-natural greenspace adjacent to the retention basin and woodland boundary, and 1642m² of frontage and boundary planting/greenspace.

6.10.2. The Horsham Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review (2021) sets out Horsham's expectations for the provision of open space. This establishes where deficiencies in particular categories of open space and outdoor amenities exist, or where they could arise given future growth projections. The following table excerpt sets out the predicted future need in Ashington.

Analysis Area	Parks	NSN	AGS	Child's Play	Young People	Allotments	Combined
Ashington	-2.05	-7.56	+0.44	+0.14	-0.03	-0.56	-9.63

Table 3 - Identified Open Space Deficiencies

6.10.3. As shown above, the predominant identified need in Ashington is for Natural or Seminatural Greenspace (NSN). This is therefore where the majority of open space provision has been allocated.

6.10.4. It should be noted that in Pre Application Discussion, the case officer considered that the '*quantum of open space appears acceptable*'. It was also mentioned that, for a development of this scale, the council '*would not expect to see onsite provision of allotments or equipped play areas*'. Instead, the case officer encouraged a focus on pedestrian connections to benefit from the amenities of the forthcoming development to the south.

6.10.5. The quantity and quality of open space provided is therefore considered to comply with Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) Policy 32, regarding how it '*Help[s] [to] secure a framework of high quality open spaces which meets the identified needs of the community*'. The onsite provision of open space also meets the criteria of Policy 43, which reads:

'The provision of new or improved community facilities or services will be supported, particularly where they meet the identified needs of local communities as indicated in the current Sport, Open Space and Recreation Study and other relevant studies, or contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure.'

6.10.6. The development, in delivering on-site semi-natural green space and parkland, should be considered to comply with this. Further connections to the neighbouring development to the south at Land West of Ashington will further enhance the network of open space provision and enable enjoyment of those facilities by residents both within the development and along Rectory Lane.

6.10.7. It should therefore be concluded that the development complies with all policies relevant to the provision of open space and aligns with the advice of the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note.

6.11. Residential Amenity

6.11.1. As outlined in Section 2.3, the development benefits from a defensible planted boundary of hedges and trees. The site is therefore self-contained and well screened from surrounding development.

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- 6.11.2. Within Pre Application discussions, the case officer expressed concerns over the back-to-back distances between plots on the western boundary and the properties at 5-6 Penn Gardens. This has since been amended. The use of a shared surface road design in the southern portion of the site enabled the residential units along the western boundary to be shifted slightly eastwards, enabling a back-to-back distance of 21 metres. This has also enabled a thicker boundary buffer of enhanced hedgerows. Further details of these changes are outlined in page 21 of the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 6.11.3. The development has therefore taken proactive measures to avoid overlooking and ensure the Residential Amenity of neighbouring properties is maintained.
- 6.11.4. The development itself will also provide a high level of amenity to future residents. All units are designed to at least M4(2) accessibility standards, with a further 4no. units proposed to meet M4(3) standards. This is in line with Policy 40 of the draft Horsham District Local Plan 2023 - 2040, which while of only limited weight also aligns with Part f) of NPPF Paragraph 135. This asserts that decisions should '*create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being*'.
- 6.11.5. Residential amenity will also be enhanced by the on-site open space provision and high quality design, providing a positive environment for future residents.
- 6.11.6. Considering this, the development is considered to align with all relevant policy regarding residential amenity and the takes due consideration of the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note. It should therefore be concluded that the development is acceptable on these grounds.

6.12. Highways and Transport

- 6.12.1. Policy 39 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) identifies that sufficient infrastructure capacity must be available for land to be released for development. Road capacity would fall under the remit of this. The accompanying Transport Statement identifies that the existing road network does have capacity for the expected levels of traffic that the development would generate. It is asserted that:

'The proposed development is expected to generate 35 and 32 two-way vehicle movements during the morning and evening peak periods respectively; a negligible impact. The site access junction has been subject to capacity testing which is forecast to operate well within capacity with minimal queuing and delay'

- 6.12.2. It is then further concluded that '*the impact of traffic generated by the proposed development on the operation of the highway network is imperceptible and falls short of the 'severe' residual cumulative impact' test*'. It is therefore concluded that transport infrastructure capacity is sufficient to support the expected vehicle traffic of the development. As such no specific mitigation measures beyond what is standard should be required.
- 6.12.3. Beyond vehicular access, the connection and integration of development with the wider network of pedestrian, cycle, and public transport provisions is a key policy objective. Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 40 and Ashington Neighbourhood Plan Policy ASH2 both seek to promote improvements to pedestrian connectivity.
- 6.12.4. This was also identified in Pre Application discussions, with the officer '*strongly encourag[ing] that a potential pedestrian / cycle link though to the southern development site at "Land West of Ashington"* be included.

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6.12.5. Pedestrian connections towards the growing 'Community Cluster' will be available via footpath 2607. The setting of this is to be enhanced by the now under construction Chanctonbury Nurseries development site to the east. This provides connections to the Ashington Community Centre and Ashington CofE Primary School via a short stretch of Rectory Lane and the footpath, enabling a safe connection, mostly separated from vehicular traffic. Pedestrian enhancements to Rectory Lane are also proposed, improving the quality of this route for both existing and future residents. Further connections to the emerging 'Land West of Ashington' site may also be secured. Beyond this, contributions for public transport infrastructure have also been considered. These would provide for enhancements to the bus stops in Ashington, including replacement shelters, seating, and cycle stands.

6.12.6. Parking is to be provided at a rate of 1-3 spaces per unit alongside 23 visitor spaces, as set out in Table 2 in Paragraph 4.4 of this statement. Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework asserts that '*adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users*'. The accompanying Transport Statement outlines in full how the proposed provision is in line with the West Sussex Guidance on Parking at New Developments document (September 2020). It should therefore be concluded that the proposed parking provision is adequate in line with Policy 41.

6.12.7. Policy ASH3 of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan similarly asserts that provision must be in line with the West Sussex Residential Parking Demand Calculator, included within the aforementioned Guidance Note. It also states the need for '*suitable off-street parking*'. With all assigned parking spaces being off-street, the proposal also meets the demands of Policy ASH3.

6.12.8. The proposals are therefore considered fully policy compliant regarding highways and transport and align with the advice given in the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note. Please refer to the accompanying Travel Plan and Transport Statement produced by i-transport for full details.

6.13. Flood Risk and Drainage

6.13.1. As established in Paragraph 2.9 of this Statement, the site is within Flood Zone 1, with a low risk of flooding from all sources. Within the Development Plan, Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 38 outlines the district's strategy for flood risk, outlining the need for a sequential approach to flood risk management; compliance with the Horsham District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; the need for appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems; and be in accordance with the Water Framework Directive and Gatwick Sub Region Water Cycle Study. Policy 35 also stresses the need for climate adaptation strategies, including for drainage.

6.13.2. The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy sets out full details of the drainage features to be included in the scheme. To summarise, this is to include an attenuation basin of approximately 315m³, an underground cellular storage tank with 490m³ of attenuation storage within the central open space, around 2129m² of pervious pavement used across the development, water butts installed for each dwelling, and a Vortex Flow Control Device to control the discharge rate of surface water runoff.

6.13.3. Assessing the development against the requirements of the policy, the proposal is considered in line with the sequential approach by the nature of the site being within Flood Zone 1. The site is not identified as being at risk within the Horsham District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and nonetheless implements considerable elements of sustainable urban drainage infrastructure. The objectives of the Water Framework Directive and Gatwick Sub Region Water Cycle Study are also met by the implementation of SuDS features.

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6.13.4. Drainage features have also been designed to meet the needs of future modelled scenarios. This therefore meets the requirements of Policy 35 to address climate adaptation needs. The development is therefore considered to comply on drainage grounds and meets follows the recommendations within the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note. Please refer to the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy for further details.

6.14. Water Neutrality

6.14.1. On 14 September 2021, Horsham District Council received a Position Statement from Natural England. Information collected by Natural England shows that water abstraction for drinking water supplies is having a negative impact on the wildlife sites in the Arun Valley. They have advised that any new development that takes place must not add to this negative impact. As such, planning decision in Horsham District must now ensure that development is water neutral.

6.14.2. The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England and receives supplies from groundwater abstraction sources which cannot, with certainty, demonstrate no adverse impacts upon the defined Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

6.14.3. The Sussex North Water Certification Service (SNWCS) offered by Southern Water (previously known as SNOWS) is anticipated to become available during summer 2025. It has been declared that the service and associated credits will be available to eligible schemes, which was originally to include sites allocated within Draft Local Plan. This is now imminently to be withdrawn, as confirmed in a report from Horsham District Council presented to committee on 23rd July.

6.14.4. Despite this, in Paragraph 5.7 of Appendix A of the report (Shaping Development in Horsham District: Planning Advice Note), the Council asserts that they will continue to support site allocations identified within the withdrawn plan. The report states that:

'It is the Council's view that the proposed site allocations were based on robust evidence, most notably site assessment work and were capable of accommodating sustainable development. For this reason, the Council will consider positively proposals on sites identified in the wLP, which accord with such evidence and are in accordance with (non-housing supply) HDPF or Neighbourhood Plan policies. Therefore, the Council would encourage applicants to have regard to site-specific matters identified in the wLP, including the quantum of development.'

6.14.5. Given the above, the site can be functionally considered to be an allocated site. Therefore, the site should be considered eligible for accessing SNWCS. It should be noted that this view expressed by the Case Officer during Pre Application discussions. On this basis, it is through SNWCS credits that the proposal is anticipated to meet the criteria of water neutrality.

6.14.6. On this basis, a Water Neutrality Statement has been produced by Motion in support of this Application. This Water Neutrality Statement sets out Penn Gardens Limited's proposed strategy to address water consumption associated with the development of 74 dwellings at Land East of Mousdell Close, in line with the Natural England Position Statement (2021) for developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. While the development will increase water usage compared to the existing greenfield baseline, implementation of water-efficient fixtures and fittings is expected to reduce consumption to 84.45l/p/d in line with best practice.

6.14.7. As stated above, use of SNWCS credits is to address the remaining water consumption in order to make the proposals fully water neutral. By committing to this recognised and deliverable approach, Penn Gardens Limited demonstrates its alignment with the requirements of Horsham District Council and Natural England. This follows recommendations set out in the Shaping Development in Horsham

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District Advisory Note. Water neutrality, therefore, is not considered a constraint to the development coming forward.

6.14.8. Please refer to the accompanying Water Neutrality Statement produced by Motion for further information on the scheme.

6.15. Ecology

6.15.1. Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.

6.15.2. An Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application which details the extent of ecology on site and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure on site ecology is appropriately managed. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment for further details.

6.15.3. In addition, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment supports the application which details that the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be appropriately achieved through on-site and off-site as required by the Environment Act.

6.15.4. On this basis, the proposed development is in accordance with required policy and the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note in terms of ecology and biodiversity. Please refer to the supporting Ecological Impact Assessment and BNG Assessment for further information.

6.16. Arboriculture

6.16.1. Policies 26 and 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework both assert the importance of maintaining and protecting existing trees, from the perspective of landscape conservation and ecology respectively. The proposals would require the loss of some trees and hedge features to enable development, most notably the removal of a section of hedge to enable a new, widened site entrance.

6.16.2. This application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by Lizard Ecology. This sets out the strategy for protecting and managing existing trees on the site, and assesses the impact of any proposed removal of arboriculture features. The report concludes that:

'Over all the impacts relating to tree and hedgerow removals is considered to be low.'

6.16.3. It also asserts that adherence to the proposed method details would be make construction fully in line with legislation, and that the loss of any trees on site will be '*adequately compensated*' by the scheme.

6.16.4. It should therefore be concluded that the scheme is acceptable on the grounds of Arboriculture.

6.17. Heritage and Archaeology

6.17.1. The proposals are not anticipated to have any impact on local heritage assets, with no conservation areas in the immediate vicinity and the nearest listed building, the Grade II listed Laurel Cottage and Orchard Cottage (Historic England ref. 1191796) being over 450 metres from the site. As such the development is not considered to cause any impact or harm to designated heritage assets.

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6.17.2. An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group in support of the application. This identifies that the proposals do not impact on any designated archaeological sites or areas of archaeological importance. There is some identified potential for archaeological remains, through the report finds the development fully compliant with current legislation and advice from the Council.

6.18. Ground Contamination

6.18.1. Given the site's historic use as an agricultural field, contamination is unlikely. The accompanying Site Investigation Report concludes that '*no contaminants have been recorded above the relevant triggers and the site can therefore be considered suitable for use as residential land with plant uptake*'. Contamination should therefore be not considered a concern in the determination of this application.

6.19. Noise

6.19.1. A detailed Acoustic Impact Assessment has been prepared to accompany this application. It states that '*all noise levels in proposed external and internal areas would result in there being no adverse effects; with or without open windows*'. It goes on to conclude that '*No further noise mitigation measures are thereby required for this site to meet the local authority and national guidance criteria*'. The development should therefore be considered acceptable on the grounds of acoustic impact. Please see the accompanying Acoustic Impact Assessment for further details.

6.20. Air Quality

6.20.1. This application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment, which examines the potential air quality impacts arising from both construction and operational phases of the development. Air quality impacts of both phases are concluded to be 'not significant'. On this basis, the development should be considered acceptable on the grounds of Air Quality. Further details can be found in the accompanying Air Quality Assessment.

6.21. Sustainability

6.21.1. An Energy and Sustainability Statement has been produced by Impact Sustainability in support of this application. The statement outlines how the proposed residential development Land East of Mousdell Close will incorporate sustainable design and construction principles in line with national and local planning policy.

6.21.2. The Horsham District Council Planning Framework establishes the energy hierarchy, which suggests that development should: be lean (use less energy), be clean (supply energy efficiently), and be green (use renewable energy).

6.21.3. In order to meet the objectives of the energy hierarchy, several key sustainability features are proposed. These are to include, in order within the hierarchy, a high specification of building airtightness; the use of Air Source Heat Pumps; low energy LED lighting; and the installation of photovoltaic panels. All dwellings with associated parking will include electric vehicle charging infrastructure as outlined within the accompanying Transport Statement.

6.21.4. Overall, the proposals demonstrate a clear commitment to sustainability and meeting the relevant policy objectives of the Horsham District Planning Framework and the Shaping Development in Horsham District Advisory Note. The development represents a responsible and forward-thinking design that maximises environmental performance and long-term resilience.

6.21.5. Please refer to the Energy and Sustainability Statement produced by Impact Sustainability for further information on the scheme.

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6.22. Lighting Assessment

6.22.1. The proposed roads within the development will not be adopted by the Highways Authority. As such, the proposed lighting strategy for the development will be low level bollard lighting. This will be designed to minimise light pollution. Lighting to individual plots will be low level designed to minimise light spillage and protect ecology and amenity.

6.23. Minerals Resource Assessment

6.23.1. Within the HDPF, supporting text for Policy 2 (Sustainable Development) outlines that proposals should have regard to the defined County Minerals Safeguarding Area and Minerals Consultation Area guidance and policy prepared by West Sussex Country Council. The site falls within Brick Clay Minerals Consultation Zone of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and the associated Safeguarding Guidance.

6.23.2. Policy M9 of the Joint Minerals Local Plan states:

Safeguarded Areas (as shown on maps in Appendix E) will not be permitted unless:

- (i) Mineral sterilisation will not occur; or*
- (ii) it is appropriate and practicable to extract the mineral prior to the development taking place, having regards to the other policies in this Plan; or*
- (iii) the overriding need for the development outweighs the safeguarding of the mineral and it has been demonstrated that prior extraction is not practicable or environmentally feasible.*

6.23.3. Under criterion i) while the site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area in relation to Brick Clay, given the size and nature of the site, any sterilisation of the mineral is not considered to have a likely significant effect on its availability across the County. In this respect the loss of the site on wider Brick Clay supplies would be inconsequential.

6.23.4. With regards to criterion ii) clearly the development of up to 74 dwellings is of strategic importance for housing delivery for Horsham District and ensuring that the Council can demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing. This need would in our view override the safeguarding of Brick Clay.

6.23.5. On this basis, the delivery of residential development on an allocated site within the draft Horsham Local Plan would carry greater weight in the decision-making process when considered against Policy M9 of the Minerals Local Plan.

6.23.6. In mineral extraction terms the scheme is considered acceptable.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. To conclude, this application seeks permission for the erection of 74 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping at Land East of Mousdell Close, Ashington, Pulborough, RH20 3GS. The proposal has been assessed against the topics of the Principle of Development, Housing Mix, Design, Landscape, Open Space, Amenity, Transport, Drainage, Water Neutrality, Ecology, Arboriculture, Heritage, Contamination, Noise, Air Quality, Sustainability, Lighting, and Minerals, alongside all relevant local and national planning policy.
- 7.2. The proposed development represents a well-considered and sustainable extension to Ashington that will make a meaningful and timely contribution to addressing Horsham District's significant housing shortfall. In a location identified as suitable for growth, the scheme will deliver an acceptable mix of market and affordable homes, meeting a broad range of local needs while integrating sensitively with its surroundings.
- 7.3. The layout and design have been refined through pre-application discussions to respond positively to local character, reduce visual impact on the settlement edge, and provide a generous quantum of green space and landscaping that will both soften the development and enhance biodiversity. This approach ensures the scheme forms a positive addition to the village of Ashington.
- 7.4. Technical matters have been robustly assessed and resolved. The site is well connected to the village by sustainable transport links and has the capacity to accommodate vehicular movements without adverse highway impact. Flood risk is minimal, and the drainage strategy incorporates sustainable measures designed to accommodate future climate change.
- 7.5. The proposal is to achieve water neutrality through a mix of on-site usage reduction measures and offsite credits through SNWCS, ensuring no adverse effects on protected sites. Ecological and arboricultural impacts are limited and fully mitigated, with achieving biodiversity net gain in line with the 10% requirements. The development will also meet high sustainability standards through low-carbon technologies, energy-efficient design, and provision for electric vehicles, supporting the Council's aims on sustainability.
- 7.6. Importantly, the scheme has been demonstrated to be acceptable in relation to all other material considerations, including residential amenity, heritage, noise, and air quality. No policy conflicts have been identified that would outweigh the clear benefits, which include much-needed housing, investment in local infrastructure, and the creation of an attractive, accessible, and high-quality living environment.
- 7.7. The development aligns with the Shaping Development Advisory Note (2025) in all regards, and the scheme has been developed with this in mind in the absence of an up-to-date local plan.
- 7.8. In the context of the district's acute housing need and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the balance of considerations strongly supports the grant of planning permission without delay.

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Appendix A – Pre Application Written Response (dated 23rd July 2025)



Huw James
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Our ref: PE/25/0096
Your ref:
Officer: Nicola Pettifer
Email: Nicola.Pettifer@horsham.gov.uk
Tel: 01403 215238
Date: 23rd July 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Location: Land East of Mousell Close, Rectory Lane, Ashington

Details: Erection of 75 dwellings and associated access and landscaping

Your enquiry has been considered and I can advise as follows:

The proposal seeks advice on a scheme which looks to develop a field parcel for up to 75 dwellings.

As noted in the covering letter, the site lies to the west of Ashington and lies outside of the BUAB as currently defined. The enquiry site adjoins the BUAB in the very south-eastern corner (adjoining Chanctonbury Nurseries site) and at the north-eastern corner, where it adjoins the residential boundaries of Winders and Cleftstones.

It is noted that land to the south forms the development site at 'Land West of Ashington' which has been allocated in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan for the development of approximately 150 dwellings (policy ASH11), and which is currently subject to a pending planning application (DC/23/0406). A separating wedge of land that is currently populated by trees and scrub sits between the pre-app site and the southern 'Land West of Ashington' development site.

The indicative housing mix is given in the table below, with 71 dwellings complying with the M4(2) standard for adaptable homes, and 4 dwellings built to M4(3) standards (disabled):

Unit Type	Market		Affordable		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1-Bedroom Flat	2		10		12	16%
2-Bedroom Flat	-		8		8	10%
2-Bedroom House	10		3		13	17%
3-Bedroom House	24		5		29	40%
4-Bedroom House	13		-		13	17%
Total	49	65%	26	35%	75	100%

Advice is sought in relation to the Council's current housing land supply shortfall, recognising that the site had been identified in the draft Reg 19 Local Plan under strategic policy HA5 for the provision of at least 75 homes. In addition, advice is sought in relation to the position under SNOWS (new name SNWCS – Sussex North Water Certification Scheme).

Separate advice is being sought from West Sussex County Council in relation to access and highways matters.

Policy Position

The starting point in this instance is the recognition that the site lies outside of the defined Built Up Area Boundary of Ashington, and therefore presents a conflict with strategic policies in the Horsham District Local Plan (HDPF), namely policies 2, 4 and 26, which cumulatively seek to restrict development in the countryside. Furthermore, the site has not been allocated in the made Ashington Neighbourhood Plan, which remains in date until June 2026.

In recognising that the HDPF is over 5 years old, the Council was progressing a new draft Local Plan, with examinations having commenced in December 2024. However, following the Inspector's decision to halt the examination process, and the receipt of his Interim Findings (dated 4th April 2025), progress on the Local Plan has stalled. As of July 2025, I can advise that a recommendation will be going to the Scrutiny Committee (on 23rd July 2025), followed by Cabinet (6th August) advising that the draft Local Plan be formally withdrawn from the examination process. The report seeking this authorisation can be found at:

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g2883/Public%20reports%20pack%2023rd-Jul-2025%202017.30%20Communities%20and%20Place%20Policy%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

As a result the policies in the draft Local Plan, which includes the draft allocation at Mousdell Close, will carry no weight from 7 August. We will though continue to give some limited weight to the evidence base which supported the draft Local Plan. This would include the site assessments to support the draft allocations.

At the same time, we are seeking authority to publish an update to our FAD (Facilitating Appropriate Development) document. The new guidance document is called the 'Shaping Development in Horsham Planning Advice Note' (SDHD) and can be found at page 27 on the above link. The SDHD retains the same guiding principles for supporting new development as the FAD, and also includes a specific section expressing continued support for the draft site allocations (para 5.7).

In respect of the background evidence base, the following advice was contained in the document '*Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment - Sites Identified for Potential Allocation for Housing Development*' (June 2024):

- *Consideration whether the site would be a source of Horsham Stone Slate (Minerals Site)- this stone is considered essential for the maintenance of local heritage assets to preserve the unique character*
- *Assessment of local heritage assets and their sensitivity to change. There are a number of Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets within 1km of the site*
- *Detailed baseline and field assessment undertaken for potential archaeological interest as the site is located close to designated archaeological sites and scheduled ancient monuments*
- *The rural setting of the settlement of Ashington should be enhanced as part of the development, with a lower quantum of development/open space on land closer to the southern boundary.*
- *New buildings should be traditionally scaled and detailed.*
- *Consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of development on the overall landscape and historic character of the locality.*

- *The quantum of development should reflect the transition between the site area and the surrounding countryside.*

The following points should also be noted in the background evidence base document ‘*Sites with potential for allocation for housing development*’ (Dec 2023), which are considered to retain some limited weight in the decision-making process:

- *Appropriate location for an infill development*
- *The site is relatively well-screened from the wider countryside – overgrown vegetation and scrub*
- *To the south the site is relatively well-screened with existing tree belts and dense vegetation*
- *Site identified within the bat sustenance zone*
- *Within the Brick Clay (Weald Clay) Minerals Safeguarding area*
- *Opportunities to improve and enhance pedestrian and cycling linkages with the growth Cluster of Ashington*
- *Financial contributions may be required towards the expansion of the local primary school*
- *Potential access to be delivered off Rectory Road – but this is a narrow rural lane with a pavement along the southern side leading into the village*

It is therefore my view, that the principle of a residential development on this site, for up to 75 dwellings, could continue to be supported at officer level, given the Council’s recognised housing supply shortfall, and noting that the site was considered to present a suitable and sustainable housing allocation within the background evidence documents prepared to support the Local Plan process.

It must though be recognised that the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan is under five years old, contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing need, and contains a spatial policy controlling development in the countryside. As a consequence, until June 2026 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF will be engaged in the consideration of any application on this site. Whilst I recognise that Paragraph 14 does not absolutely rule out the grant of development that conflicts with a qualifying neighbourhood plan, the Paragraph 14 protection at this point in time nevertheless forms an important material consideration. How this impacts on the final decision the Council will make on any application will depend on when the application is submitted and when it is then determined.

SNOWS (SNWCS)

Another change to note is that the strategic water neutrality solution (formerly SNOWS) will now be referred to as the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS). I understand that the access criteria will be revised in due course to reflect the anticipated publication of the ‘Shaping Development in Horsham Planning Advice Note’. At that point, the site allocations within the withdrawn Local Plan will be provided with eligibility to join SNWCS. This is because these sites have informed the evidence used to inform Southern Water’s demand budget.

In my view, should an application on this site come forward in broad alignment with the draft policy allocation then it would be eligible to offset its water use via SNWCS.

Further information on accessing SNWCS can be found on our website under:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/water-neutrality-in-horsham-district/sussex-north-water-certification-scheme>

Design / Layout

The pre-application submission included a layout with a centrally located public open space and an aligned row of ‘townhouses’ along the northern boundary with Rectory Lane (Option A / SK02 Rev D).

Following the pre-app meeting, and surveys undertaken on site, two further layout options have been presented:

Option B (dwg SK07): off-centred public open space (behind Winders and Cleftstones) and a stepped northern alignment along Rectory Lane to allow space for canopy spread

Option C (dwg SK02 Rev E): Centrally located public open space, with parking block behind Winders and Cleftstones, and a stepped northern alignment along Rectory Lane to allow space for canopy spread

The proposed layout appears to reflect the linear street pattern and development type approved on the adjacent approved site at Chanctonbury Nurseries, which exhibits a reasonably dense urban grain. The pre-application site does though lie further to the west and therefore closer to the rural edge of the village and the open countryside. Of note is also the row of 4no. chalet / bungalow dwellings along Rectory Lane which currently provide a low-rise roof-line when travelling west out of the village along Rectory Lane, creating a soft to the countryside. The two-storey dwellings beyond at Mousdell Close and Penn Gardens are set back from the highway boundary, screened by a vegetated boundary and are designed with half hipped or hipped roof-forms, which help to reduce their visual massing. As such, the semi-rural location of the site should be recognised and sympathetically dealt with, giving consideration to policy 'ASH5: Landscaping and Countryside Access'.

The following advice is therefore offered in respect of Layout and Design:

- 1) The mix and palette of materials is supported in principle, reflecting the design and materials found locally in Ashington.
- 2) The development quantum reflects the anticipated draft Local Plan policy HA5 delivery of up to 75 homes, but will be dependant on the connectivity from the site to key local amenities and services and eventual site constraints in delivering open space, BNG and parking. The potential for a pedestrian connection through to the adjacent development at Chanctonbury Nurseries was discussed at the meeting, but is likely to present a conflict with the siting of plots 16 and 17 in the south-west corner of the site, as currently shown in plans, as this appears to be where the end of the cul-de-sac in the adjacent development appears to be located. However, as officers, we would support a prospective link through to create access to the PRoW network that runs through to the 'community cluster' of the village, and aligning with policy 'ASH2: Increasing walking in Ashington' in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3) I would advise that any development along the northern edge of the site adopt a similar low-roof profile to the adjacent bungalows / chalet bungalows which lie immediately to the east of the site, to continue the soft transition from village to rural. The site visit revealed that the two-storey development of Penn Gardens is set some 70m away from Rectory Lane, whilst the two-storey semi-detached pairs in Mousdell Close are set behind a retained landscape buffer that lies outside of the private gardens and therefore offers increased protection. In contrast, your proposal would appear significantly more dominant in the streetscene.
- 4) The sketch street-scene (B-B) presented in the pre-app document, includes for 'townhouses', or 2 ½ storey dwellings, as well as the block of flats. I have no concern with the proposed design and massing of these dwellings within the site itself, but in my view, the northern edge should include a more sensitive design approach that better reflects this rural edge location. Options B and C include a set-back of plots 54 and 55 to provide more space to the canopy of the trees along the existing boundary which is welcome.
- 5) I like the idea of using the existing field gate access location for two dwellings, which could be designed to coordinate with the adjacent bungalows / chalets in terms of their visual

massing, and retaining the planted field boundary along the front to help separate and soften the visual impact of the development on the rural character of Rectory Lane.

- 6) Concern would be expressed at the siting of a flatted block close to the northern section of the site, with a side elevation onto Rectory Lane. This appears to be very dominant. The eventual architectural solution of this section needs to be sympathetic to the roof-lines and the immediate context of the low-level profile. An architectural resolution to this is likely, such as a cat-slide roof-slope along the very north and south elevations of these two flatted blocks, with dormers set within the roof-slope offering a 'gentler' visual impact on the street-scene along Rectory Lane and on the visual outlook of the dwellings at No's 1-4 Penn Gardens (which would be set some 15m off the building line of this new block). I would also encourage you to review the access to these blocks as it appears to have limited natural surveillance.

I noted on my site visit that the land levels at the Mousdell Close site are lower than the properties at Penn Gardens. As a result, the two-storey massing of the newer houses at Mousdell Close don't appear to present any undue overlooking, or an over-dominant form of development on the pre-existing houses at Penn Gardens, despite their reasonably close proximity. I am not sure whether the land levels at the pre-application site could be similarly exploited to reduce the eventual massing of these two new flatted blocks, and potentially reduce the perception of any overlooking?

- 7) The use of an entrance 'green' at the end of the entrance drive into the site is supported in principle, creating a central area of public open space (POS) which benefits from a high level of natural surveillance. However, as per the indicative layout (Options A and C), it would be visually marred by a row of on-street visitor parking bays and beyond this, an unbroken row of 8no parking spaces set to the front of plots 19-22. Furthermore, there is some concern over the usability of both this POS, which appears to be less than 20m in depth, and the one to the southern boundary, with neither appearing sufficiently sized to be used meaningfully. Perhaps a layout response could be to shift the central 'island' of development southwards into the site, reducing the POS along the southern boundary, but thus increasing the size and usability of the POS at the northern edge of the 'island'. Careful treatment of the edges of this POS will be required to ensure it is not used for overspill parking, whilst providing a defensible edge for any users, cognisant of the proximity to the roadway. It may be worthwhile considering a perimeter pavement to provide a sense of separation between the POS and the roadway.
- 8) The back-to-back distance between No's 5-6 Penn Gardens and the proposed plots 40, 41 and 42 appears to be less than 21m, which might lead to a restriction on the use of clear and openable rear-facing windows to these plots. There should be a plausible layout resolution to this, perhaps involving turning these properties by 90degrees to create a terrace side-on to the estate road and the first-floor habitable windows to the Penn Garden dwellings.
- 9) Trees and street trees are greatly encouraged, within new developments. To ensure appropriate management of these landscaping features, new and retained trees should remain outside of any private demise, and instead be part of the wider communal landscape and maintenance responsibilities.
- 10) I would strongly encourage that a potential pedestrian / cycle link though to the southern development site at 'Land West of Ashington', is investigated. The current plans for this site indicate the presence of open space, landscape and an attenuation pond to the south of the pre-application site. This would also work towards achieving compliance with policy 'ASH2: Increasing walking in Ashington' of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan in providing a safe walking route to school and links to the community cluster and help meet Active Travel principles.

- 11) Please note that bin stores will need to accommodate an additional food-waste bin from 2026, with household properties being provided with a 5 litre kitchen caddy and a 23 litre kerb-side caddy, and with flats being provided with a larger 140 litre / 240 litre wheelie bin, as may be appropriate.
- 12) Consideration of any pumping station or sub-stations at part of the design and layout at the outset to ensure they can be integrated into the overall site plan.
- 13) The site lies predominantly in a red zone for potential Great Crested Newt habitat on the impact risk zone maps. This would therefore require an application to join the District Licencing scheme implemented by NatureSpace, or the submission of a Great Crested Newt habitat and pond survey within the vicinity of the site.
- 14) The revised EA floodmaps, which have revised the surface water flood potential to take into account climate change, do not show the pre-application site within any area at risk of surface water flooding. However, areas at and beyond the southern boundary and the south-eastern boundary are within the surface water flow paths for the 1:1000 annual risk.

Housing

The following open market housing split would accord with our current SHMA (which dates from 2019):

	SHMA 2019	Open Market – 49 (units)
1-bed	5% = 2.45 units	2 dwellings
2-bed	30% = 14.7 units	15 dwellings
3-bed	40% = 19.6 units	20 dwellings
4+ bed	25% = 12.25 units	12 dwellings

For affordable housing, the policy-compliant mix would appear thus:

	SHMA 2019	Affordable rent – 18 (units)	SHMA 2019	Shared ownership – 8 (units)
1-bed	35% = 6.3 units	6 dwellings	25% = 2 units	2 dwellings
2-bed	30% = 5.4 units	6 dwellings	40% = 3.2 units	3 dwellings
3-bed	25% = 4.5 units	5 dwellings	25% = 1.6 units	2 dwellings
4+ bed	10% = 1.8 units	2 dwellings	10% = 0.8 units	1 dwellings

As of March 2025, the housing demand for Ashington stood at 35 people / families in need of a 1-bed unit, 31 in need of a 2-bed unit, 57 in need of a 3-bed unit and 23 in need of a 4-bed unit. We are also finding that those in need of larger ‘family-sized’ dwellings tend to wait longer, so we are actively seeking a bespoke on-site Affordable Mix relevant to the need at the time of submission. Indications remain consistent though, that there is a greatest need for 3-bed dwellings, which we are keen to respond to.

Another issue which we are fully cognisant of, is the difficulties created by mixed tenure blocks, as housing providers / RPs are unwilling to take on mixed blocks, leading to the need to vary associated legal agreements and planning conditions at a later stage, which can impact on timings and delivery of a development.

I would therefore encourage early discussions with our Housing Team to ensure that any affordable housing split takes account of an up-to-date analysis of local need.

Open Space

Specific advice was sought in response to the Open Space / Land Budget generated by this development. The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan identifies a general shortage of quality play-space within the village, with upgrades to the current facilities sought to the 'Community Cluster' to be sought by way of CIL contributions. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of local community assets within the village and their current status: Good, Improvements / Repairs, or Replacement.

According to the latest Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review (OSSR, June 2021), Ashington presents deficiencies in Parks and Gardens, Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces, Multi-Functional Green Spaces and allotments, as well as a modest shortfall in the provision for young people. The only area which has been assessed as 'sufficient' is for children's provision.

Some overall calculations therefore, derived from the latest position of the OSSR would be that the site and proposed quantum of development would result in an expectation to provide the following open space within the site:

- 265sq.m of Allotments,
- 33sq.m of Children and Youth Provision, and;
- 6,460sq.m of Multi-functional Greenspace:
 - o 2,030sq.m of Parks and Gardens
 - o 853sq.m of Amenity Greenspace, and
 - o 3,575sq.m of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

Any submission should review the OSSR and address the anticipated on-site delivery of the various typologies of open space. To this end, a 'Land Budget Plan' can help illustrate the quantitative break down of open space within the site, setting out each typology by area. Given the size of this development we would not expect to see onsite provision of allotments or equipped play areas, however we would strongly encourage you to provide the links south and east to enable residents to access these facilities in the local area. Such links, in our view, would be an asset to this development and its attractiveness for future occupiers. Whilst at this stage the quantum of open space appears acceptable, again the inclusion of the links south would enable easy access to wider amenity space in the area, including that on the future Land West of Ashington site (application DC/23/0406 refers).

The requirement that open space provision be linked to meeting the identified needs of the community is embedded within HDPF policy 32 and policy 43.

Trees

The Council's Arboricultural Officer has undertaken a review of the proposal and has undertaken a site visit, noting that there are no designated protected trees within / close to the site, but that there are some large trees along the boundaries of the site as indicated on Options B and C. It is advised that the eventual layout bear in mind that maintenance access is advised along the eastern boundary where the proposed properties are shown to abut the boundary line (and trees) directly. The site visit revealed a number of sizable canopies along the eastern boundary (with Chanctonbury House), which might have a shading effect on the rear gardens / amenity spaces of plots 6-13 (or 6-17 depending on which plan layout is progressed). The RPAs indicated on Options B and C appear to extend close to the rear of the proposed development including houses, garages and other garden development (sheds / patios) close to or within the RPAs.

Any submission should therefore be accompanied by a full Tree Protection Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, in full accordance with 'BS 5837 (2012) - Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations'.

Highways and Parking

Given that Ashington does not have access to a regular public transport network (bus service), the full parking quota set out in the current WSCC Parking Guidance should be followed. Policy ASH3

of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan sets out that the **maximum** parking levels set out in this guidance be implemented within any development sites. For Zone 1 locations (such as Ashington), this equates to the following:

1-bed = 1.5 space
2-bed = 1.7 spaces
3-bed = 2.2 spaces
4+beds = 2.7 spaces

It is also noted that WSCC considers the provision of garages to account for only 0.5 of a space, and then only if the internal clear dimensions of 3m x 6m can be achieved. The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan policy 'ASH3: Parking Provision' recognises that in many instances, garages are not utilised for parking and therefore don't provide a genuine parking option. The use of open carports (car-barns) might therefore offer a more usable solution to ensuring there is sufficient parking provided within the site and which could also assist with creating a more rural vernacular within the site. Cycle parking within each plot should also be secure and suitably sized.

Conclusion

In the first instance, therefore, the development of this site conflicts with Policies 2, 4 and 26 of the HDPF and neighbourhood plan policy ASH1.

I recognise that the Council currently cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, and furthermore, that the HDPF is over 5 years old. Therefore, any application on this site would be considered against the tilted balance of para 11 of the NPPF, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, the conflict with the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan continues to carry important material weight in the overall planning balance, under paragraph 14 of the NPPF, as it is less than 5 years old, and includes the provision of housing allocations within the plan area to meet its identified need.

Although the planning balance is likely to give significant weight to the district's weak housing land supply position, the local response to proposed housing numbers in the village over and above the levels within the current Neighbourhood Plan should not be underestimated, particularly noting the local provision of supporting infrastructure services (GP's, dentists, schools, shops).

I also note that the adjacent development at Chanctonbury Nurseries elicited a number of local responses over the nature of Rectory Lane and the perceived ability to accommodate increased vehicular movements. You may wish to seek pre-application advice with West Sussex County Council prior to any formal submission to the Council.

In my view, should an application be received on this site, subject to detailed consideration of all other relevant matters, it could be supported at officer level in principle, noting the Council's housing land supply position and the background evidence that supported this site's draft allocation in the (now to be withdrawn) draft Local Plan. Broad support to these draft site allocations is carried forward into the forthcoming document 'Shaping Development in Horsham Planning Advice Note', which also sets out the expectation that compliant sites meet all of the following criteria (para 5.12):

- *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*

As I have set out above, the weight we give the conflict with the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan will depend on how consideration of the application times with the neighbourhood plan exceeding 5 years in age in June 2026. I have set out above areas of design concern to address in any submission and strongly advise you to provide links south and east to allow residents ease of access to the village centre and nearby amenities. Such access will help offset the open space needs of this quantum of housing.

Application Submission

The following provides a 'without prejudice' summary of the supporting documents that would be expected to be submitted. In addition to the application form, fee and usual suite of location plans and architectural drawings, the supporting documents that should be submitted included:

- Planning Statement (to include reference to all matters including heritage impact and schedule of accommodation including affordable provision)
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement (referencing nearby heritage assets – above and below-ground)
- Landscape Masterplan / LVA, including land use budget (open space)
- Flood Risk Assessment (reference to all sources of flood risk and taking account of climate change) – please ensure that the latest Environment Agency surface water flood modelling and climate change predictions are used
- Drainage Strategy (any SuDS / 'Blue Infrastructure' proposals must reflect and be coordinated with the proposed landscape strategy to avoid conflicts with planting or utilities)
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment (including reference to SSSI, priority habitat, Great Crested Newt habitat, the Mens SAC and bats / priority / protected species)
- Arboricultural Appraisal and Tree Survey
- DEFRA Metric / BNG – whether the net gain habitat would be secured on-site or off-site (NB: In the event of 'Significant' BNG, we would look to secure this by way of a s106 legal agreement, irrespective of on-site or off-site)
- Transport Statement, including consideration of Active Travel England Standing Advice for pedestrian and cycle connectivity – considerations of a 'vision-led' approach as per NPPF paras 109, 115 and 118
- Parking Strategy
- Energy Statement
- Air Quality Assessment with Damage Cost Calculation & Mitigations
- Preliminary Risk Assessment (Contamination and remediation)
- Minerals Resource Statement (in relation to Brick Clay extraction and potential future sterilisation of the site) – Please refer to WSCC Joint Minerals Local Plan, July 2018 (policy M9)
- Water Neutrality Statement / SNOWS access request
- S106 Draft Heads of Terms (in respect of the affordable housing, delivery of open space, Travel Plan, significant BNG)

CIL / S106 / Affordable Housing

The Council would advise that a s106 agreement would need to be drafted principally to cover the affordable housing obligations.

Other community infrastructure / improvement obligations would be sought under the CIL regulations, with a local IDP set out under the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan, policy 'ASH8: Ashington Community Cluster'.

The above comments are given as the opinion of the Case Officer and do not prejudice any outcome of a subsequent application. Should you submit a formal planning application, please quote reference number PE/25/0096 in your submission.

Yours faithfully

Nicola Pettifer
Senior Planning Officer

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Horsham District Council implemented a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule on 1st October 2017.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge placed on new development. The funds raised will help to pay for a wide range of infrastructure to support development across Horsham District.

Most new development which creates net additional floorspace of 100m² or more, or creates a new dwelling, (including permitted development), is potentially liable for the levy.

How does it affect you?

Applications for CIL liable development which are determined on or after 1st October 2017 are required to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (unless the development qualifies for relief or exemption).

Further information and the rates charged by Horsham District Council are set out in the CIL Charging Schedule which can be viewed online at www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/apply/cil

General Consent e.g. Permitted Development

Developments which are permitted by way of a general consent (such as permitted development) may still be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy if they meet the above criteria.

In these circumstances, you must submit a Notice of Chargeable Development (CIL form 5), notify us of the person who will assume liability to pay the CIL and make any applications for relief or exemption, before the development is commenced.