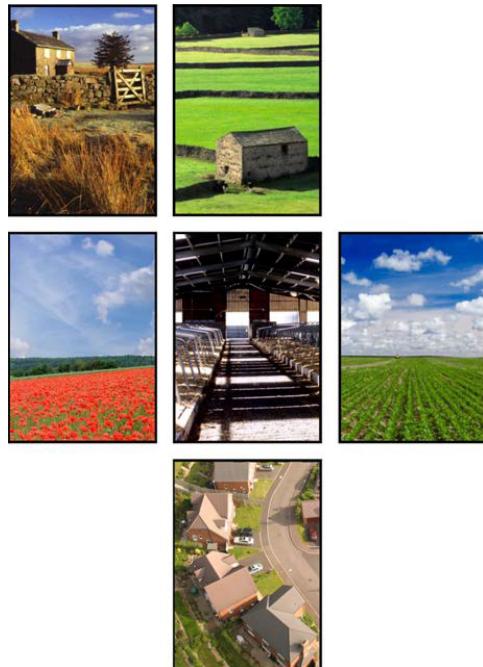


PLANNING STATEMENT
Resubmission Horsham District Council's Refusal of DC/25/0003
PLANNING IN PRINCIPAL APPLICATION

For the demolition of an existing structure and erection of a dwelling.

Located

Winstons,
Formerly Jinkers Farm,
Muttons Lane,
Ashington,
Horsham, RH20 3AL



The objective for rural business is to sustain a balanced outcome, a delicate relationship between productive activity which includes farming and rural enterprise and the conservation of the environment both historic and landscape needs to be maintained. The rural economy is a constantly changing paradigm and should be nurtured, supported and promoted because it forms the core of the nation.

Prepared for:
Mr and Mrs James Thorns

RESUBMISSION PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning in Principle (Stage 1) Application – Land at “The Stables”, Adjacent to Winstons, Muttons Lane, Ashington, RH20 3AL

1. Introduction

This Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs James Thorns in support of a resubmitted Permission in Principle (PIP) application for the redevelopment of land known as “*The Stables*”, following Horsham District Council’s refusal of application DC/25/0003. That application sought PIP for the demolition of existing structures and the erection of one dwelling.

This revised submission directly addresses and overcomes the previous reasons for refusal. In particular:

- Water neutrality is no longer a relevant or material issue, following:
 - DEFRA’s published announcement on 8 October 2025, confirming strategic water supply measures, and
 - Natural England’s formal withdrawal (31 October 2025) of its 2021 Position Statement, which had triggered the water neutrality requirement.
- The applicant is committing to significant biodiversity net gain, enhanced planting, and ecological improvements, resulting in visual and environmental betterment when compared to the existing lawful structures.

This Stage 1 application concerns only the principle of development on this site—specifically the suitability of the location, land use, and amount of development—in accordance with the statutory parameters of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017.

2. Policy Context and Material Considerations

2.1 National Planning Policy – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Horsham District Council is presently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The latest published position shows:

- A supply of only 1.6 years, and
- Delivery of 62% of its Housing Delivery Test (HDT) requirement.

Under NPPF paragraph 11(d), this deficit triggers the presumption in favour of sustainable development, rendering the policies most important for decision-making out of date. As confirmed by national policy, this presumption may only be disapplied where protective policies apply (e.g. Green Belt, AONB, designated ecological sites). None of these designations apply to the site. Importantly:

Horsham District contains no designated Green Belt land.

This is particularly relevant given national emphasis on supporting small-scale housing delivery and focusing growth on underutilised or previously developed sites.

Further, mandatory housing targets imposed by Government increased Horsham’s annual housing requirement by 41% (from 917 to 1,294 dwellings). Against this context of persistent under-delivery, small, deliverable brownfield sites—such as this one—carry significant positive material weight.

2.2 Grey Belt and Previously Developed Land (PDL)

Although Horsham District does not contain any Green Belt, the 2024–2025 revisions to the NPPF introduced the concept of Grey Belt, signalling a national shift toward enabling development on:

- Previously developed land, and
- Land making a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes.

National policy clearly encourages the efficient and sustainable reuse of brownfield land. *The Stables* meets the NPPF definition of previously developed land, containing permanent structures erected with planning permission, areas of hardstanding, and no agricultural or forestry use.

While Grey Belt designation is not strictly required in non-Green Belt areas, the associated national guidance is still a strong indicator of the Government's intention to prioritise redevelopment of lower-environmental-value land, particularly to support housing supply and small-site delivery.

2.3 Importance of Housing Delivery and Appeal Precedents

Recent appeal decisions nationally reflect a consistent trend:

- Where councils cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, Inspectors apply the tilted balance and give substantial weight to housing delivery.
- Small-scale redevelopment of previously developed rural land is frequently supported, even in constrained or sensitive areas.
- The Government expects such sites to make a meaningful contribution to national housing targets, especially where council performance under the HDT demonstrates structural delivery failure.

Locally, appeal decisions—including those relating to the stalled Local Plan and sites such as the Horsham Golf Club—highlight:

- Deep-rooted inadequacies in Horsham's ability to meet its housing need, and
- The national expectation that non-strategic and windfall sites will help address the shortfall.

This context is highly relevant to this PIP application.

3. Horsham's Housing Delivery Shortfall and the Tilted Balance

Horsham District Council has formally failed the Housing Delivery Test for 2024, delivering only 62% of its requirement between 2020–21 and 2022–23. Under NPPF paragraph 79(c), this:

- Triggers the presumption in favour of sustainable development,
- Requires a 20% buffer, and
- Requires an action plan.

The effect is that:

Planning permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Given that the site comprises previously developed land, is modest in scale, and is well-related to existing development, there is no evidence of harms capable of outweighing the strong national policy presumption.

4. National and Local Planning Framework

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024)

Relevant themes strongly supportive of the proposal include:

- Effective reuse of land (para 123)
- Support for small-scale housing delivery (para 69)
- Redevelopment of previously used or underutilised sites (para 124)
- Efficient use of land, including through windfall development (para 137)

The PIP route is specifically designed to unlock small, sustainable development opportunities. This proposal sits squarely within that framework.

4.2 Local Policy (HDPF 2015 and Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2021)

The Council's previous refusal cited the site's position beyond the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB). However, where the presumption applies, BUAB policies cannot form a defensible basis for resisting sustainable development, unless significant harm is demonstrated.

Even absent the tilted balance, HDPF Policies 3, 4, and 26 allow development outside settlement boundaries where it:

- Adjoins a settlement,
- Is of appropriate scale,
- Does not harm landscape character, and
- Meets an identified need.

A single dwelling on a small enclosed plot immediately adjacent to existing homes meets these tests in principle, with any design or landscape considerations reserved for the TDC stage.

5. Site Characteristics and Previously Developed Land Status

The site comprises a former stable building and yard with established access and areas of hardstanding. It is unequivocally previously developed land, as defined by the NPPF. Redevelopment of PDL is given substantial national weight and aligns with the Government's stated priority of encouraging efficient land use and supporting brownfield delivery. Replacing deteriorated structures with a sensitively designed dwelling offers:

- Visual enhancement
- Environmental and landscape improvements
- Biodiversity net gain

All detailed matters will be addressed at the Technical Details Consent stage.

6. PIP Application Requirements (Stage 1 Determination)

Article 5D of the PIP Order restricts the assessment at this stage to:

1. Location
2. Land Use
3. Amount of Development

All other matters—including access, design, drainage, ecology, and landscaping—are for the Technical Details Consent (Stage 2) process.

The application has been validly submitted with the required documentation.

7. Assessment of the Proposal

7.1 Location

The site is located directly adjacent to existing residential development along Muttons Lane. It is part of a small cluster of dwellings and relates well to the established settlement pattern. Given the council's severe housing deficit and national expectations for small-site delivery, the location is entirely appropriate for one additional home.

7.2 Land Use

Residential use on this previously developed site is a natural continuation of surrounding land uses and is strongly supported by national policy.

The proposal will:

- Replace redundant and deteriorating structures,
- Improve the site's appearance,
- Deliver ecological enhancements, and
- Contribute to sustainable housing growth.

7.3 Amount of Development

The proposal is for one dwelling only—a very modest quantum. This scale:

- Raises no measurable infrastructure burden,
- Is wholly compatible with rural character,
- Is easily deliverable, and
- Represents precisely the type of small-scale housing delivery national policy expects councils to support.

8. Water Neutrality – Issue Removed

The earlier refusal referenced the absence of a mitigation mechanism relating to the Arun Valley SPA/SAC/Ramsar sites.

This matter is now fully resolved, due to:

- DEFRA's national announcement (8 October 2025),
- Natural England's withdrawal of its water neutrality Position Statement (31 October 2025), and
- Confirmation from affected planning authorities that water neutrality is no longer required.

There is no remaining basis, in law or policy, for refusing the proposal on water neutrality grounds.

9. Benefits of the Proposal

The scheme delivers several clear and tangible benefits:

- Contribution to local and national housing targets
- Utilisation of previously developed land in line with national priorities
- Rapid and efficient small-site delivery
- Construction-phase economic investment
- Enhanced biodiversity and landscape structure
- Removal of outdated structures and associated visual improvement

These benefits attract significant weight in the planning balance.

10. Conclusion

This application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of one dwelling on previously developed land. At this stage, the Council must assess only:

- Location – suitable and well-related to existing development
- Land use – residential redevelopment of brownfield land strongly supported
- Amount of development – a single, modest dwelling entirely appropriate

Material considerations overwhelmingly favour approval:

- Horsham lacks a five-year housing land supply and the tilted balance applies
- Water neutrality constraints have been formally removed
- The site is brownfield land, offering environmental and visual enhancements
- There are no protective designations, such as Green Belt or designated habitat constraints

Accordingly:

The principle of development is acceptable, and Permission in Principle should be granted.