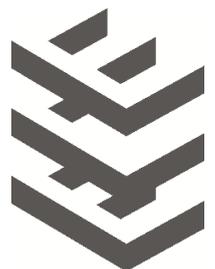


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Planning Statement

Land Adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Rusper

July 2025



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Project Name: Land Adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Rusper

Location Land Adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Horsham Road, Rusper, Horsham

Client: BPH Plant Hire

File Reference: P2014

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been produced by ECE Planning on behalf of our client, **BPH Plant Hire** in support of an Outline Planning Application at the Land adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Horsham Road, Rusper, West Sussex. The description of development reads:

“Erection of 4no. dwellings, extension to existing cottage and improvements to the access and provision of landscaping”

- 1.2. As set out in the description of development, the proposals seek to erect 4no dwellings and extend the existing cottage on site, alongside providing new landscaped amenity space for each of the dwellings.
- 1.3. The application has previously undergone Pre-Application discussions with Horsham District Council which culminated in a response dated 25 April 2024 (reference PE/24/0031). Following the feedback from the meeting and written response, minor amendments have been made to address the comments received. This is explored in detail within this Statement and the Pre-Application response can be found at **Appendix A**.
- 1.4. This Statement sets out the relevant background for the determination of the planning application, including a description of the site and its surroundings, the relevant planning history, planning policy, key details of the proposed development and assessment of the relevant planning considerations.
- 1.5. In support of this application, the Statement will examine relevant planning policy and guidance. The proposals have been informed by the Development Plan comprising the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance, the Horsham District Planning Framework and Rusper Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.6. The application for Outline Planning Permission is supported by the following documents and drawings:

Application Forms and Notices

Planning Statement

Architectural Drawings inc. Location and Block Plans

Outline Planning and Design and Access Statement (including Sustainability Statement)

Soft Landscape Mitigation Layout and Landscape Appraisal Study

Transport Statement

Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Reporting

Arboricultural Impact, Method Assessment and Tree Retention Protection Plan

Water Neutrality Statement

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage

2. The Site

- 2.1. The site lies to the south of the village of Rusper and forms part of the residential curtilage of Pucks Croft Cottage. It comprises residential land, a deteriorating wooden barn, and areas of hard landscaping. A portion of the site falls within the Rusper settlement boundary, while the remainder lies outside, though immediately adjacent to it.



Figure 1- Site Location Plan

- 2.2. The site has existing access off Horsham Road. The site also has good pedestrian links to the Public Right of Way (PROW) network in which public footpath (RUSPER 1567-1), runs along the western border of the site to the wider countryside.
- 2.3. The town of Horsham is located approximately 3.5 miles to the south-west of the site, while Crawley is located approx. 3 miles to the east. Both are accessible via public transport from the site, with nearest bus stops only 250m to the south.

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- 2.4. The site is entirely located within Flood Zone 1 and there is no risk of flooding within it. There are also no historic or environmental constraints on the site.
- 2.5. The site was included within the Horsham District Council SHELAA 2018 as “developable” for 5 units (site SA737) within 11 years. Please see Planning Policy Section of this Statement for further detail.

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3. Planning History

3.1. The Site Planning History

- 3.1.1. A search of Horsham District Councils planning register has been undertaken and revealed the following relevant planning history.
- 3.1.2. **DC/20/2465 / APP/Z3825/W/21/3280084-** Outline application for the provision of 7No. houses with car parking, landscaping and associated access at land adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage with all matters reserved except for access. **Refused 3 February 2021 and Appeal Dismissed 21 July 2022.**
- 3.1.3. The appeal was dismissed although it should be noted that this scheme was for a higher quantum of development and included a larger layout and site area.
- 3.1.4. Changes have been made to the scheme which include:
1. **Reduction from Seven Dwellings to Four.** This revised scheme also incorporates the extension and refurbishment of the on-site house.
 2. **Adjusted Scale and Function.** The scale of the proposed development has been carefully calibrated to suit the function and size of the settlement. The revised scheme introduces smaller, more appropriately scaled homes, aligning with local needs and reducing car parking requirements.
 3. **Improved Layout and Openness.** The updated site layout creates a less urbanised environment compared to the earlier proposal.

3.2. Pre Application (Reference PE/24/0031)

- 3.2.1. As briefly set out within Section 1 of this Statement, pre-application advice was sought from the Council in direct relation to the current proposals as set out in the development description below.
- 3.2.2. **PE/24/0031-** Erection of 4no. dwellings and extension to existing cottage at the Land adjacent Pucks Croft Cottage. **Advice was received 25 April 2024.**
- 3.2.3. The pre-application submission was carried out to understand the Council's thoughts on the proposals prior to an application for outline planning permission being submitted.
- 3.2.4. In summary, the Council requested further survey work, however, the principle was considered acceptable due to the lack of 5-year Housing Land Supply in Horsham District. Please refer to **Appendix A** for a copy of the Pre-Application advice received.
- 3.2.5. In preparation of this application for outline planning permission, further survey work has been carried out as discussed in detail within this Statement and accompanying Reports.

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4. The Proposal

- 4.1. The development proposal seeks approval for the erection of 4no. dwellings, extension to existing cottage and improvements to the access and provision of landscaping. The existing cottage will be extended and refurbished.
- 4.2. The masterplan therefore proposes a total of 4no. private market dwellings which vary in tenure. As follows:
- 2 Bedroom/4 Person Semi-Detached: 2 units
 - 4 Bedroom/6 Person Detached: 1 unit
 - 4 Bedroom/8 Person Detached: 1 unit
- 4.3. The site covers approximately 0.3 hectares and therefore the proposals achieve a density of 17.2 dwellings per hectare.



Figure 2- Proposed Site Plan

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- 4.4. The predominant height of the dwellings will be two storeys, with subtle variations such as dormers and low eaves to articulate the roofline. These features create an appealing streetscape that integrates seamlessly with the local vernacular.
- 4.5. The dilapidated barn will be rebuilt in barn style aesthetic as a new 4 bedroom dwelling.
- 4.6. The material palette for the proposed houses reflects the rural character of the site, incorporating:
- Timber and clay tile vertical cladding
 - Mixed stock bricks, and
 - Slate and plain clay roof tiles.
- 4.7. The colour scheme will feature darker tones for aluminium window frames and entrance doors, complementing the rural aesthetic and adding a modern touch.
- 4.8. The illustrative masterplan adopts a landscape-led approach, prioritising the integration of green spaces to enhance the character and functionality of the development. The scheme proposes the creation of communal open space, distributed throughout the site.
- 4.9. The illustrative masterplan proposes an average of two car parking spaces per dwelling, with all parking spaces accommodated within the curtilage of the dwellings. Adequate cycle storage will be provided within small purpose build low level flat roofed sheds within the rear garden.
- 4.10. The proposed layout allows for emergency and refuse collection vehicles to access the site via a new junction on Horsham Road. Each dwelling will also include rear-accessible areas for storing refuse and recycling bins, helping to minimise their visual impact on the street scene.

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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 Rusper 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.

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

- 5.2.1. The Regulation 19 Local Plan was published for a six-week period of representation from 19 January 2024 to 1 March 2024. The Regulation 19 Local Plan has since been formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 26 July 2024 and the examination hearings commenced in December 2024.
- 5.2.2. At the time of writing this Statement, the Local Plan hearings have been cancelled by the Inspector due to '*significant concerns about the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan in respect of a number of areas*'.
- 5.2.3. On 7 April 2025, a Letter was published by the Inspector which recommended to Horsham that the Local Plan should be withdrawn from examination and a new Local Plan should be prepared.
- 5.2.4. Horsham District Council (HDC) has not, at the time of writing, made a formal decision on how to proceed following the publication of the Inspector's letter.

5.3. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.3.1. The NPPF was adopted in 2012 with many revised versions, the most recent of which being updated in February 2025.
- 5.3.2. 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 updated to try and further boost the delivery of housing to meet the amended target.
- 5.3.3. The relevant sections of the NPPF in relation to this application are summarised below and explored in further detail later in this Statement.
- **Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development**
 - **Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes**

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- **Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres**
- **Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities**
- **Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport**
- **Section 11 - Making effective use of land**
- **Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places**
- **Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**
- **Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**
- **Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

5.4. Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

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

5.5. Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

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

5.5.2. Although the HDPF is out of date by reason of it being over 5 years old, the following policies are considered to be relevant to the application although those relating to supply of housing are considered to carry no weight.

- **Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development**
- **Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development**
- **Policy 3 – Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy**
- **Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision**
- **Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Need**
- **Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection**
- **Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character**
- **Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection**
- **Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity**
- **Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development**
- **Policy 33 - Development Principles**
- **Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change**
- **Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use**
- **Policy 37 – Sustainable Construction**
- **Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding**
- **Policy 39 - Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision**
- **Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport**

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- **Policy 41 - Parking**

5.6. Rusper Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

5.6.1. The Rusper Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area during the period to 2031, the same as the end of the plan period for the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework. The key policies of relevance are as follows:

- **Policy RUS1: Spatial Plan**
- **Policy RUS3: Design**
- **Policy RUS5: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity**
- **Policy RUS6: Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes**
- **Policy RUS11: Promoting Sustainable Transport**

5.7. Facilitating Appropriate Development

5.7.1. The Council is presently unable to demonstrate a 5-year land housing supply, with the Council's latest Authority Monitoring Report acknowledging a 5-year land housing supply of 1 years.

5.7.2. In the context of the Authority's inability to demonstrate a 5-year land housing supply and delays to the emerging local plan, HDC has published the Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) document to clarify the approach that it will pursue in respect of spatial matters in the circumstance that existing and emerging policy is attributed greatly reduced weight. The provisions of the FAD represent a material consideration.

5.7.3. In respect of proposals for the development of unallocated land adjoining a settlement boundary the FAD confirms that the Council will positively consider applications which meet all of the following criteria:

- 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.

5.8. Other Relevant Guidance and Policies

5.8.1. The following summaries the relevant guidance for this application:

- Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

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- WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020)
- Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex (2021)
- Natural England Position Statement September (2021)
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (2022)

5.9. Horsham Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2018 (SHELAA)

5.9.1. It is pertinent to note that the site (referred to as The Land Adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage) was included within the Horsham District Council SHELAA 2018 as “developable” for 5 units (site SA737). The Council’s site assessment is shown below in Figure 4.



Figure 3- SHELAA 2018 Assessment

Parish		Rusper	
SHLAA Reference	SA737	Site Name	Pucks Croft Cottage and Land South, Rusper
Years 1-5 Deliverable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Address	Pucks Croft Cottage, Horsham Road, Rusper
Years 6-10 Developable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Area (ha)	0.8
Years 11+	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greenfield/PDL	Greenfield
Not Currently Developable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Total	5
		Suitable	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Available	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Achievable	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 4- SHELAA 2018 Assessment

6. Planning Appraisal

6.1. Introduction

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

Principle of Development

Character and Appearance

Landscape

Housing Mix

Residential Amenity

Transport, Access and Parking

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Trees

Drainage

Sustainability

Water Neutrality

6.2. Principle of Development

- 6.2.1. The proposals seek outline consent for the erection of 4no. residential dwellings and extension to existing cottage with all matters reserved apart from access.
- 6.2.2. Policy 3 of the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015) states that *“development will be permitted within towns and villages which have defined built-up areas. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain the characteristics and function of the settlement.”*
- 6.2.3. Part of the site lies within the defined built-up area boundary (BUAB) of Rusper, a village with good accessibility to larger settlements. The remainder of the site is located directly adjacent to the settlement boundary. The site is therefore considered to be in a sustainable location, with essential public services within walking distance (approximately 250 metres), including a primary school, public house, convenience store with Post Office, village hall, and church.
- 6.2.4. In January 2019, the Council published the 2018 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), which assessed sites for their deliverability, developability, and availability for future housing development. This forms a key evidence base in identifying potential housing options within the District.
- 6.2.5. The application site, identified as *‘Land Adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage’* (Site Reference SA737), was included in the 2018 SHELAA and classified as *“developable”* for up to 5 units, noting its proximity to the settlement boundary.
- 6.2.6. As established, the site is adjacent to the built-up area of Rusper, with part of the curtilage of Pucks Croft Cottage located within the BUAB. While Rusper is categorised as a ‘Smaller Village’ within the HDPF, the built-up area designation confirms that development in this location is acceptable in principle and sustainable in nature.

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- 6.2.7. Although part of the site lies outside the BUAB, it remains directly contiguous to it. In planning terms, the curtilage is classified as previously developed land. The site is therefore both physically and functionally linked to the settlement, reinforcing its appropriateness for limited expansion.
- 6.2.8. It is important to note that the Council is currently only able to demonstrate a one-year supply of deliverable housing land (as of May 2025), representing the most severe shortfall in recent years. This position has significantly worsened since the time of the pre-application advice, further strengthening the case for additional housing delivery. The lack of a five-year housing land supply engages the presumption in favour of sustainable development and is a material consideration of substantial weight in the assessment of this application.
- 6.2.9. In addition, Horsham District Council failed the latest Housing Delivery Test, published in December 2024, delivering only 62% of its housing requirement. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (as set out in Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF) is engaged.
- 6.2.10. Paragraph 11(d) confirms that where the most important policies for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless:
- (i) policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusal; or*
- (ii) the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.*
- 6.2.11. The site is not located within or near any protected designations identified in Footnote 7 of the NPPF, such as Green Belt, SSSI, National Park, or areas at risk of flooding. There are no known constraints which would weigh significantly against the development.
- 6.2.12. Given the housing land supply position, the *Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD)* SPD becomes a relevant and material consideration in the decision-making process. The FAD acknowledges that, in times of shortfall, proposals for housing outside defined settlement boundaries can be supported, subject to compliance with key criteria. The proposal has been assessed against these criteria and found to be compliant:
- **Adjoins the existing settlement edge** – The site is contiguous with the BUAB and closely related to existing development in Rusper.
 - **Appropriate scale and function** – The proposed development (up to 4 dwellings and extension) is proportionate to the scale of Rusper and complements its rural character.
 - **Supports local needs and facilities** – The development provides market and/or affordable housing, contributing positively to local housing needs and supporting local services such as the primary school and village shop.
 - **Does not prejudice long-term development** – The proposal is modest in scale and would not restrict future, more comprehensive expansion of the settlement.
 - **Contained by defensible boundaries and sensitive to landscape character** – The site is enclosed by existing boundaries and integrates with the surrounding built form, with no unacceptable visual or landscape impacts.
- 6.2.13. The proposal therefore meets the criteria for settlement expansion as set out within the FAD.

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- 6.2.14. The site also benefits from sustainable transport links, including nearby bus stops and improved pedestrian connectivity. Horsham and Crawley are also within accessible distance, enhancing the location's suitability for new residential development.
- 6.2.15. In addition, it is important to note in the pre-application response (ref: PE/24/0031) from the Council recognised that the contribution of four dwellings, in the context of housing shortfall, The officer states,
- 'The proposal would provide 4no. residential dwellings, where given that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the contribution to the housing supply would be moderate and would be of significant weight in the planning balance. The proposed development would also provide associated socio-economic benefits in the form of short-term construction employment and increased local spend. These benefits are also considered to be of some weight in the overall assessment'.*
- 6.2.16. In summary, the Council's current housing land supply position and failure to meet national delivery benchmarks means the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. The site is in a sustainable location and aligns with the principles of the FAD document. The delivery of up to 4 dwellings would represent a meaningful contribution to housing supply and should be afforded significant weight.
- 6.2.17. Furthermore, the site is identified as "developable" in the Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), reinforcing the direction of future growth in this location. Subject to detailed considerations relating to design, access, and any site-specific constraints, the principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.
- 6.2.18. In this regard, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable.

6.3. Character and Appearance

- 6.3.1. The application is seeking outline planning permission for up to 4 dwellings. Access will be a detailed consideration as part of the application. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved and will be considered in a subsequent Reserved Matters Application.
- 6.3.2. The application is accompanied by an indicative Site Plan showing how the quantum of development can be accommodated at the site together with the associated access. This plan indicates that 4no. dwellings is feasible on the site which while incorporating new open spaces and landscaping
- 6.3.3. Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF support development that protects and enhances the local landscape and townscape. Proposals should reflect the character of the area and deliver a high standard of design that contributes to a sense of place, with scale and layout that respond sensitively to the surrounding built form and landscape.
- 6.3.4. At pre-application stage (reference PE/24/0031), two development options were presented: Option 1 – a Farmstead Arrangement and Option 2 – a Frontage Layout. While the frontage layout was initially explored, further technical design work including provision of an attenuation basin led to the farmstead layout being progressed as the most appropriate solution for the site.
- 6.3.5. Both design options involved a reduction in the overall quantum of development from that originally envisaged. Importantly, the layout ensures that development does not extend beyond the established building line of the linear housing to the north-east. The proposal retains generous open space around the built form, thereby ensuring the scheme sits comfortably within the landscape.

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- 6.3.6. The proposed architectural character draws inspiration from the traditional forms and detailing found throughout the village, helping to create a distinct and authentic sense of place. Buildings will predominantly be two storeys in height.
- 6.3.7. The proposed layout also respects key views across and through the site. Care has been taken to limit visual impact from surrounding vantage points. Grassland is retained along the site edges, creating a soft and appropriate transition from the rural countryside to the west into the more suburban, linear development pattern to the north-east.
- 6.3.8. It is considered that the reduction of quantum of dwellings from 7no. dwellings to 4no. dwellings now provides a suitable and comfortable density that is in keeping with the site character, setting and landscape.
- 6.3.9. With regard to quantum and density, the proposal is for 4 dwellings across a site area of 0.29 hectares (ha) which results in a density of 13.7 dwellings per hectare (dph) which is considered to be highly appropriate for this edge of settlement location.
- 6.3.10. It is therefore considered that the proposals comply with density of surrounding developments and overcome comments raised by the Inspector at Appeal Stage.
- 6.3.11. In this context it is clear that an acceptable scale and appearance of development can be secured as part of a later reserved matters submission.

6.4. Landscape

- 6.4.1. Whilst reserved for later consideration, the application includes a Strategy which sets out how a landscape-led scheme can be delivered at the site.
- 6.4.2. The Landscape Strategy has been carefully developed by PJC to respond sensitively to the sites rural setting and to integrate the scheme within the existing village context.
- 6.4.3. It should be noted within the Appeal Decision, Paragraph 19 that the Inspector agrees that there is limited impact on the landscape. As follows:
- “In addition, I acknowledge that the site is well-contained, and that new planting could be incorporated into the scheme including around the boundaries which would provide some screening of the development. The LAS outlines that there would be no or only negligible change to views from many points, and while there would be some views of the development from Horsham Road and sections of the nearby right of way, I find that the visual impact of the proposal would be localised. Given also the relatively small scale of the development, harm to the character of the wider surrounding landscape would in my judgement be modest”.*
- 6.4.4. It is acknowledged that traditionally, adjacent development would have been linear, road facing development (mainly along High Street, East Street and Horsham Road). This is balanced against more contemporary development within Rusper which sets development around fluid internal access roads (i.e. estate development) – Steeres Hill, Gardners Green, Cooks Mead, Cooks Meadow). In general, there is a clear divide between more linear development to the north and the use of estates and clusters of housing to the south.
- 6.4.5. The site layout has sought to develop a ‘landscape-led’ approach with the creation of a considerable amount of communal open space, scattered around the site. This includes the existing trees and hedgerows that form the north-east and south-west edges of the site being retained, where possible to the benefit the site and the new community.

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- 6.4.6. A Landscape Appraisal has been produced by PJC and submitted as part of the Application. In summary, it states that,

'The proposed scheme would seek to enhance landscape character and green infrastructure with a new green buffer to the south-western edge comprising a ribbon of native shrubs and tree specimens. The Horsham frontage would also be enhanced with a new shrub and tree planting. Within the proposed development site, the residential frontages and garden boundaries would be edged with new planting which would soften and filter near-distance views. Whilst there would be adverse landscape character effects as a result of the proposed scheme it is considered effects would be largely limited to the proposed development site context.

Views from locations to the wider landscape are constrained by existing buildings and vegetation. The proposed scheme would be partially perceptible in near distance views from locations to a limited section of the PRoW: Footpath to the west. However, views would be within the context of the Horsham Road and the existing Pucks Croft Cottage. In addition, the proposed new planting would partially soften and filter views east of the new residential dwellings.

It is therefore considered the proposed development scheme could be accommodated within the proposed development site without undue harm to the surrounding landscape character and visual amenity'.

- 6.4.7. It should be noted within the Appeal Decision Paragraph 18 that the Inspector states:

'The appellant has also sought to develop a 'landscape-led' approach, and I agree that the planting together with indicated provision of open spaces within the site would provide visual links with the surrounding landscape and would help to integrate the development with its surroundings'.

- 6.4.8. As part of the application, an indicative soft landscape mitigation layout which seeks to maintain existing trees and hedges is proposed. Further to this the application seeks to plant additional trees, buffers and native shrubs. Please refer to the submitted plan for more detail.
- 6.4.9. For the above reasons, it is therefore considered that the scheme is entirely appropriate for its location and that the indicative proposals demonstrate that any residual impacts can be appropriately mitigated in accordance with Local Plan Policy and Policies 25, 32, 33 of the HDPF.
- 6.4.10. Please refer to the Landscape Strategy which has been produced by PJC for further information on the scheme.

6.5. Housing Mix

- 6.5.1. The proposal seeks to deliver a broad mix of high-quality homes offering a range of different types of accommodation from two-bedroom homes through to larger four-bedroom family homes. This proposal seeks to deliver a balanced mix of housing to meet projected future household needs for the local area.
- 6.5.2. The scheme therefore provides for an appropriately broad mix of houses to meet local housing need. These dwellings all meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 6.5.3. It is therefore considered that the provision of 2 and 4-bedroom houses secures a suitable mix of development for Rusper complies with development plan policy.

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6.6. Residential Amenity

- 6.6.1. Policy 33 of HDPF emphasises that new development should consider the scale, massing and orientation of buildings, ensuring that it respects the amenity of existing neighbouring occupiers. This includes minimising potential impacts such as overlooking, overbearing presence, and loss of privacy or daylight. This principle has been embedded into the design approach for the proposed development.
- 6.6.2. As shown on the submitted site layout, the scheme has been carefully arranged to ensure appropriate separation between new dwellings and surrounding properties, particularly those to the north east. The layout has been designed to respond sensitively to the surrounding residential grain, with dwellings located and orientated to avoid direct overlooking of existing properties.
- 6.6.3. The development has been designed to provide a sensitive transition between new and existing residential uses. The scheme is naturally separated from surrounding built form through a combination of retained vegetation, new planting and garden areas.
- 6.6.4. Overall, the scheme has been carefully designed to provide a well-balanced, landscape-led layout which respects both the amenities of future occupants and those of surrounding residents. The combination of spatial separation, green infrastructure and thoughtful building orientation ensures the proposals are fully compliant with the amenity objectives of Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.
- 6.6.5. In addition, proposed dwellings benefit from private rear gardens that are well sized and positioned to provide usable outdoor space for future residents. In addition to private amenity space, the proposals incorporate high-quality landscaped public open space throughout the scheme.
- 6.6.6. The overall layout demonstrates strong regard to existing residential amenity, with a considered use of boundary landscaping, sensitive positioning of buildings, and the retention of trees where possible providing further visual buffering between existing development and the new homes.
- 6.6.7. In conclusion, the proposed development has been designed to uphold high standards of amenity for both existing and future residents. The design achieves a balance of privacy, outlook and usable amenity space, and is considered to fully comply with the requirements of Policy 33 of the HDPF.

6.7. Transport, Access and Parking

- 6.7.1. In support of this application, a Transport Statement has been prepared by Motion Transport Consultants. The statement assesses the highway and transport implications of the development and demonstrates compliance with relevant planning policy.
- 6.7.2. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be via the existing access on Horsham Road, which will be formalised and upgraded to include a new 2-metre footway, dropped kerbs, and tactile paving. A recent Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) survey confirms that suitable visibility splays can be achieved in accordance with Manual for Streets guidance. Swept path analysis demonstrates that delivery, refuse and emergency vehicles can safely enter, manoeuvre within, and exit the site in a forward gear.
- 6.7.3. Trip generation analysis, based on TRICS data, shows that the development will generate only 2 to 3 additional vehicle movements during weekday peak hours, with approximately 22 trips across a typical day. This low level of traffic is not anticipated to cause harm to the operation or safety of the local highway network.

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- 6.7.4. Parking provision has been designed in accordance with West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) parking standards, with a total of 11 car parking spaces and 5 cycle spaces proposed. All new dwellings will benefit from electric vehicle charging infrastructure, ensuring future-proofed, sustainable provision.
- 6.7.5. While the rural location does limit access to frequent public transport, the site remains accessible on foot to local amenities within Rusper village. There is also access to a daily bus service and nearby rail stations such as Faygate and Crawley, supporting sustainable travel options. These factors are consistent with national and local planning policy, which recognises the context of rural development and seeks to ensure reasonable opportunities for sustainable travel.
- 6.7.6. In summary, the Transport Statement concludes that the development provides safe and suitable access, appropriate parking, and sustainable transport options. It will not have a detrimental impact on the highway network and complies with the relevant requirements of the NPPF, WSCC Transport Plan, and Horsham District Planning Framework. There are therefore no highways or transport grounds on which the application should be resisted.
- 6.7.7. Please refer to the Transport Statement produced by Motion Transport Consultants for further information on the proposals.

6.8. Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.8.1. An Ecological Impact Assessment has been produced by Lizard in support of the proposals.
- 6.8.2. Ecological surveys have been undertaken for land adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Rusper, to assess the potential impacts of the proposed residential development. The site comprises an existing dwelling, garage, derelict barn, gardens and a grassland paddock, with surrounding woodland and hedgerows. Habitats present are of site-level ecological value, with areas of modified and neutral grassland, introduced shrubs, and scattered trees.
- 6.8.3. A series of protected species surveys were completed in 2020 and updated in 2024. These identified a confirmed bat roost of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats within buildings B2 and B3. These buildings will require a Natural England mitigation licence, with appropriate bat boxes and roosting features integrated into the development to ensure compliance with legislation and conservation objectives.
- 6.8.4. Reptile surveys confirmed a good population of slow worms and a low number of grass snakes. A translocation strategy has been prepared, relocating reptiles to an enhanced receptor area to the south of the site. This will include habitat enhancement and long-term management to maintain biodiversity value.
- 6.8.5. No evidence of great crested newts, dormice, badgers or water voles was recorded on site. Habitats for birds and invertebrates were present and will be safeguarded or compensated for through timing of works, habitat creation, and planting designed to enhance ecological value.
- 6.8.6. Overall, the development is predicted to have a negligible impact on biodiversity, subject to the implementation of proposed mitigation and enhancement measures. Ecological enhancements include native hedgerow planting, integrated bat and bird boxes, and habitat creation, in accordance with national and local planning policy requirements.
- 6.8.7. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report and Metric have been produced by Lizard in support of the proposals.

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- 6.8.8. The BNG metric calculations demonstrate that the current proposals would result in a net loss of -0.95 Habitat Units, equivalent to a -52.62% reduction. However, the scheme would deliver a modest net gain of +0.09 Hedgerow Units, equating to a 91.27% increase, through the introduction of native hedge planting. While this represents a positive contribution, it does not offset the overall loss in habitat units.
- 6.8.9. In line with national policy and to ensure compliance with the biodiversity trading rules, the applicant proposes to purchase habitat units from a third-party provider such as the Environment Bank. A minimum of 1.13 Habitat Units of medium distinctiveness or higher will be secured to address the shortfall. This approach accords with the provisions of the Environment Act 2021 and relevant statutory guidance and will be formalised through the submission of an updated Biodiversity Metric calculation including off-site units, prior to commencement of development.
- 6.8.10. Although some of the proposed habitats are of medium distinctiveness, their limited extent and scale mean that a formal Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP) is not considered necessary. Nevertheless, to ensure the successful establishment and ongoing condition of the proposed habitats and hedgerows, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be prepared. This document will detail the management responsibilities and monitoring arrangements to secure biodiversity benefits in the long term and can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition.
- 6.8.11. In conclusion, whilst the development does not initially meet the +10% net gain target on-site, appropriate measures are proposed to address this deficit through the purchase of off-site units. Combined with the implementation of a LEMP, the scheme will ensure that biodiversity gains are secured in accordance with national legislation and guidance. The proposals therefore provide an acceptable and policy-compliant approach to achieving Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 6.8.12. Please refer to the Ecology and BNG reporting produced by Lizard for further information on the proposals.

6.9. Trees

- 6.9.1. As set out previously, the site is occupied by established dense vegetation and trees on the boundaries of the site. As such, this application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact, Method Assessment and Tree Retention Protection Plan which have been prepared by Lizard.
- 6.9.2. The development has been designed to avoid tree losses as far as possible, however a small number of trees shall require removal to facilitate the development. The table below demonstrates the trees proposed to be removed as shown in the submitted Tree Protection Plan.

BS Category	Tree/Group/Hedge Numbers	Total
A	0	0
B	0	0
C	T05, T06 H20 & H21	4
U	0	0

Figure 5- Trees and Hedges Proposed for Removal

- 6.9.3. The vast majority of trees to the boundaries of the site are being retained and will be protected using Tree Protective Barriers to prevent any incursion into the root protection area (RPA). A small number of trees however will require enabling works and / or an operation zone within their RPA's.

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6.9.4. Provided that mitigation planting is in line with current guidelines and all other protection measures are properly enacted, the loss of trees from the site would be adequately compensated and the proposals would accord with the requirements of BS5837.

6.9.5. Please refer to the Arboricultural reporting produced by Lizard for further information on the proposals.

6.10. Drainage

6.10.1. In support of this application, a Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Motion. The assessment confirms that the site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

6.10.2. While surface water flood mapping identifies small areas at low, medium and high risk primarily along the access the analysis confirms that the predicted flood depths are shallow (less than 0.2m), presenting a very low hazard. As no buildings are located within these zones, and safe pedestrian and vehicular access is achievable, the Sequential Test is not required.

6.10.3. The Drainage Strategy has been designed in line with national and local policy requirements, including those of the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance, and West Sussex County Council. Due to the impermeable nature of the underlying Weald Clay and failed soakage testing, infiltration techniques are not viable. As there are no watercourses or surface water sewers available nearby, surface water runoff will discharge, under highly controlled conditions, to the on-site 150mm foul sewer. This approach has been agreed in principle with Thames Water, subject to confirmation from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) that all higher tiers of the drainage hierarchy have been fully explored.

6.10.4. Surface water runoff will be attenuated using a combination of permeable paving and an open SuDS basin. The permeable paving will be tanked and cover 490m², providing approximately 66m³ of storage. The basin will add a further 55m³ of storage, bringing the total attenuation volume to over 120m³. The site's outfall will be restricted to just 1.6 litres per second, 45% lower than the calculated greenfield runoff rate ensuring a better-than-greenfield discharge. Hydraulic modelling undertaken using MicroDrainage software confirms that the strategy can contain and manage the 1-in-100 year rainfall event, plus a 40% climate change allowance, without flooding.

6.10.5. The strategy also incorporates measures to protect water quality. Pollution risk from roofs and low-traffic areas is considered low, and the combination of permeable paving and the SuDS basin achieves the necessary mitigation indices as set out in the CIRIA SuDS Manual. Together, these features provide effective treatment for total suspended solids, hydrocarbons and metals, protecting downstream watercourses and infrastructure.

6.10.6. Foul drainage from the four dwellings will connect to the existing on-site public foul sewer. Estimated peak flows of 0.23 litres per second are well within the sewer's capacity. Combined foul and surface water discharge from the development will not exceed 1.83 litres per second. In line with best practice and LLFA guidance, allowances for urban creep and climate change have been incorporated into the strategy, along with detailed hydraulic modelling using the latest FEH 2022 rainfall data.

6.10.7. The strategy considers exceedance events and overland flows, ensuring that extreme rainfall events will not affect dwellings or neighbouring land. A high-level exceedance plan has been produced to demonstrate flow routes. In addition, a Drainage Management and Maintenance Plan has been prepared, ensuring the proposed system will remain effective and operational for the lifetime of the development.

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6.10.8. In summary, the proposed development is not at significant risk of flooding from any source, and the drainage strategy provides a robust, sustainable solution for managing surface water runoff. The approach complies with all relevant policy and technical guidance, utilises the highest tiers of the drainage hierarchy available on-site, and demonstrates betterment in terms of runoff control and water quality. As such, the development is appropriate for its location and should be supported from a drainage and flood risk perspective.

6.10.9. Please refer to the Drainage Strategy produced by Motion for further information on the proposals.

6.11. Sustainability

6.11.1. Despite part of the site being located outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary, it is sustainably located and benefits from being near to a bus stop located approximately 500m to the south of the site on Horsham Road. The site is also located within walking distance to a good range of community amenities, such as a shop, post office, primary school, church, playground recreational space and public houses. Rusper Primary School is also located to the north, as well as St Mary Magdalene C of E Church, a sports club, post office, children's playground.

6.11.2. Additionally, the town of Horsham is located approximately 5 miles to the south-west of the site, while Crawley is located some 5.6 miles to the east. Both are accessible via public transport.

6.11.3. Policy 37 of the adopted Local Plan states *that 'proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development. To deliver sustainable design, development should incorporate the following measures where appropriate according to the type of development and location'*. In addition to the measures listed under the policy, *'all new development will be required to provide satisfactory arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials as an integral part of design'*.

6.11.4. In addition to meeting the current Building Regulations we propose to use the following measures to enhance the sustainability and further reduce the carbon footprint of the house:

- Highly Insulated Fabric Face
- Passive Solar Design Principles
- Fabric First Approach
- Natural Ventilation

6.11.5. Further details regarding the sustainability strategy are included within the Design and Access Statement submitted with this planning application.

6.12. Water Neutrality

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

6.12.2. A recently received advice note from Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

6.12.3. On this basis, a Water Neutrality Statement has been produced by Motion to support this Application.

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- 6.12.4. The majority of the site is undeveloped although because the existing property that will be extended from a 2-bed to a 3-bed is within the site boundary, there is a water use associated with this dwelling that forms the baseline water use of the site.
- 6.12.5. The existing dwelling does not have any water efficient fixtures and fittings and anecdotally uses 130 litres/person/day. This has formed the basis for the calculation of the existing site's current water demand, based on the occupancy levels for the existing dwelling. The existing 'baseline' water use of the dwelling is an occupancy of 1.88 persons (for a two-bed house) multiplied by 130 litres/day, which equals 244.4 litres/day.
- 6.12.6. Using the Part G water consumption figure of 84.45 litres per person per day and the population of the development within the new dwellings (9.48) it is estimated that the overall domestic water usage of the four new houses will be 757.55 litres/day.
- 6.12.7. It has been stated already that the existing dwelling doesn't have any water efficient fixtures and fittings and anecdotally uses 130 litres/person/day. If this water usage figure is multiplied by 0.59 persons, this results in additional water use increase on site of 76.70 litres/day.
- 6.12.8. When the water use increase of the new dwellings (757.55 litres/day) is added to the water use increase of the extension to the existing dwelling (76.70 litres/day) this results in a total water use increase as a result of the development of 834.25 litres/day, prior to any rainwater harvesting or offsetting.
- 6.12.9. The four new proposed dwellings will have a total population of 9.48 persons. When this figure is multiplied by the proposed residual mains water demand in litres/person/day of 51.93 it results in the total water demand of the proposed new dwellings being reduced from 757.55 litres/day to 492.30 litres/day. Once this figure is added with the extension of the existing dwelling the water demand on the site of 569.00 litres/day.
- 6.12.10. In summary, the proposed development on land adjacent to Pucks Croft will reduce mains water demand on-site through the use of water efficient fixtures and fittings and rainwater harvesting and the residual mains water demand of the development will be offset through credits allocated as part of the significant offsetting scheme within Horsham District.
- 6.12.11. Therefore, the residual mains water requirement of the development of 569.00 litres per day has been fully offset. This means that there will be no additional mains water requirement within the SNWSZ because of the development, which will be water neutral.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The proposal seeks consent on behalf of BDP Plant Hire for the erection of 4no. dwellings, extension to existing cottage and improvements to the access and provision of landscaping at the Land Adjacent to Pucks Croft Cottage, Rusper.
- 7.2. The Council does not have a 5-year housing supply, and for the reasons set out in this report it is concluded that the site is sustainably located, and the development proposed is of an entirely appropriate form outside the settlement boundary.
- 7.3. The site lies directly adjacent to existing development and therefore this proposal is considered to contribute positively to the area's much needed housing delivery, providing 4no. market homes therefore complying with Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework.
- 7.4. The application is further supported by a suite of reports which detail how the development responds to the landscape, ecological and arboricultural context of the site and how it relates to the surrounding context of the area. Information about drainage, highways, sustainability and water neutrality have also been provided.
- 7.5. Overall, the development provides a high-quality small-scale housing development fully responsive to the semi-rural context of the site and the surrounding character.
- 7.6. For the reasons set out in this statement it is considered to comply with the Development Plan, as updated by the National Planning Framework and associated supplementary planning guidance. We therefore respectfully request that outline planning permission is granted without delay.

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Appendix A – Pre-Application Advice



Mr Huw James
ECE Planning
64-68 Brighton Road
Worthing
BN11 2EN

Our ref: PE/24/0031
Your ref:
Officer: Tamara Dale
Email: tamara.dale@horsham.gov.uk
Tel: 01403 215166
Date: 25th April 2024

Dear Mr James

Location: Land Adjacent To Pucks Croft Cottage Horsham Road Rusper Horsham

Details: Erection of 4no. dwellings and extension to existing cottage at the Land adjacent Pucks Croft Cottage.

Thank you for your enquiry relating to the erection of 4no. dwellings and the extension of an existing dwelling at Pucks Croft Cottage, Horsham Road, Rusper. Following a review of the planning history and spatial context and the recent site meeting, please find below comments for your consideration.

The pre-application enquiry relates to the provision of 4no. dwellings and an extension to an existing dwelling. Two layout options have been provided, showing the proposed arrangement of the development, including retained grassland, restoration of a historic pond, and parking. Access would be taken from the existing access serving Pucks Croft Cottage.

Option 1 is laid out in a farmstead arrangement, with the proposed dwellings positioned to the rear (south-east) of the site. The proposal would comprise 2no. detached dwellings and 1no. pair of semi-detached dwellings, where Plot 5 would replace an existing barn. A central parking area would be provided, with grassland retained to the south and west of the dwelling. The existing dwelling of Pucks Croft Cottage is also proposed to be extended to create a 3-bed dwelling.

Option 2 would locate the development to the frontage of the site, and would comprise the same mix of development, where the dwellings would be positioned adjacent to the existing dwelling of Pucks Croft Cottage. Plot 5 would be located further to the south-east, replacing an existing barn, with grassland retained to the north, south and west. Each plot would benefit from its own parking area with associated landscaping, with a turning head provided to the south-west.

The pre-application site is located to the south of Rusper Road and comprises agricultural land to the south and west of Pucks Croft Cottage. The site is primarily located outside of the defined built-up area, but adjoins it to the north-east. The site comprises paddock land which is enclosed to the west by a mature tree line, with a fence line separating the site from wider agricultural land to the south. The site is bound by residential development to the north and north-east, with countryside comprising paddocks and fields to the south and west.

Planning History

The pre-application site has been subject of a previous refusal under DC/20/2465 which was dismissed at appeal. The appeal decision recognised that the majority of the site is adjacent to, but outside of, the defined built-up area boundary of Rusper; with the site located within the countryside in policy terms. The decision recognised that the site was not allocated for development within the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, with no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the development is essential to its countryside location. It was therefore considered that residential development of the site would not accord with Policies 2, 3, 4, or 26 of the HDPF.

The appeal decision recognised that Rusper is identified as a smaller village under Policy 3 of the HDPF, where these settlements have limited services, facilities, social networks, but good accessibility to larger settlements or settlements with some employment but limited services, facilities or accessibility. Residents of smaller villages are reliant on larger settlements to access most of their requirements. It was recognised that Rusper does offer some facilities including a primary school, local shop, post office, and pubs within reasonable walking distance of the site. However, future occupiers would need to travel further to reach facilities including a secondary school, comprehensive shopping facilities, or significant employment. The Inspector recognised that there would be some opportunity to do so by bicycle or bus, but noted that the available bus service does not operate during usual commuting hours or at weekends. The Inspector concluded that occupiers would likely be reliant on private vehicles for many of their journeys, albeit that due to the small scale nature of the proposal, the adverse impacts in this regard were considered limited.

The Inspector recognised that the development would result in direct and indirect social and economic benefits, both short-term during construction and longer-term on occupation. These would include support for local services and employment, and expenditure contributing to the local economy. However, the extent of these benefits would be tempered by the small scale of the development, and were therefore afforded modest weight. While it was recognised that future occupiers would have some access to local services and facilities and public transport links within Rusper, as well as pedestrian and cycle linkages to the public rights of way network, it was considered that there would still be a reliance on private vehicles, where the accessibility of the site would not constitute a significant benefit of the proposal.

In considering character and appearance, the Inspector noted that the pre-application site is largely open, reflecting the small and medium scale grassland fields edges with woodland shaws, hedgerows, and hedgerow trees that are characteristic of the landscape to the south and east of Rusper. While it was recognised that layout was reserved for later consideration, the Inspector noted that the development would be spread across a considerable proportion of the site, where irrespective of the nearby buildings, the encroachment of the development onto currently undeveloped land would be urbanising and would result in a loss of openness. It was considered that the layout would be at odds with the generally linear ribbon character of the adjacent buildings, which would give the development a more formal and suburban character which the Inspector considered to be incongruous at the settlement edge. It was therefore concluded that the proposal would erode the spacious character along this side of Horsham Road, disrupting the perception of a gradual transition between the village and the surrounding countryside.

While the Inspector recognised that the development sought a landscape-led approach, it was not considered that the inclusion of landscaping and enhanced planting would fully offset or mitigate the encroachment of more intense built form into the countryside; where these factors would serve to reduce the visual impact of the proposal. It was acknowledged that the visual impact of the proposal would be localised, where the relatively small scale of the development would result in modest harm to the character of the wider surrounding landscape. However, it was concluded that

the proposal would adversely affect the countryside setting to the village, and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The Inspector considered the water strategy, which sought to offset the water demand at a forestry site within the District, but concluded that there was little confidence that the measures to fully offset additional water demand could be delivered in practice in order to achieve water neutrality. It was therefore concluded that water neutrality had not been secured and as an appropriate mechanism could not be secured, it was found that adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site could not be excluded.

In weighing the planning balance, the Inspector recognised that the Council could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply, where the presumption in favour of sustainable development applied. However, it was considered that the development would not be a suitable location for housing given the position of the majority of the site within the countryside, in conflict with the spatial strategy for the District, and would cause harm to the integrity of the Arun Valley protected sites and to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal was therefore considered to conflict with the development plan when read as a whole.

This appeal is a material consideration of significant weight in the consideration of the current proposal, albeit that it is recognised that the quantum of development has been notably reduced.

Principle of Development

The application site comprises an undeveloped paddock to the west of Pucks Croft Cottage, which is located outside of the defined built-up area, albeit that it adjoins the boundary to the east. While the site is located immediately to the west of the built-up area, it remains outside of a defined settlement, and is therefore within a countryside location in policy terms.

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) sets out the main growth strategy, focusing development in the main settlements. The HDPF outlines that the proposed settlement hierarchy is the most sustainable approach to delivering housing; where new development is focused in the larger settlements of Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst; and limited new development is directed elsewhere, and only where it accords with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. Specifically, Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to retain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations as possible.

Policy 4 of the HDPF refers to the expansion of settlements outside the built-up area, and states that such development is only supported where: the site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type; the development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs; the impact of development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long term development; and the development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

As the site is located outside of any defined built-up area boundary, Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF are of significant weight in the determination of the application. As stated within Policy 3 of the HDPF, development will be permitted within towns and villages that have defined built-up areas; with development in the countryside more strictly controlled through the provisions of Policy 4. This policy states that development outside of built up areas will only be supported where the site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins a settlement edge.

Rusper Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021. The Plan elected to omit the allocation of sites, where only high-level development policies have been outlined.

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that "to promote development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF continues that "planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

The term "isolated" is not defined within the National Planning Policy Framework, but case law has confirmed that it should be given its ordinary objective meaning of remote and far away from other places, buildings and people, and separate or remote from a settlement, services, and facilities. It was concluded in the Braintree Judgement that a settlement would not necessarily exclude a cluster of dwellings. The application site is located within close proximity to a number of residential dwellings and other buildings, and given this spatial context is not considered to be "isolated" in its truest sense, and does not therefore engage the considerations of paragraph 84.

In this countryside location, the proposal is also considered against Policy 26 which seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development unless it is considered essential and appropriate in scale; whilst also meeting one of four criteria. This criterion includes: supporting the needs of agriculture or forestry; enabling the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; providing for quiet informal recreational use; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas. The proposed development does not meet any of this criterion, nor is it considered to be essential to the countryside location, and does not therefore comply with Policy 26 of the HDPF.

The Council is however currently unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, with the latest Authority Monitoring Report (December 2023) detailing a supply of 2.9 years. In such instances the Paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF states that where there are no relevant development plan policies in place, or the policies that are considered most important for the determination of applications are out of date (such as when a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated), planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

In this case the most important policies contained within the HDPF, including Policies 2, 4 and 26 must be afforded reduce weight given the engagement of the 'tilted balance' within Paragraph 11d.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that in situations where the presumption applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made, and the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet

its identified housing requirement. While Shipley Neighbourhood Plan was made on 23.06.2021, it has not established a housing target for the Parish nor allocated sites for housing development. As such, the provisions of paragraph 14 of the NPPF do not therefore apply.

The proposal would provide 4no. residential dwellings, where given that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the contribution to the housing supply would be moderate and would be of significant weight in the planning balance. The proposed development would also provide associated socio-economic benefits in the form of short-term construction employment and increased local spend. These benefits are also considered to be of some weight in the overall assessment.

The conclusions of the appeal decision are of note, where the Inspector found that the site would not be an appropriate location for residential development given the position of the majority of the site within the countryside, in conflict with the spatial strategy for the District. Given the Council's current housing land supply, which is distinctly less than considered at appeal, and coupled with the Inspector's recognition that future occupiers would have some access to local services and facilities and public transport links within Rusper, as well as pedestrian and cycle linkages to the public rights of way network, further consideration would need to be given to the planning balance should an application be submitted. Should an application be progressed, it is suggested that these matters be addressed and justified within the Planning Statement.

Character and Appearance

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposal should take into account townscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

The pre-application enquiry proposed two options for residential development at the site, referred to as Option 1 Farmstead Arrangement and Option 2 Frontage Layout. Both options have reduced the quantum of development proposed on the site, where the development does not extend beyond the build line of the linear development to the north-east and open spaces are retained around the development. Both proposals acknowledge important viewpoints through the site, where the layout of the development seeks to limit impact on this view. Grassland would be retained to the edges of the site to allow an appropriate transition between the rural countryside to the west and the suburban linear built surrounds to the north-east. It is considered that both options have taken better consideration of the constraints of the site, as well as the character and context of the built surroundings.

While the rationale behind the farmstead arrangement is understood and appreciated, there are however concerns that such an arrangement would appear relatively formalised due to the level of hardstanding required for the yard area, as well as the collection of development to the rear of the site. Should such an arrangement be proposed, further information with respect the materials and finishes, and justification with regard to the proposed layout, would be beneficial.

The frontage layout would cluster the proposed dwellings within the frontage of the site, in line with existing built development to the north. This arrangement is considered to better reflect the settlement characteristics of the locality, with the arrangement acting as a book-end to the linear ribbon of development.

Following verbal discussion with the Council's Landscape Architect, the rationale for both options is understood. While there is no specific preference between the two options, the frontage layout is considered to better reflect the build pattern of the immediate surroundings, clustering

development within the same area as the adjacent linear development. The importance of the view into the site is acknowledged, and it is considered that there may be scope to angle the proposed dwellings to the western portion of the site to further open this view and lessen the formal arrangement as currently proposed. Should an application be submitted, it is suggested that a Landscape Visual Assessment be submitted to justify the proposed arrangement in the context of the wider townscape, landscape, and views.

The proposed development is considered to take better consideration of the transitional space the site occupies, with the reduced quantum of development and proposed layout considered to address the concerns raised by the Planning Inspector.

Water Neutrality

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

A Water Neutrality Statement would be required with any future submission, further details of which can be found through the following link:-

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

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

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.

Circular 06/2005 identifies that the presence of protected species is a material consideration when considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Therefore, it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed application, is established before planning permission is granted. Information on biodiversity impacts and opportunities should inform all stages of development, and an ecological survey is usually necessary where the type and location of development are such that the impact on biodiversity may be significant and existing information is lacking or inadequate.

The pre-application site is located within the countryside, among agricultural fields, with woodland, hedgerows, and ponds in the vicinity. Given this context, the site has the potential to be used as habitat and a connector for various species. It is also noted that the pre-application site is located within the Red and Amber Impact Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts, which is considered to be the suitable habitat with a likelihood of Great Crested Newts being present.

Should an application be submitted, it would need to be supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment, with a high likelihood that additional surveys, including Great Crested Newt Survey and Bat Scoping Report, would also be required.

From 2 April 2024, the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement becomes mandatory for all developments. The submission would need to demonstrate that 10% Biodiversity Net Gain could be achieved through on-site and, where relevant, off-site enhancements. Further information on Biodiversity Net Gain can be found at:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/biodiversity-net-gain>

Conclusion

Should an application be submitted, the following information would be required in support of the application:

- Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Proposed Floor and Elevations Plan
- Planning Statement
- Water Neutrality Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including Bat Scoping Report and Great Crested Newt Survey)
- Landscape Visual Assessment
- Completed Biodiversity Metric in original Microsoft Excel and PDF format
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement
- Draft Biodiversity Net Gain Plan

I hope this is of some assistance. 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/24/0031 in your submission.

Yours sincerely

Tamara Dale
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