



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/2025

Storrington Sand Quarry Ltd, Hampers Lane, Storrington, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 3EX

DESCRIPTION:

Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 9no. dwellings.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

NC/20/0004	Variation of conditions 1,2,4,8,19 and 22 of planning permission WSCC/009/18/SR to allow two further years extraction and restoration by 2028	Application permitted on 15/10/2025
WSCC ref: WSCC/001/20 DC/13/2460	The continuation of mineral extraction for a two year period and the importation of inert material over a five year period only, to enable the restoration of mineral working at Washington Sandpit for the long term benefit of the Sandgate Country Park (County Consultation)	Application permitted on 01/05/2015
WSCC ref: WSCC/104/13/SR		
DC/13/1898	The continuation of mineral extraction for a two year period and the importation of inert material over a five year period only, to enable the restoration of mineral working at Washington Sandpit for the long term benefit of the Sandgate Country Park (County Consultation)	Application permitted on 30/05/2014
DC/08/2500	Variation of conditions 1, 6 and 13 (and condition 7) of planning permission SG/2/99 for the extension of sand extraction operations (County Matter)	Application permitted on 26/01/2009
SG/37/93	Consolidation of extant planning consents authorising extraction of sand (sg/43/75 & sg/7/82) county consultation Site: Hampers La Sandpit Washington	Application permitted on 05/07/1994

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site relates to part of the former Washington Sand Pit / Storrington Sand Quarry site, located to the north of the A283 Washington Road and to the west of Hampers Lane, Storrington. The site lies outside of the defined Built-Up Area Boundary and is therefore located within the countryside for planning policy purposes.

The wider quarry site is currently subject to an extant minerals and restoration permission and remains in active mineral/waste use pending completion of extraction and restoration works. The application site comprises part of the wider quarry landholding and currently has a disturbed appearance associated with its mineral extraction history.

The site is positioned adjacent to the South Downs National Park to the south and east. Existing residential development is located to the north, east and west, including the residential development at John Ireland Way to the east and dwellings fronting Washington Road to the south. Woodland, mature tree belts and vegetation are present around parts of the site boundaries and within the wider quarry landscape.

The surrounding area contains a number of public rights of way, although views into the site are currently limited due to existing vegetation and landform. The site falls within the Storrington Woods and Heaths Landscape Character Area at county level and the Parham and Storrington Wooded Farmlands and Heaths Landscape Character Area at district level.

The site forms part of land identified through previous permissions and policy designations for restoration to recreational and landscape uses, including provision of a country park and public amenity space associated with the wider quarry restoration scheme.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

This application seeks Permission in Principle (PiP) for the erection of up to 9 dwellings. Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017, the application seeks approval only for:

- the location of development;
- the land use proposed; and
- the amount of development.

No detailed matters are submitted for consideration at this stage. Issues relating to access, layout, scale, appearance, landscaping, drainage and other technical matters would be considered separately through a subsequent Technical Details Consent application should Permission in Principle be granted. The application is supported by an indicative site layout plan showing a potential arrangement of detached dwellings within the site. The indicative material suggests a mix of 2 to 5-bedroom dwellings. The submitted information indicates that vehicular access is anticipated from the A283 Washington Road, although no detailed access drawings or technical highway information form part of the application.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 17 - Exceptions Housing Schemes
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Storrington and Sullington Neighbourhood Plan (2019):

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

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

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 1.7-years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

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

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

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy

Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion

Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change

Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use

Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction

Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality

Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection

Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes

Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport

Policy 25: Parking

Policy 32: Conversion of Agricultural and Rural Buildings to Commercial, Community and Residential Uses

Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision

Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs

Policy 41: Rural Exception Homes

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish Design Statement:

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham District (SDPAN)

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

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

Consultations:

HDC Environmental Health: Objection (18.12.2026) [Summary]

I am concerned that this application seeks permission in principle for residential development on a quarry that is undergoing active restoration with all the vibration, noise and dust that is associated with this activity. This is likely to continue for several more years and is not discussed in the application. Given the condition of the site, I'm unclear how a red line can be definitively drawn based on the aerial photo and site plan provided with the application submission. The site has a minerals and waste permission to be infilled and restored for recreational use, and this is different to an infilled site designed to receive development. Contamination and land instability are identified in the NPPF as material planning considerations. There are likely to be significant design and geotechnical constraints for constructing residential development on areas of deep infilling that may adversely impact the viability of the proposed development.

HDC Landscape Architect: Objection (23.01.2026) [Summary]

The principle of 9no. dwellings directly contravenes proposals under approved DC/13/2460 and WSCC/001/20 and referred to under NC/20/0004, as well as Policy AL19 of the Horsham District Site Specific Allocations of Land (2007) to secure the wider sand quarry site for the formation of a Country Park. Further, the introduction of domestic and urbanising features along with associated light pollution adjacent to the South Downs National Park (SDNP) is likely to detract from the setting of the SDNP, notwithstanding the existing industrial use which is to be restored as approved under WSCC/01/20. The proposals are contrary to policies 25, 26 and 30 of the HDPF.

Southern Water: No Objection (23.12.2025) [Summary]

No objection subject to details provided at Technical Details Stage showing the proposed means of foul/surface water drainage disposal.

WSCC Highways: No Objection (08.01.2026) [Summary]

In principle, the LHA would not raise any objections to an application at this site, subject to the submission of sufficient information at Technical Details Stage.

WSCC Minerals and Waste: Objection (07.01.2026) [Summary]

The application site is an active waste site that is currently being restored as per the approved restoration plans (planning permission WSCC/001/20). In addition, the decision includes a s106 which secures the delivery of permissive pathways within the restored site, for use by the public.

The proposal as submitted would introduce 9 dwellings to the southern part of the site. No details pertaining to access or landscaping have been provided at this stage. From the information provided, it appears that the new houses would intercept the location of the pathways, which would in turn would invalidate the s106. Further, the PiP as submitted would undoubtedly conflict with the objectives of the restoration and aftercare scheme as no provisions for dwellings were agreed for this area of land, which instead was intended to be used as public amenity space, and the introduction of housing would presumably result in a loss of biodiversity/ecological habitats when considered against the extant permission. Given the proposed PiP would clearly prejudice the ongoing restoration of the site, the MWPA raise an Objection in principle to the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None received

Parish Comments:

None received

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

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

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

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

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

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

Location

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) establishes the District's spatial strategy, directing the majority of development toward sustainable settlements within defined Built-Up Area Boundaries. Policies 3 and 4 similarly seek to retain the existing settlement pattern and strictly control development outside settlement boundaries unless specifically allocated or otherwise justified through the development plan process.

The application site lies outside of any defined Built-Up Area Boundary and therefore forms part of the countryside for planning policy purposes. The site is not allocated for residential development within either the Horsham District Planning Framework or the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan.

Furthermore, the site forms part of the wider Washington Sand Quarry site, which remains subject to extant minerals and restoration permissions secured under planning permission WSCC/001/20. The approved restoration scheme seeks to restore the wider quarry site to publicly accessible recreational, ecological and landscape uses, including the delivery of permissive pathways and public amenity space associated with the extension of Sandgate Park. These objectives are additionally reinforced through Policy AL19 of the Horsham District Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Document (2007), which seeks to secure the wider site for the formation of a Country Park and resists development that would prejudice its delivery.

In this regard, the proposed introduction of up to 9 dwellings would fundamentally conflict with the approved restoration strategy for the site and would prejudice the intended recreational, ecological and landscape-led after-use of the former quarry. The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority has objected to the proposal on the basis that the development would conflict with the approved restoration and aftercare scheme, interfere with permissive public routes secured through legal agreement, and undermine the intended public amenity and biodiversity objectives for the site.

Policy 26 of the HDPF seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development unless it is essential to a countryside location and meets identified rural function exceptions. The proposed residential development would neither be essential to this countryside location nor support any of the rural purposes identified within the policy. Instead, the proposal would introduce a permanent residential form of development into a site specifically intended to be restored to open recreational and landscape uses.

In addition, the Council's Landscape Officer has raised objection to the proposal, noting that the site lies adjacent to the South Downs National Park within a sensitive landscape context. The proposed residential use, together with associated domestic paraphernalia, lighting and urbanising influences, would fail to conserve or enhance landscape character or the setting of the National Park, contrary to Policies 25, 26 and 30 of the HDPF. The proposal would also conflict with established landscape character objectives seeking restoration of former extraction land to heathland, woodland and recreational uses rather than built development.

While it is acknowledged that the Council currently cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, this does not automatically render all countryside sites suitable for residential development. In this instance, the proposal would not simply represent development beyond the settlement boundary, but development that would directly undermine an extant and approved minerals restoration scheme and prejudice the long-term delivery of publicly accessible recreational land and ecological restoration secured through previous permissions and legal agreement.

The proposal therefore conflicts with the overarching spatial strategy of Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the HDPF, fails to satisfy the requirements of Policy 26 relating to countryside development, and would prejudice the approved restoration and recreational objectives for the wider quarry site. The proposal is also contrary to Policies 25 and 30 of the HDPF by reason of its harmful urbanising impacts within this sensitive landscape setting adjacent to the South Downs National Park.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposed residential land use is unacceptable in principle and would constitute inappropriate and unsustainable development in the countryside.

Land Use

From the information submitted, it is understood that the development would comprise open market residential dwellings. An indicative layout has been provided showing a potential arrangement of detached dwellings within the southern part of the wider quarry site, although layout and access are reserved for future consideration through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application.

The application site forms part of an active minerals and restoration site currently subject to extant permissions and restoration obligations secured under planning permission WSCC/001/20. The approved restoration and aftercare strategy for the wider site seeks to restore the former quarry to publicly accessible recreational, ecological and landscape uses, including permissive pathways, biodiversity enhancements and amenity space associated with the extension to Sandgate Park.

In land use terms, Officers consider the proposed residential use to be fundamentally incompatible with the established and approved long-term use of the site. The introduction of a permanent residential enclave within land intended for restoration to open recreational and ecological purposes would directly undermine and prejudice the delivery of the approved restoration strategy. The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority has confirmed that the proposal would conflict with the restoration and aftercare objectives for the site and potentially interfere with permissive public routes secured through legal agreement.

Furthermore, Policy AL19 of the Horsham District Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Document (2007) specifically identifies the wider quarry site for the formation of a Country Park and resists development proposals that would prejudice its delivery. Officers consider that the introduction of residential development within the site would materially conflict with these objectives by urbanising part of the restored landscape and reducing the site's ability to function as publicly accessible recreational and ecological land.

The Council's Landscape Officer has additionally advised that the proposal would introduce domestic and urbanising influences, including lighting, domestic activity and associated paraphernalia, into a sensitive countryside location adjacent to the South Downs National Park. The proposed residential use would therefore fail to conserve or enhance the landscape character of the area or the setting of the National Park and would conflict with the intended landscape-led restoration of the former extraction site.

Whilst the site lies in proximity to existing residential development, Officers do not consider this sufficient to justify the principle of residential use in this location. Unlike surrounding residential land, the application site forms part of a strategically important restored minerals site subject to approved ecological, recreational and landscape objectives. The proposed use would neither be essential to a countryside location nor support the approved long-term function of the wider site.

Accordingly, Officers conclude that the proposed residential land use would represent an inappropriate and incompatible form of development within the countryside and would prejudice the approved restoration, recreational and ecological objectives for the wider quarry site. The proposed land use is therefore considered unacceptable in principle.

Amount of Development

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

In considering the “amount of development” under the provisions of the Permission in Principle regime, the Council is required to assess whether the proposed quantum of residential development would be appropriate having regard to the site, its surroundings and the relevant planning policy context.

The application site forms part of the wider Washington Sand Quarry restoration site, which is intended to be restored to publicly accessible recreational, ecological and landscape uses following cessation of mineral operations. The approved restoration strategy seeks to deliver a landscaped and naturalistic afteruse, including permissive public routes, habitat creation and amenity space associated with the extension to Sandgate Park.

Officers consider that the introduction of up to 9 dwellings would represent a significant and permanent intensification of built form within this sensitive countryside location and would materially conflict with the approved restoration objectives for the wider site. Whilst only the amount of development is formally under consideration at this stage, the quantum proposed would nevertheless establish a substantial residential presence within land intended for open recreational and ecological purposes.

The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that the proposed development would introduce urbanising influences into a sensitive landscape setting adjacent to the South Downs National Park, including domestic paraphernalia, lighting, activity and associated infrastructure. Officers agree that the cumulative impact arising from up to 9 dwellings would fail to conserve or enhance the character of the area and would undermine the intended landscape-led restoration of the former quarry site.

Furthermore, the proposed scale of development would reduce the ability of the wider site to function as intended under the approved restoration and aftercare scheme. The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority has confirmed that the proposal would prejudice the approved restoration strategy, including ecological and public amenity objectives secured through planning permission and legal agreement obligations.

While indicative plans suggest that dwellings could physically be accommodated within the site boundaries, Officers do not consider that this in itself demonstrates that the amount of development proposed is appropriate in planning terms. The issue in this instance is not solely one of physical capacity, but whether the proposed quantum of residential development would be compatible with the approved long-term function and character of the site.

The proposal would therefore result in an inappropriate quantum of residential development within a countryside location that is intended to be restored for recreational, ecological and landscape purposes. The amount of development proposed is consequently considered unacceptable and

contrary to Policies 25, 26 and 30 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, together with the approved restoration objectives for the wider quarry site.

Water Neutrality

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

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

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000 litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

As this application is for Permission in Principle, only matters of land use and location are within scope. Detailed water consumption information is not required at this stage. However, the application has been subject to a Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment, which concludes that the development—using a precautionary occupancy rate of 3.09 persons per dwelling and subject to standard water-efficiency requirements secured at the Technical Details stage—would not give rise to an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination.

At the Technical Details Consent stage, the applicant will be required to provide detailed information demonstrating that the dwellings will achieve no more than 110 litres per person per day (including external consumption), in accordance with Building Regulations Part G and Natural England's standing advice. The submission will also need to confirm the specific fittings, technologies, and design measures that will deliver this standard. These measures will be secured by condition and/or planning obligation.

On this basis, the principle of development is not precluded on water neutrality grounds, and the completed Appropriate Assessment provides the necessary certainty—beyond reasonable scientific doubt—that the development can proceed without adverse effects on the Arun Valley designated sites.

Other Environmental Considerations:

Sustainable Transport

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

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) require that development mitigates the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency,

reduced flood risk, lower water consumption, enhanced biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which requires that local plans and decisions support the transition to a low carbon future and minimise vulnerability to climate impacts.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, limited technical detail has been provided at this stage. At the detailed design stage, it is anticipated that the following measures could be incorporated to ensure the development builds resilience to climate change and reduces carbon emissions:

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

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

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions and Planning Balance

In considering a Permission in Principle application, the Local Planning Authority is required to assess only the matters of location, land use and amount of development. Matters relating to access, layout, appearance, landscaping, drainage, ecology and environmental mitigation would be considered separately through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application and do not form part of this determination.

The application site lies outside of any defined Built-Up Area Boundary and therefore forms part of the countryside for planning policy purposes. Furthermore, the site forms part of the wider Washington Sand Quarry site, which remains subject to extant minerals and restoration permissions secured under planning permission WSCC/001/20. The approved restoration and aftercare strategy for the wider site seeks the restoration of the former quarry to publicly accessible recreational, ecological and landscape uses, including permissive pathways, biodiversity enhancements and amenity space associated with the extension to Sandgate Park.

The proposal would introduce a permanent residential use into land intended to form part of the approved restored quarry landscape. Officers consider that the proposal would fundamentally conflict with the approved restoration strategy for the site and prejudice the long-term recreational, ecological and landscape objectives secured through the extant minerals permission and associated legal agreement obligations.

The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority has objected to the proposal on the basis that the development would conflict with the approved restoration and aftercare scheme, potentially interfere with permissive pathways secured through legal agreement, and undermine the intended public amenity and biodiversity objectives for the site. In addition, the Council's Landscape Officer has objected to the proposal, raising concerns regarding the introduction of domestic and urbanising influences into a sensitive countryside location adjacent to the South Downs National Park. Officers agree that the proposed residential development would fail to conserve or enhance landscape character or the setting of the National Park and would undermine the intended landscape-led restoration of the former quarry site.

It is acknowledged that the proposal would deliver up to 9 additional dwellings within the District at a time when the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The proposal would therefore provide some social and economic benefits through a modest contribution toward housing delivery, short-term construction employment and associated local expenditure. These benefits weigh in favour of the proposal.

However, the proposal would also result in the permanent loss of land intended to contribute toward the approved restoration and after-use of the wider quarry site. The development would prejudice the delivery of publicly accessible recreational land, ecological enhancement and landscape restoration objectives that have been secured through previous permissions and legal agreements. This harm is considered substantial.

The proposal would additionally conflict with Policy AL19 of the Horsham District Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Document (2007), which seeks to secure the wider quarry site for the formation of a Country Park and resists development that would prejudice its delivery. The proposal would therefore directly undermine the long-established planning strategy for the restoration and after-use of the site.

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

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

In these circumstances, planning permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal; or

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

While the delivery of up to 9 dwellings attracts moderate weight in favour of the proposal given the Council's acute housing land supply position, Officers consider that the benefits of the scheme are clearly outweighed by the identified harm. The proposal would conflict with the spatial strategy of the Development Plan by introducing residential development within the countryside on unallocated land, but more significantly would directly prejudice an extant and approved quarry restoration scheme intended to deliver recreational, ecological and landscape benefits in perpetuity.

The proposal would also introduce an urbanising form of development within a sensitive landscape setting adjacent to the South Downs National Park, resulting in harm to landscape character and the setting of the National Park contrary to Policies 25, 26 and 30 of the HDPF.

Having regard to the above, Officers conclude that the adverse impacts of granting Permission in Principle would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole.

Accordingly, the proposal does not represent sustainable development and is therefore recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason for Refusal:

- 1 The proposed development would result in inappropriate and unsustainable residential development within the countryside, outside of any defined Built-Up Area Boundary and on land not allocated for housing development within the Development Plan. The proposal is not essential to a countryside location and would prejudice the approved restoration, recreational and ecological objectives for the wider Washington Sand Quarry site, whilst also introducing harmful urbanising development within a sensitive landscape setting adjacent to the South Downs National Park, to the detriment of landscape character and the setting of the National Park. The development is therefore contrary to Policies 2, 3, 4, 25, 26 and 30 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Policies 1 and 8 of the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019), and Policy AL19 of the Horsham District Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Document (2007).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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

Plans list for: DC/25/2025

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

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		OS1 REV A	26.11.2025
Block plan		PBP REV A	26.11.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Daniel Holmes Date: 15/05/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 19.05.2026