



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

**CONVERSION OF STABLE BARN TO A SELF-
BUILD DWELLING WITH VEHICLE ACCESS, CAR
PARKING AND LANDSCAPING**

AT

**HOPELANDS FARM, POLECAT LANE, COPSALE,
RH13 6QR**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

JUNE 2026



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of a barn at Hopelands Farm into a small, two-bedroom self-build dwelling to be occupied by the Applicants.

1.2 It is also proposed to utilise an existing field gate entrance from Polecat Lane with a new vehicle crossover created and access to the dwelling (a second existing access will be retained for the equestrian yard and buildings) together the creation of a new car parking area with a gate to the equestrian yard, a gravel/permeable surfaced driveway and landscaping.

1.3 The details of the proposal will be described and appraised having regard to the following aspects:

- **Physical Context** – explains the physical context of the site and its surroundings;
- **Planning Context** – the planning history of the site and broad policy requirements;
- **Use** – the purpose of the proposed additional accommodation;
- **Amount** – the extent of development on the site;
- **Scale** – the physical size of the development;

- **Layout** – the relationship of the proposed extension and alterations to neighbouring properties;
- **Appearance** – details of materials, style and impact upon the visual amenities of the area;
- **Landscape** – impact of the proposal on the existing landscape;
- **Access** – access to the development and parking provision.

1.4 This Planning, Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying plans and documents including the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Bat Survey and Energy Statement.

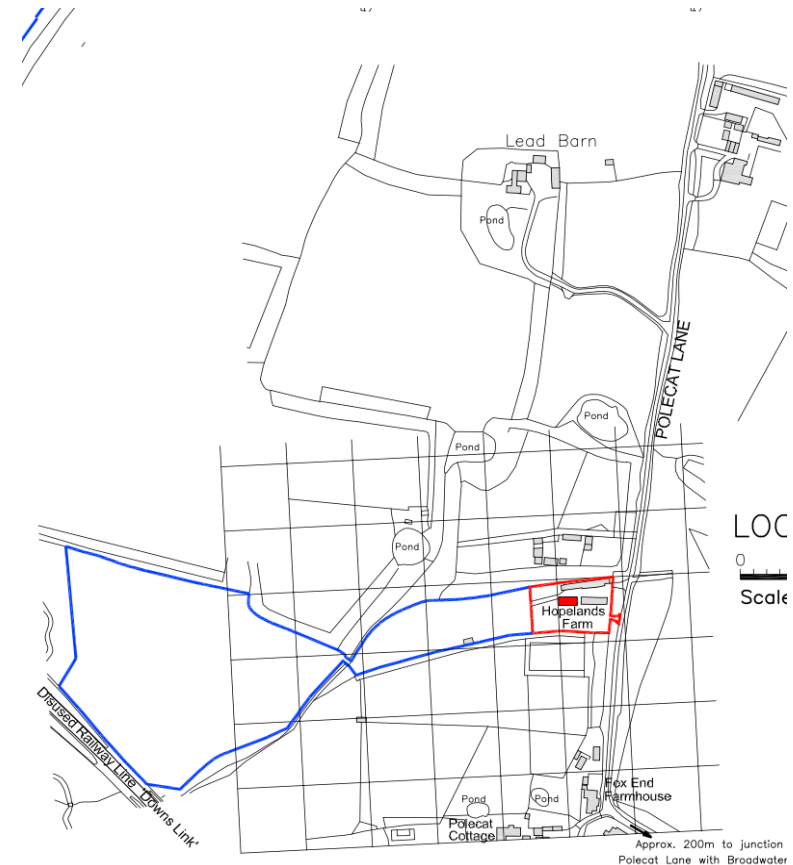
2.0 PHYSICAL CONTEXT & PLANNING HISTORY

Physical Context

- 2.1 Hopelands Farm is a private equestrian facility which comprises a stable building (with stables, a machinery store, tractor shed, tack room and drying area), a pole barn and a stable barn which is the subject of this planning application. These buildings are clustered together, close to Polecat Lane which runs along the eastern boundary of Hopelands Farm. Paddock land used in association with the equestrian facilities at Hopelands Farm extends to the west.
- 2.2 Hopelands Farm is accessed via a gated access from Polecat Lane. Mature trees are located close to the entrance and along the northern boundary of the property. A public right of way (NUT 1687) runs along the southern boundary from Polecat Lane leading to the Downs Link at Southwater.
- 2.3 The application site is located within the countryside, close to but outside of the built-up area boundary of Southwater. The Council's policies map also shows that the site is located within the Jackerells Farm aerodrome area and although Hopelands Farm is located within the Nuthurst Parish Council area (and covered by the Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan),

Polecat Lane is defined by the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan as a Promoted Route/Character Area.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 2.4 The following are photographs of the application site:









Planning History

2.5 The following is the relevant planning history for Hopelands Farm:

- DC/19/2565 – Retrospective application for an agricultural building for the use of storage for riding equipment, farming tools and installation of toilet, wash basin, boiler and kettle/microwave (welfare area). Planning permission refused 25 February 2020.
- DISC/15/0419 – Discharge of condition 3 (materials) on DC/15/2029. Application permitted 01 February 2016.

- DC/15/2029 – Demolition of existing stable building and erection of replacement stable building. Planning permission granted 12 November 2015.
- DC/15/0948 – Rebuilding of building on site and use for mixed storage purposes (partially retrospective). Application withdrawn 09 July 2015.
- DC/14/1304 – Change a flat roof on a stable block to a pitched roof to allow solar/pv panels to be installed. Planning permission granted 28 August 2014.
- N/64/95 – Installation of caravan for use as shelter and rest area for tending horses. Planning permission refused.
- N/16/94 – Erection of one dwelling (outline). Planning permission refused 18 May 1994.

2.6 The Case Officer's report for application DC/19/2565 describes the barn the subject of this planning application as follows:

'The application site, known as Hopelands Farm, comprises a number of buildings used for stabling and hay storage. The building the subject of this application was originally granted permission to be re-roofed in 2014,

in order to allow the installation of solar panels. However, when the re-roofing work was being undertaken, the applicant began to reconstruct the building due to its structural stability. An application was subsequently submitted in 2015 to regularise the re-building of the structure and to allow its use for storage purposes. The application was withdrawn following concerns raised by Officers in respect of the lack of justification for the storage use in the countryside location. Permission however was subsequently granted later in 2015 for the rebuilding of the structure to provide replacement stabling for the applicant's horses'.

- Appendix NJA/5 Sir Roberts Farm, Pulborough
- Appendix NJA/6 Cheriton Cottage, Plummers Plain
- Appendix NJA/7 Rosewood Barn, Barns Green
- Appendix NJA/8 Cowfold Lodge Cottage, Cowfold
- Appendix NJA/9 Marlpost Meadows, Southwater
- Appendix NJA/10 Thornhill Stables, Coolham

2.7 This Statement is accompanied by a number of decisions where planning permission has been granted for either the conversion of an existing building to a dwelling or for the construction of a new dwelling within the Horsham district countryside areas:

- Appendix NJA/1 Owers, Barns Green
- Appendix NJA/2 Chancton Down, Steyning
- Appendix NJA/3 Pound Place, Partridge Green
- Appendix NJA/4 Wappingthorne Lodge, Steyning

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is for the conversion of a stable barn at Hopelands Farm to form a small, two bedroom self-build dwelling. The ground floor will comprise an open plan kitchen/living area, a bathroom and hallway. The first floor level will comprise two bedrooms and a bathroom.

3.2 No extensions to the barn are proposed and the external works including the following:

- Ground floor windows to the north and south elevations (existing windows and door to be retained).
- New gable window to east elevation.
- New Juliet balcony window with glass balustrade to west elevation.
- Existing timber barn doors in west elevation to be replaced with new glazed French doors within existing structural opening.
- Two Velux roof windows to north facing roof slope.
- Existing PV panels to south facing roof slope replaced/upgraded to provide the maximum practical capacity.

- New traditional five bar timber gates installed between the proposed dwelling and north west corner of pole barn.
- Gravel/permeable driveway
- Planting of fruit trees with spring bulbs planted beneath
- Planting of new hedgerow to south and west boundaries around the dwelling/equestrian yard and also in part to the north and east boundaries.
- Both existing accesses from Polecat Lane will be retained. One will be adapted to serve the proposed dwelling with a new crossover installed. The second will serve the equestrian yard (both the proposed dwelling and equestrian yard will still be linked).

3.3 No changes are proposed to the following:

- Plain tiled roof cladding to be retained as existing.
- Half tiled round ridge tile to be retained as existing.
- Gutters and downpipes to be retained as existing.
- Timber weatherboard cladding to be retained as existing.
- Foundations to be retained as existing.
- Equestrian stable yard to be retained as existing.
- All existing trees (predominantly oak) to be retained.

Figure 2: Proposed Block Plan



Figure 3: Proposed Floor Plans and Roof Plan

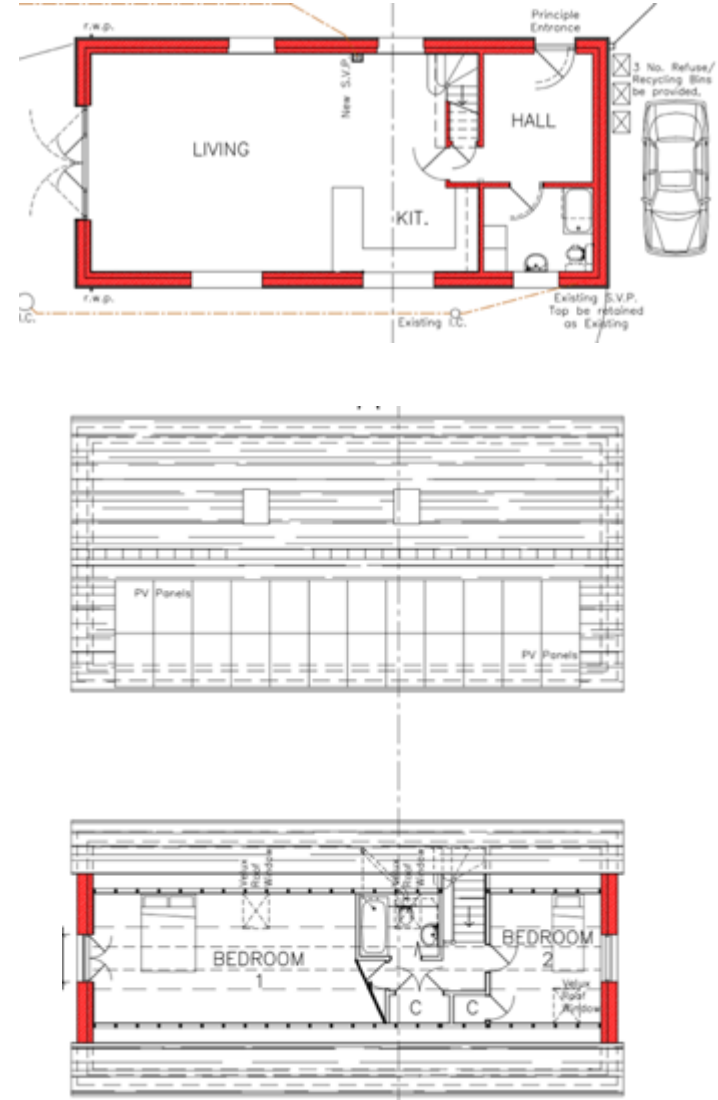
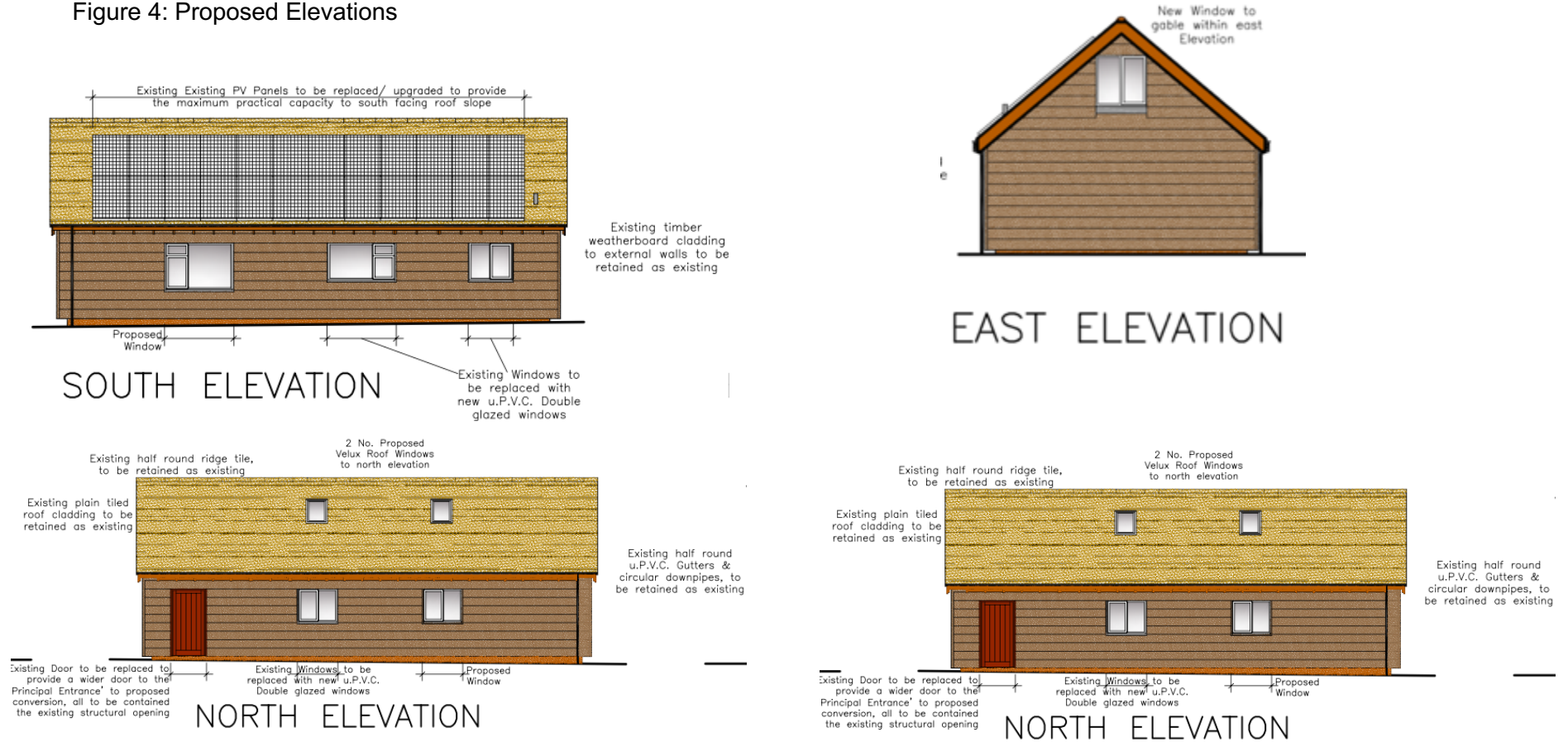


Figure 4: Proposed Elevations



3.4 The Applicants would like to bring the following matters to the attention of the Council in considering this planning application:

- The Applicants presently live in Horsham and have to drive twice a day to look after the horses at Hopelands Farm. If they lived on site their trip generation would be greatly reduced.
- There are security benefits of living at the property.
- Selling their home in Horsham will release a home for sale and it would also release funds to repair and renew the buildings at Hopelands Farm.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Sustainable Development

- 4.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole (NPPF paragraphs 1 and 3).
- 4.2 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF sets out that ***'Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements'***.

- 4.3 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has the following three overarching objectives which are independent but need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- a) ***'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;***
- b) ***a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and***
- c) ***an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and***

historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy’.

4.4 Paragraph 10 states ***‘So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).*** For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

4.5 Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the relevant policies are out of date, the NPPF states that planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed, 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. Particular regard should be given to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making efficient use of land, securing well-designed places and

providing affordable homes, individually or in combination (NPPF paragraph 11 d).

4.6 Paragraph 12 of the Framework states that ***‘The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed’.***

Plan and Decision Making

4.7 Paragraph 34 requires policies in local plans and spatial strategies to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. In respect of housing, ***‘Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has***

changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future’.

- 4.8 In terms of decision-making, the Framework states at paragraph 39 that ***‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’.***

Housing Provision

- 4.9 Paragraph 61 states ***‘To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed***

without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet as much as an area’s identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community’.

- 4.10 Paragraph 62 states that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance. Within this context, paragraph 63 requires the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community to be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups include (inter alia) people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- 4.11 In terms of the provision of affordable housing, NPPF paragraph 65 states that this should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer).
- 4.12 Paragraph 72 requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. Planning policies should identify a supply of

specific, deliverable sites for five years following the intended date of adoption and specific deliverable sites or broad locations for growth for the subsequent years 6-10 and where possible, years 11-15 of the remaining plan period.

- 4.13 Paragraph 73 sets out that ***‘Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built out relatively quickly’***.
- 4.14 Paragraph 78 requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific, deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of deliverable sites should include a buffer as set out at paragraph 78 a) – c).
- 4.15 To maintain the supply of housing, NPPF paragraph 79 sets out that local planning authorities should monitor progress in building out sites which have permission. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below the local planning authority’s housing requirement over the previous

three years, certain policy consequences should be taken into account as set out at paragraph 79 a) – c).

Rural Housing

- 4.16 In rural areas, NPPF paragraph 82 requires planning policies and decisions to be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (paragraph 83).
- 4.17 Paragraph 84 states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside, unless certain circumstances apply. This includes where ***‘the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting’*** (NPPF paragraph 84 criterion c).

Highways and Car Parking

- 4.18 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered at the early stages of plan-making and development proposals.

- 4.19 NPPF paragraph 110 requires the planning system to actively manage patterns of growth. Whilst significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, it should also be recognised that ***‘opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making’***.
- 4.20 Paragraph 112 states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of land and opportunities for public transport, local car ownership levels and the need to ensure that adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 4.21 Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (paragraph 113).

- 4.22 Paragraph 115 requires (inter alia) that sustainable transport modes are prioritised and that a safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.
- 4.23 Paragraph 116 makes it clear that ***‘Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios’***.

Effective Use of Land

- 4.24 Paragraph 124 requires planning policies and decision to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring healthy living conditions.
- 4.25 Paragraph 125 states that planning policies and decision should encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land. Substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs. In addition, policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised

land and buildings especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained.

- 4.26 Paragraph 128 requires local planning authorities to take a proactive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in place where this would help to meet identified development needs.
- 4.27 In terms of the density of new development, NPPF paragraph 129 encourages the efficient use of land taking into account a number of issues including the needs for different types of housing and other forms of development, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens) and securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

Design

- 4.28 In terms of design, Section 12 seeks to achieve well designed places sets out that the ***'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which***

to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities' (paragraph 131).

- 4.29 Paragraph 135 further states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Development should also be sympathetic to local character and history and should be designed with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 4.30 Paragraph 139 states that ***'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:***
- a) ***development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes: and/or***

b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings’.

Climate Change

- 4.31 Paragraph 161 requires the planning system to support the transit to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate change impacts. New development should be planned in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.
- 4.32 Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (paragraph 170). Local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere as a result of new development (paragraph 181).
- 4.33 Applications which could affect drainage in or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff which are

proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal (paragraph 182).

Natural Environment

- 4.34 Paragraph 187 requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Policies and decisions should also minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- 4.35 Paragraph 193 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply a set of principles and if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated against or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 4.36 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where there would be a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) unless an appropriate assessment has

concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site (paragraph 195).

Ground Conditions and Pollution

- 4.37 Paragraph 196 requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner (paragraph 197). Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment (paragraph 198).

Local Planning Policy

- 4.38 The 'development plan' comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015) and the Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 (2015).

- 4.39 The relevant policies of the HDPF are listed below:

Horsham District Planning Framework

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2: Strategic Development
- Policy 3: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 7: Economic Growth
- Policy 9: Employment Development
- Policy 10: Rural Economic Development
- Policy 15: Housing Provision
- Policy 16: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 24: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25: District Character and the Natural Environment
- Policy 26: Countryside Protection
- Policy 27: Settlement Coalescence
- Policy 28: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
- Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33: Development Principles
- Policy 35: Climate Change

- Policy 36: Appropriate Energy Use
- Policy 37: Sustainable Construction
- Policy 38: Flooding
- Policy 39: Infrastructure Provision
- Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 41: Parking

Nutshurst Neighbourhood Plan

4.40 The following policies of the Nutshurst Neighbourhood Plan are most relevant to the proposal:

- Policy 1: A Spatial Plan
- Policy 10: Housing Design
- Policy 14: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Emerging Policy

4.41 The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 was formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on Friday 26 July 2024 for public examination. Hearings commenced, however the Planning Inspector found that the Duty to Co-operate had not been met and raised significant soundness concerns in

relation to the Plan's housing requirement and spatial strategy. As a result, the Planning inspector recommended that the Council withdraw the Plan.

4.42 Matters have since progressed and in January 2026 a Planning Inspector was appointed to conduct a new examination of the Horsham Local Plan 2023-2040 and examination re-commenced. At this stage however, the HDPF and (in this case) the Nutshurst Neighbourhood Plan, remain the adopted development plan documents relevant to the determination of this planning application.

4.43 It is however relevant to note that policy 32 of the draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) does seek to permit the conversion of agricultural and rural buildings to commercial, community and residential uses subject to criteria.

Relevant Legislation and Case Law

4.44 In considering the issue of the principle of the proposed development it is necessary to also consider the legal framework within which planning decisions are made. Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the

Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (as also confirmed at paragraph 2 of the NPPF).

4.45 Specifically, Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that in dealing with planning applications, the Authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan (so far as material to the application), a post examination draft neighbourhood development plan, any local finance considerations (so far as material to the application) and any other material consideration.

4.46 Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

4.47 When considering whether or not a proposed development accords with a development plan, it is not necessary to say that it must accord with every policy within the development plan. The question is whether it accords overall with the

development plan (see *Stratford on Avon v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2014)). Even if a proposal cannot be described as being in accordance with the development plan, the statutory test requires that a balance be struck against other material considerations.

4.48 The Courts have emphasised that a planning authority is not obliged to strictly adhere to the development plan and should apply inherent flexibility (see *Cala Homes (South) Limited v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* (2011) and *Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council* (2012)).

4.49 More recently in *Corbett v Cornwall Council* [2020] the appeal court judge emphasised the importance of considering the plan as a whole when he said;

"Under section 38(6) the members' task was not to decide whether, on an individual assessment of the proposal's compliance with the relevant policies, it could be said to accord with each and every one of them. They had to establish whether the proposal was in accordance with the development plan as a whole. Once the relevant policies were correctly understood, which in my view they were, this was classically a matter of planning judgment for the council as planning decision-maker."

4.50 Paragraph 3 of the NPPF confirms that the Framework should be read as a 'whole' and the Government's National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) confirms that **'Conflicts between development plan policies adopted, approved or published at the same time must be considered in the light of all material considerations, including local priorities and needs, as guided by the National Planning Policy Framework'** (paragraph 012 21b-012-20140306).

Housing Land Supply (Case Law)

4.51 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing (paragraphs 72 and 78).

4.52 The NPPF requires plans and decisions to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). For decision making, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies most important for determining the application are out-of-date NPPF paragraph 11 d) requires planning permission to be granted unless:

- i. **'the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or**
- ii. **any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrable outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making efficient use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination'.**

4.53 In respect of criterion 'i', NPPF footnote 7 confirms that the policies are those in the Framework which refer to habitats sites (and those listed at NPPF paragraph 189), and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park or defined as a Heritage Coast, irreplaceable habitats, designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest) and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

- 4.54 NPPF footnote 8 confirms that the policies most important for determining an application includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites with the appropriate buffer as per NPPF paragraph 78 or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75%) of the housing requirement over the previous three years.
- 4.55 The ‘Suffolk Coastal’ case (Suffolk Coastal District Council v Hopkins Homes Ltd and Richborough Estates Partnership LLP v Cheshire East Borough Council [2017] UKSC 36) had regard to the meaning and effect of the provisions of the NPPF on housing land supply and the presumption in favour of sustainable development in having regard to the NPPF (2012 version). This is considered to still apply to the present NPPF.
- 4.56 The judgement noted the purpose of the NPPF is to have regard to the Development Plan policies unless these are not determined to be up to date. When the most relevant policies are not considered to be up to date, the balance is ‘tilted’ in favour of the grant of planning permission unless the benefits are ‘significant and demonstrably’ outweighed by the adverse

effects or where specific policies indicate otherwise. Weight is required to be afforded to such policies in the overall tilted balance (NPPF paragraph 11 d).

- 4.57 Importantly, the judgement determined that the decision-taker need not concern themselves with the specific reasons as to what is causing a lack of housing supply but attribute weight proportionally to addressing the problem to significantly boost an adequate supply of housing land (as required by NPPF paragraph 61).

Rural Housing (Case Law)

- 4.58 In terms of the provision of housing within the countryside, the ‘Braintree’ case (Braintree DC v SSCLG [2018] Civ 610) afforded particular attention in the assessment of ‘isolation’ when having regard to the NPPF. The term ‘isolated’ was considered by the Court of Appeal (who upheld a High Court decision) confirming that the word ‘isolated’ should be given its ordinary meaning as being ‘far away from other places, buildings and people; remote’.
- 4.59 In ruling on the case, Lindblom LJ held that, in the context of paragraph 55 of the NPPF 2012 version, (now paragraph 84

in the present NPPF), 'isolated' simply connotes a dwelling that is physically separate or remote from a settlement. Whilst previous hearings had considered that the term 'isolated' could have a dual meaning, in that it referred to physical and functional (i.e. from services and facilities) isolation; this argument was rejected by the Court.

4.60 The Judgement additionally drew reference to transport opportunities in rural areas where it is consistent with the Framework that sustainable transport opportunities are likely to be more limited. This therefore further acknowledges that rural areas should not necessarily preclude new development.

4.61 The Court of Appeal's judgment in *Bramshill v SSHCLG* [2021] forms more recent case law addressing the interpretation of 'isolated dwellings' in the countryside. This upheld the previous interpretation of *Braintree* that the term 'isolated' should be given its ordinary meaning as being 'far away from other places, buildings and people; remote' and that in determining whether a particular proposal is for "isolated homes in the countryside", the decision-maker must consider whether the development would be physically isolated, in the sense of being isolated from a settlement. What is a "settlement" and whether the development would be

"isolated" from a settlement are both matters of planning judgment for the decision-maker on the facts of the particular case.

4.62 This Statement demonstrates that the application site is neither remote or isolated from a settlement or other built form.

Horsham District Council's Housing Land Supply Position

4.63 NPPF paragraph 61 states that to support the Government's objective of '**significantly boosting the supply of homes**', it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance (NPPF paragraph 62).

4.64 Policies in local plans and spatial strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary (NPPF paragraph 34). In addition, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply

of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing (paragraphs 72 and 78).

4.65 In the case of Horsham District Council, the present HDPF was adopted in 2015; it is therefore significantly over five years old and it does not take into account the standard method in its policies relating to the supply of new homes (specifically HDPF policy 15).

4.66 In addition, the Council's most recent Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) 2024/25 (published 19 December 2025) confirms that the Council can demonstrate just **1.7 years' supply**. The latest Housing Delivery Test was published in December 2024 and this sets out that the Council scored 62% delivery against national housing targets.

4.67 As the Council cannot demonstrate the necessary level of housing land supply as required by the Framework, the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11 d) (and the *'tilted balance'*) apply to the proposal which must in turn be considered against the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.68 Having regard to paragraph 11 d) i, NPPF footnote 7, the site is not located within a 'protected area' and the Council no longer requires development to demonstrate water neutrality at planning application stage (as of November 2025). Therefore, the policies of the NPPF (specifically paragraphs 193, 184 and 195) do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development and this does not prevent the consideration of the application under the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11 d).

4.69 For the reasons set out in this Statement, and having regard to 11 d) ii, there are no adverse impacts of granting planning permission that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the provision of a new home (of a high quality design, in a sustainable location which makes effective use of land) when assessed against the policies of this Framework taken as a whole.

Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice
Note September 2025

4.70 The Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (SD PAN) was approved by the Council on 17 September 2025. The SD PAN supersedes the Council's

former Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) which was published in 2022.

4.71 The SD PAN is now a material consideration in determining planning application. It sets out the Council's aspirations for how development comes forward and the weight that can be given to current local planning policy within the context of legislation, national planning policy and guidance.

4.72 The SD PAN covers the following issues:

- The tilted balance
- The weight of the adopted HDPF
- The status of, and weight to be given to the emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40
- The weight given to 'made' and emerging Neighbourhood Plans
- Importance of the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy
- Consideration in principle of applications for housing development
- Applying local plan policies in current circumstances

4.73 The Council's SD PAN acknowledges that the Council can only demonstrate a 1 year supply of housing land and that the Council's performance against the Housing Deliver Test is 62%. Accordingly, the Council has produced a Housing Delivery Action Plan (paragraph 1.7).

4.74 The SD PAN confirms the following:

'Because of the circumstances in which the Council finds itself, and notwithstanding the current requirement of all new development to demonstrate that it is water neutral, HDC expects to receive planning applications proposing development in locations and of types not supported by the HDPF, the emerging Local Plan or in Neighbourhood Plans.'

HDC will continue to act in a proactive manner by supporting sustainable development that both delivers the development to meet identified needs and ensures that other objectives are met. To demonstrate this, HDC has produced this document to provide clarity in its approach and guidance to those who engage with the planning system in Horsham' (paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9).

4.75 The SD PAN sets out at paragraph 2.4 that in the absence of a 5 year housing land supply and/or where Housing Delivery Test performance is less than 75%, NPPF paragraph 11 (and footnote 8) indicate that the policies that effect that supply of housing may be considered out-of-date. It further confirms that this has the effect of reducing the weight that may be afforded to such policies and engages the 'tilted balance' where there is an expectation that planning applications for housing should be approved.

4.76 In respect of the Council's emerging Local Plan, SD PAN paragraphs 2.13 and 2.18 confirm that (at this stage), the Council does not take the view that the emerging Local Plan is sufficiently advanced to justify great weight to its policies, in addition to there being unresolved objections to the majority of policies within it. In addition, the Council acknowledges that Strategic Policy 37 (Housing Provision) of the emerging Local Plan is not consistent with the NPPF as it does not fully address housing needs (paragraph 2.19).

4.77 In respect of Neighbourhood Plans, the SD PAN confirms that where NPPF paragraph 14 is not engaged, the 'tilted balance' would be engaged, reducing the weight that can be

applied to Neighbourhood Plan policies that relate to the supply of housing.

4.78 The Council recognises that as it is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land that in accordance with the NPPF, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. Given these circumstances, it is also acknowledged that it is likely to receive applications outside of built-up area boundaries and on unallocated sites. Subsequently, the SD PAN confirms that it will consider positively applications that 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 all 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’.***

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note
(October 2022)

4.79 The Council’s Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note (PAN) provides guidance on how biodiversity and net gain should be taken into account within development proposals and applicants are encouraged to seek to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain (BDG) or more.

5.0 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Principle of Development

- 5.1 NPPF paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental (NPPF paragraph 8).
- 5.2 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states ***‘So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11)’***.
- 5.3 HDPF Policy 1 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. Therefore planning applications that accord with the policies of the HDPF will be approved without delay (unless material considerations indicate otherwise). Where there are no policies relevant to the

application, or relevant policies are out of date, Policy 1 states that the:

‘Council will grant permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or***
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted’.***

- 5.4 The application site is located outside of the built-up boundary of Southwater and therefore it is deemed to be located within the countryside. HDPF policy 26 seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and states that new development must meet one of the following criteria:

- ‘1. Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;***
1. Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;

- 2. Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or**
- 3. Enable the sustainable development of rural areas’.**

- 5.5 In addition, the policy requires proposals to be of a scale appropriate to the countryside character and location and that it should not lead individually, or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside. New development should protect and/or conserve, and/or enhance the key features and characteristics of the landscape character in which it is located.
- 5.6 The HDPF does not contain a policy that relates specifically to the conversion of buildings within the rural area to dwellings. However, there is some recognition of the acceptability of this in HDPF policy 10 which states that proposals for the conversion of rural buildings to business and commercial uses will be considered favourably over residential in the first instance.
- 5.7 In addition, it is reiterated that the emerging Local Plan (Regulation 19) at policy 32 seeks to permit the conversion of agricultural and rural buildings to other uses, including residential uses, subject to criteria. Whilst this is not an

adopted policy, it demonstrates a direction of travel of the Council in allowing such development within the countryside.

- 5.8 However, In the absence of a specific adopted planning policy relating to the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings, this planning application should be considered under the provisions of NPPF paragraph 84. This states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of *isolated* homes in the countryside, unless certain circumstances apply including where **‘the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting’** (NPPF paragraph 84 c).
- 5.9 As the application site is in private equestrian use, there are no implications in respect of the loss of a rural business or employment and as such the proposal does not conflict with HDPF policies 7, 9 and 10.
- 5.10 This Statement demonstrates that the proposed development will not result in any harm to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape and that it is an acceptable form of development in this specific location. In particular the provision of a new home will enable the sustainable development of the rural area and the small scale nature of the proposal will neither in itself, nor cumulatively lead to a

significant increase in the overall activity in the countryside. In fact, vehicle movements to and from Hopelands Farm will be reduced with the Applicants living at the property instead of commuting to/from Horsham twice a day.

Housing Land Supply

- 5.11 As set out at Section 4, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing as required by the NPPF. The latest AMR confirms that the Council can presently demonstrate only a **1.7 years supply**. As a result, the Council's policies in respect of the supply and location of new homes (HDPF policies 2, 3, 4, 15 and 26) are out of date and should be given less weight in the decision making process. The tilted balance of NPPF paragraph 11 d) is engaged and the proposal should be considered against the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.12 Although the application site is located within the countryside, it is not situated within a protected area and the Council is no longer requiring Applicants to demonstrate water neutrality at planning application stage. As such, there is no conflict with NPPF paragraph 11 d) (i). This Statement further confirms that overall there are no adverse impacts of granting planning permission for the proposal that would significantly and

demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the provision of a new home of a high quality design, in a sustainable location and which makes effective use of land and therefore the provisions of 11 d) (ii) are also met.

- 5.13 The revised NPPF (December 2024) introduced a new Standard Method for calculating local housing need which significantly increases the level of housing that some local authorities should plan for to achieve the Government's target of 1.5 million new homes for the present Parliament. It also reinstated the requirement for local authorities to maintain a five-year supply of housing, as opposed to a reduced four-year supply (under certain circumstances) set out in the NPPF December 2023 version.
- 5.14 There is as such a significant need to build new homes and proposal will positively contribute towards the supply of windfall homes within the district. This is an important source of supply as noted at NPPF paragraph 73 which states that **'Small and medium sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes and are often built-out relatively quickly'**.

Location and Shaping Development

- 5.15 In terms of the Council's spatial strategy, Policy 2 of the HDPF seeks to maintain the rural character of the district and states that new development should be focused in and around **'the key settlement of Horsham'** with growth in the rest of the district in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out at HDPF Policy 3 and also in accordance with HDPF Policy 4.
- 5.16 Policy 3 establishes the settlement hierarchy for the district and confirms that development will be permitted within towns and villages which have defined built-up areas.
- 5.17 The application site is located just to the east of the settlement boundary of Southwater which is categorised by HDPF Policy 3 as a small town/larger village and is one of the main settlements within the district. HDPF Policy 3 describes these settlements as having **'a good range of services and facilities, strong community networks and local employment provision, together with reasonable rail and/or bus services. The settlements act as hubs for smaller villages to meet their daily needs, but also have some reliance on larger settlements/each other to meet some of their requirements'**.
- 5.18 Within Southwater there is a wide range of local services and facilities including education, retail, sport and recreation facilities and community groups and facilities. There are also bus stops with regular bus services linking Southwater to other settlements including the route 98 (Roffey – Horsham – Southwater) which runs every 15 to 20 minutes and route 23/23X (Crawley – Horsham – Worthing) which runs every 30 to 60 minutes. Southwater is therefore well connected including to main line train stations.
- 5.19 Occupiers of the proposed dwelling (the Applicants) will be able to walk into Southwater via the public right of way and the Downs Link and as such, they will not necessarily be dependent on the use of the private vehicle to meet some day-to-day needs. The walk into Southwater to the shops is approximately 1.25 miles which will take 25 minutes - this is deemed to be a realistic walking distance/time.
- 5.20 NPPF paragraph 110 requires the planning system to actively manage patterns of growth. Whilst significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, it should also be recognised that **'opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary**

between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making’.

5.21 In addition, NPPF paragraph 115 states that sustainable transport modes should be prioritised when taking account the vision for a site, the type of development proposed and its location. A safe and suitable access to a site should be achieved for all users and any significant impacts from a development on the transport network should be mitigated.

5.22 The proposed creation of one dwelling is not ‘significant’ development and it will not in itself result in unsustainable patterns of vehicle movements within the rural area or result in any harmful impact upon the local transport network. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling will be close to other built form, including the existing equestrian buildings and sporadic development along Polecat Lane and at Copsale just to the south.

5.23 As such, the proposed dwelling will not be remote from a settlement or other development and it will not appear out of keeping with the context of the site’s surroundings. This is particularly as the proposal relates to the conversion of an existing building with minimal alterations to its appearance.

5.24 Therefore having regard to the cases of Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2018) and Bramshill v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) (referred to previously at Section 2), the application site is not physically isolated from a settlement given its proximity to Southwater as described and neither is it isolated from other built form.

5.25 HDPF Policy 4 supports the growth of settlements across the District in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs. Therefore, outside built up area boundaries, Policy 4 permits the expansion of settlements subject to the following:

- 1. ‘The site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge.***
- 2. The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type.***
- 3. The development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs and/or employment needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services.***

4. ***The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive development, in order to not conflict with the development strategy; and***
5. ***The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced***'.

5.26 The supporting text for HDPF Policy 4 (and 3) sets out the following justification - ***'to ensure that development takes place in a manner that ensures the settlement pattern and the rural landscape character of the District is retained and enhanced, but still enables settlements to develop in order for them to continue to grow and thrive'*** (HDPF paragraph 4.6).

5.27 Given the fact that the Council cannot demonstrate an appropriate supply of housing, the Council's SD PAN acknowledges that the Council is likely to receive applications for residential development outside of the defined built up area boundaries and on unallocated sites.

5.28 As such, it is reiterated that the SD PAN (at paragraph 5.12) confirms that the Council will consider positively applications that 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 all 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***'.

5.29 The above essentially follows the same principles of HDPF policy 4 with the exception that it does not contain the same requirement for sites to be allocated for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Plan.

5.30 Hopelands Farm does not adjoin a settlement edge, however, for the reasons described, the site is considered to be in a suitable position to accommodate a new dwelling without any significant or harmful conflict with the Council's spatial strategy.

5.31 In terms of criterion 2 of the SD PAN and HDPF policy 4, the level of expansion, just one dwelling is small. The low density of development is wholly appropriate to site's location which is close to other built form and the proposed dwelling will retain the appearance of a barn, as appropriate to the rural building.

5.32 The proposed development meets local housing needs in respect of the clear need for new housing within the district and the impact of the proposal will neither individually nor cumulatively prejudice comprehensive long term development. The proposal complies with criteria 3 and 4 of the SD PAN and HDPF policy 4.

5.33 In respect of criterion 5 of the SD PAN and HDPF policy 4, the application site is contained by an existing defensible boundary and important landscape features will be retained. The proposed dwelling, like the existing barn will be partially screened by the mature trees to the northern and eastern

boundary and it will not harmfully intrude into open countryside given that no extensions are proposed. New soft landscaping is proposed in the form of fruit trees together with a new hedgerow to the southern and western boundaries which will further define and enhance the site and create a greater sense of enclosure to the existing built form.

5.34 In summary of HDPF policies 1, 2, 3 and 4, these policies encourage sustainable development and allow for the expansion of settlements outside of built up area boundaries where the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type.

5.35 Given the small scale of development proposed, the sustainable location of the application site, the lack of any harm caused to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape (as further addressed within this Statement) and the high need for new homes within the district, it is reiterated that the proposal does not significantly conflict with the overarching principles of the Council's spatial strategy or the Council's SD PAN. However as set out, any conflict must be weighed in balance with the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11 d) and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 5.36 It should also be noted that the proposed dwelling is deliverable in the short term in accordance with the NPPF and the Council's SD PAN (paragraphs 5.13 – 5.17).

Rural Housing and Countryside Impact

- 5.37 HDPF policy 26 seeks to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside against inappropriate development. However policy 26 must also be read in the context of the text at HDPF paragraph 9.18 which sets out that ***'The Council is seeking to identify the most valued parts of the district for protection, as well as maintain and enhance this natural beauty and the amenity of the district's countryside'.***

- 5.38 The NPPF supports the provision of rural homes at paragraph 83 where it states:

'To promote sustainable 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'.

- 5.39 This recognises the importance of allowing new residential development within the rural areas which can help to sustain local rural communities. It is relevant to note that appropriate residential development on sustainably located sites, such as the application site is arguably 'essential' to rural areas and allows the sustainable development of rural areas (HDPF policy 26, criterion 4).
- 5.40 Furthermore, HDPF policy 26 must be read in conjunction with NPPF paragraph 84 c) which permits the conversion of buildings to dwellings within the countryside, subject to criteria.
- 5.41 In this respect, the proposal will re-use an existing building and the proposed conversion and alterations together with the new landscaping will improve its overall appearance, benefitting the visual amenities of the countryside landscape together with the setting of Hopelands Farm itself.
- 5.42 The proposed conversion works are relatively minimal and primarily include the insertion of new windows and doors. These have been sensitively considered in terms of number,

size and siting to ensure that the barn does not develop an overly domestic appearance.

5.43 As a result, the stable barn will retain its appearance as a traditional rural building as appropriate to its location but there will be a benefit to the immediate setting with improvements to its appearance and overall setting of Hopelands Farm. The proposal therefore complies with this element of NPPF paragraph 84 c), notwithstanding the fact that the site is not located within 'isolated' countryside.

5.44 Just one new dwelling will not result in any significant increase in the overall level of activity within the countryside and the proposal complies with policy 26 in respect of its requirement for proposals to be of a scale appropriate to the countryside character and location and to protect/conservate/enhance key features and characteristics of landscape character.

Self-Build Housing

5.45 The proposed dwelling is a self-build home. HDPF policy 16 requires development to provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the district's communities. In addition to ensuring that the supply of a sufficient amount of new homes, the NPPF at paragraph 63

also requires the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community to be assessed and reflected in planning policy. This includes ***'people wishing to commission or build their own homes'***.

5.46 The Planning Portal advises that self-build projects account for 7-10% of new housing in England each year (around 12,000 homes) and the Government's planning policy guidance acknowledges that self-build or custom build homes help to diversify the housing market and increase consumer choice. Self-build and custom housebuilders choose the design of their own home, and can be innovative in its design and construction. The provision of such homes is supported by the Framework and which play an important role in helping to tackle the housing crisis, with projects cumulatively making an important contribution to meeting housing need (helping to speed up delivery) and increased choice and variety in the type of new homes.

5.47 The Government is looking to overhaul the planning system to allow for the provision of more 1.5 million new homes and to grow the economy. There is as such a need to apply a more flexible approach to planning policy (in accordance with the principles of sustainable development) especially where there

is a clear under provision and high need for new homes, such as within the Horsham district. The dwelling, as a self-build is therefore supported by the NPPF and HDPF policy 16.

Efficient Use of Land

5.48 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that ***‘Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions’***. Paragraph 128 requires that a positive approach is taken to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help meet identified development needs.

5.49 Similarly, HDPF policy 2 at criterion 8 states that part of the spatial strategy is to ***‘Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value’***.

5.50 The application site is already developed and the proposal makes efficient use of an existing building which is suitable for

conversion to a dwelling with minimal alterations and no extensions proposed. In addition, the proposal will provide for a new home within the rural area which is important to maintaining an appropriate housing stock within the rural areas of the district.

Case Studies

5.51 Local planning authorities have a duty to exercise their decision making powers in a transparent and consistent manner. The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance provides an example of unreasonable behaviour which may lead to an award of costs at appeal, as where a local planning authority does not determine similar cases in a consistent manner.

Residential conversion of buildings within the countryside

5.52 A number of cases are included at Appendices NJA/1 – NJA/10 where planning permission has granted planning permission for the creation of new dwellings within the countryside either via the conversion and adaptation of existing buildings or for the construction of new dwellings. In many cases, weight is given to the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11 d).

5.53 The most recent example provided is planning application DC/24/0218 where on 10 June 2026 the Council granted planning permission for the conversion of a small barn at Owlers, Barns Green into a dwelling (Appendix NJA/1). Earlier, under DC/25/1994 the Council granted planning permission for the conversion of a former cattery building at Chancton Down, Steyning, to a dwelling on 01 April 2026 (Appendix NJA/2). The Case Officer's report for the proposal gives weight to an appeal decision for a similar proposal at the nearby Wappingthorn Lodge (see below) together with HDPF policy 26 where it states that the proposal:

'...would be compliant with Policy 26 as it is a conversion of an existing building, rather than the erection of a new building. It is considered that the benefits of converting an existing building carry a comparable level of weight to the overall level of harm caused by the dwelling being in an unsustainable location. While it is acknowledged that both Policy 10 of the HDPF and Policy 32 of the draft local plan hold limited weight, it is considered that these are directive in how redundant agricultural buildings should be viewed and how these should be developed. Taking the combination of the recent appeal decision, coupled with the proposal being a conversion of an existing

building in accordance with Policy 10 of the HDPF and Policy 32 of the draft Local Plan, it is considered that the principle of development would be acceptable'.

5.54 Another example provided is planning application DC/24/1710 where the Council granted planning permission for the conversion of a barn/outbuilding to form a three bedroom dwelling at Pound Place, Littleworth (Appendix NJA/3). The Case Officer's report for application DC/24/1710 notes that the site is within a reasonable distance from Partridge Green (classified as a 'medium' village in HDPF policy 3) and that future occupiers would therefore have access to a range of services and facilities. The Case Officer's report states that:

'Taking the combination of the sustainable location, coupled with the proposal being a conversion of an existing barn, it is considered that the principle of development would be acceptable'.

5.55 The Case Officer's report also noted that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development at NPPF paragraph 11 d) applies.

5.56 In respect of the case of Wappingthorn Lodge (Appendix NJA/4), in determining the appeal for the conversion and extension/alteration of existing buildings to form a dwelling (DC/23/0627), the Planning Inspector considered the main issue of whether the proposed development would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the Council's spatial strategy, the provisions of the NPPF and access to services and facilities.

5.57 The Planning Inspector noted that the centre of Steyning (like Southwater, classified as a 'small town/larger village' in HDPF policy 3) would be about 1.5 miles away with the nearest edge of the settlement being closer. The Planning Inspector did not find the application site to be 'isolated' for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 84 and subsequently gave limited weight to criterion c) of paragraph 84 (the conversion of buildings to dwellings in the countryside).

5.58 However, the Planning Inspector gave significant weight to the under provision of housing within the district which at the point of determining the appeal stood at a five year supply of 2.9 years. The Planning Inspector also found that the site would fall within the NPPF's definition of previously developed land and noted that whilst HDPF policy 10 includes a preference

for the conversion of rural buildings to business or commercial uses, the Framework is broadly supportive of the reuse of existing buildings for a range of purposes including housing.

5.59 When considering the proposal in the planning balance, the Planning Inspector concluded that:

- While the Council's spatial strategy reflects the Framework's focus on locating significant development within locations with good access to services, facilities and a range of transport options, the approach for new housing in the countryside is more restrictive than the NPPF. The relevant annual housing requirement has also increased since the settlement boundaries were defined and there is evidence of a substantial shortfall in housing land supply. As such, the Planning Inspector gave conflict with the Council's spatial strategy only moderate weight.
- The proposal would not introduce housing in an 'isolated; countryside location.
- The proposal would make a small contribution to the supply of housing along with modest economic benefits. There would be a small contribution to the diversity in

housing stock and the proposal would make alternative use of existing buildings without harming the character and appearance of the area.

- There are subsequently no adverse impacts of granting planning permission that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. Consequently, the proposal benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at NPPF paragraph 11d) and HDPF policy 1.

Housing land Supply

5.60 Planning permission has been allowed at appeal for the construction of single dwellings at Cowfold Lodge Cottage, Cowfold (Appendix NJA/8), at Marlpost Meadows, Southwater (Appendix NJA/9) and at Thornhill Stables (Appendix NJA/10). In these cases, the sites are located outside of a settlement boundary but the Planning Inspectors again gave weight to the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11 d) in light of the Council's inability to demonstrate a five year supply of housing.

Sustainable Development

5.61 Given that the tilted balance at NPPF paragraph 11 d) is engaged in this case, it is reiterated that the proposal should be considered against the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the Framework. Having regard to the three key objectives of sustainable development set out at paragraph 8 of the NPPF, the proposed development complies as follows:

- a) an economic objective – the proposal will make a small contribution to the local building industry and associated trades in creating the new dwelling. Furthermore, the occupiers of the new dwelling will help to support local services and facilities. The proposal complies with the economic objective of sustainable development.
- b) a social objective – the proposal provides a suitable site for the creation of a new dwelling in close proximity to local services and facilities including schools, public transport and work opportunities. The proposal will also make a modest but important contribution to the supply of new homes within the district and it will provide an opportunity

for a new self-build home. The proposal complies with the social objective of sustainable development.

- c) an environmental objective – The proposal makes effective use of an existing building and no harm will result to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape. This planning application is also supported by information in respect of ecology, energy and water use and new landscaping. The proposal complies with the environmental objective of sustainable development.

6.0 LAYOUT, DESIGN & APPEARANCE

Design

- 6.1 The NPPF sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to the local character of the surrounding area and should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (paragraphs 131 and 135).
- 6.2 HDPF policy 32 requires high quality design for all development in the District. In addition, HDPF Policy 33 sets out the Council's key development control criteria and states that development should make efficient use of land, should not cause harm to neighbouring residential amenities, should be appropriate in scale, massing and appearance and be of a high standard of design. Development should also be locally distinctive in character and should use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping.

- 6.3 HDPF Policy 33 (text in bold italics) is addressed in detail as follows:

In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:

- 1. Make efficient use of land and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist.***

- 6.4 The proposed development makes effective use of an existing building and there will be no harmful encroachment into the countryside given small scale nature of the proposed development and the screened and contained nature of the site. The proposal complies with criterion 1.

- 2. Ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development;***

6.5 The proposed dwelling is situated away from other residential development and there will be no adverse impact caused to neighbouring residential amenity.

6.6 It is also considered that the proposed (small scale) development will not give rise to any noise or disturbance and a high quality living environment will be created for future occupiers of the new dwelling including sufficient amenity space and good levels of natural light. The proposal complies with criterion 2.

3. Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;

6.7 The proposed conversion works are sensitive to the character of the existing building (retaining its stable barn design) and will relate sympathetically to its surroundings. The proposal complies with criterion 3.

4. Are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments;

6.8 The proposal provides the opportunity to deliver additional housing without adversely impacting upon the established character of the wider locality. The resulting dwelling will be distinctive in character and the proposal complies with criterion 4.

5. Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;

6.9 The materials used in the proposed conversion works (new windows and doors) are sympathetic to the character of the building and its rural location. The proposal complies with criterion 5.

6. Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development; and,

- 6.10 The proposal will not result in any harm to important trees and natural features and complies with criterion 6.

7. Ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography where it is of good quality.

- 6.11 The dwelling will be built to be thermally efficient and built in accordance with the latest Building Control standards. An Energy Statement accompanies this planning application and the plans show that the existing solar panels will be replaced/upgraded to provide the maximum practical capacity to the south facing roof slope of the building. The proposal raises no conflict with criterion 7 or HDPF policies 35, 36, 37 and 38.

Proposals will also need to take the following into account where relevant:

8. Incorporate where appropriate convenient, safe and visually attractive areas for the parking of vehicles and cycles, and the storage of bins/recycling facilities without dominating the development or its surroundings;

9. Incorporate measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behavior on the site and in the surrounding area; and create visually attractive frontages where adjoining streets and public spaces, including appropriate windows and doors to assist in the informal surveillance of public areas by occupants of the site;

10. Contribute to the removal of physical barriers; and,

11. Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces within the site.

- 6.12 The site will be accessed from Polecat Lane with a new vehicle crossover installed and more than sufficient space is available within the site for appropriate car parking and turning of vehicles together with the discreet storage of refuse and recycling bins.

6.13 The proposed development does not conflict with parts 8, 9, 10 or 11 of policy 33.

6.14 In summary, no harm will be caused to the surrounding landscape or in respect of residential amenity. The proposal complies in full with HDPF policies 24, 25, 26, 32 and 33 together with Neighbourhood Plan policy 10.

Ecology and Biodiversity

6.15 The NPPF seeks to ensure that planning policies and decisions enhance the natural and local environment (paragraph 187) including by minimising the impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. NPPF paragraph 193 sets out principles in respect of biodiversity that planning authorities should apply when determining planning applications.

6.16 This planning application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). The PEA identified a low risk of bats being present in some of the adjacent stables/barns and as a result, a bat survey has been carried out. A wildlife sensitive lighting strategy will be adopted as part of the proposed conversion both during and post the proposed

development. The proposal is considered to comply with the NPPF, HDPF policy 30 and Neighbourhood Plan policy 14.

7.0 ACCESS AND PARKING

- 7.1 NPPF paragraph 115 requires (inter alia) that sustainable transport modes are prioritised and that a safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. However, paragraph 116 also confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 7.2 HDPF Policy 40 requires (inter alia) new development to be appropriate in scale to the existing transport infrastructure. Development should also minimise the distance people need to travel. In respect of car parking, HDPF Policy 41 states (inter alia) that adequate car parking must be provided within new developments.
- 7.3 The proposed dwelling will be accessed from an existing gated access from Polecat Lane where a crossover will be installed. The other existing access from Polecat Lane serving the stale yard will be retained as existing.

- 7.4 A new gravel/permeable driveway will be created with space for the parking (and turning) of at least three vehicles. This is suitable provision for a two bedroom dwelling and overall the proposal complies with the NPPF and HDPF policies 40 and 41.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This Statement supports an application for planning permission which seeks the conversion of an existing stable barn at Hopelands Farm to form a two-bedroom, self-build dwelling.
- 8.2 As set out at Section 2, case law confirms when considering whether a proposal complies with a development plan, it is not necessary to say that it must accord with every policy of the development plan and the question is whether it accords with the development plan overall. In addition, paragraph 3 of the NPPF confirms that the Framework should be read as a 'whole' and the Government's Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) states that any conflicts between the development plan should be considered in light of all material planning considerations including local priorities and needs, as guided by the NPPF.
- 8.3 Therefore whilst the site is located outside of a built-up area boundary, it is necessary to consider the following aspects of the proposal in the planning balance:

- The Council's HDPF is over five years old and the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing as required by the NPPF. As a result, the Council's policies in respect to the supply and location of new homes are out of date and the provisions of NPPF paragraph 11 d) and the tilted balance are engaged. This requires the proposal to be considered against the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- The proposal will make a small but important contribution towards windfall housing provision within the district. The cumulative provision of individual homes should not be underestimated as acknowledged by NPPF paragraph 73. The long term, continued lack of housing supply within the district undermines the NPPF's intentions to 'significantly boost' the supply of new homes (NPPF paragraph 61).
- NPPF paragraph 110 makes it clear that whilst the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth (and *significant* development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable), opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. This should be taken into account in both plan-

making and decision-making. The proposal is not for significant development and neither will it generate significant levels of vehicle movements.

- The application site is also not located within isolated countryside. It is close to Southwater where there is a wide range of local services and facilities and close to other built form. The proposal would not therefore result in significant or harmful conflict with the Council's spatial strategy (HDPF policies 2, 3 and 4 and the SD PAN) especially when taking into account the current under supply of housing within the district.
- The proposed works are sensitively designed to ensure that the proposed dwelling will retain the character of a small scale building typical of the rural area and new landscaping is proposed. As a result, no harm will be caused to the visual amenities of the countryside landscape and there is no conflict with HDPF policy 26 in respect of its intention to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.
- NPPF paragraph 83 encourages the sustainable development of rural areas and sets out that housing should be located

where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Occupiers of the proposed dwelling will help to support local services and facilities within the rural community.

- The NPPF permits in principle the residential re-use of buildings within the countryside and in the absence of any similar, adopted policy within the HDPF, the provisions of paragraph 84 of the Framework take priority. The Council has previously permitted applications for the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings.
- The proposal makes effective use of an existing building as encouraged by the NPPF and HDPF policy 2. No harm will be caused to neighbouring amenity and ecology is appropriately addressed.
- The proposed dwelling is a self-build home, the provision of which is supported by the NPPF paragraph 63. This considers the need to provide a variety of size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and including people wishing to commission or build their own homes. The provision of self-build/custom-build homes play an important role in the provision of new

homes, offering choice and variety within the housing market and helping to meet housing need.

- Sufficient car parking and vehicle access is provided in accordance with HDPF policies 40 and 41.

8.4 This Statement demonstrates that there are no adverse impacts of granting planning permission that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of a new home of a high-quality design, in a sustainable location and which makes efficient use of land. The proposal will make a small but important contribution towards the supply of much needed new homes within the district without resulting in any harm to the local environment or significant conflict with the Council's spatial strategy.

8.5 Therefore, in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 39 of the NPPF and HDPF Policy 1, planning permission should be granted for the sustainable development proposed.