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**Appeal 6013244: 1 Stablehouse Bungalows, Leechpond Hill, Lower Beeding, West Sussex, RH13 6NP**

This document is submitted on behalf of Horsham District Council in respect of the above appeal, which has been made on the grounds of non-determination. It is advised that had the Local Planning Authority been in a position to determine the application, it would have refused permission for the following reasons: -

**Reasons for Refusal:**

- 1. The development would enable a residential use within a countryside location outside of the built-up area boundary of any settlement, on a site which has not been allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework or an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The development would be contrary to the overarching strategy and hierarchical approach of concentrating development within the main settlements and is not essential to its countryside location. There are no material considerations which outweigh this harm, and the proposal represents unsustainable development contrary to Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 10 of the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan.*
- 2. The proposed development results in the overdevelopment of a constrained and atypical plot, creating a development that is incompatible with the established spacious character of the surrounding area. It therefore fails to reflect local character or achieve a high-quality, sympathetic design, contrary to Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, and Policy 12 of the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan.*

**Reason for Refusal 1**

Policy S3 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals should be assessed against Policy S4 where they are located within settlements and Policy S5 where they are located outside settlements. Planning permission should be granted without delay where proposals accord with an up-to-date development plan and the relevant national decision-making policies. Where a site lies partly within and partly outside a settlement boundary, the relevant policies should be applied to each part of the site before reaching an overall planning judgement.

Policy S5 supports certain types of development in the countryside and outside settlement boundaries, provided that any adverse impacts do not substantially outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework's decision-making policies.

In summary, development outside settlements will generally be supported where it:

- Supports rural land uses, such as agriculture, forestry, horticulture, outdoor recreation, infrastructure, mineral extraction, nature conservation, and defence uses.
- Meets the needs of rural businesses and tourism, where a countryside location is genuinely required.
- Involves the reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of existing buildings, provided changes are proportionate and the existing building is lawful and substantial.
- Brings forward the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land.
- Consists of limited infill development within existing groups of houses.
- Delivers rural exception sites, community-led development, or neighbourhood-led schemes (see HO10).
- Meets an identified need for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation.
- Provides housing or mixed-use development in sustainable locations close to well-connected railway stations, where infrastructure can support the development.
- Is allocated in the development plan for that purpose.
- Addresses an evidenced unmet development need, such as housing shortages where the authority cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply or has poor housing delivery performance, provided the development is well-related to an existing settlement and supported by adequate infrastructure.

Paragraph HO11 sets out the requirements of isolated homes in the countryside.

Development proposals for isolated dwellings in the countryside will only be supported where they satisfy one or more of the specified exceptions. These include circumstances where there is an:

- Essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of employment.
- The proposal constitutes enabling development necessary to secure the future of a heritage asset
- The proposal involves the re-use of a redundant or disused building and enhances its setting;
- The development comprises the subdivision of an existing dwelling;
- The proposal is of an exceptional design quality through outstanding architecture that raises design standards and responds sensitively to the character and setting of the local area.

Policy 1 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that the council will take positive approach to development proposals, aligning with the National Planning Policy Framework's emphasis on sustainable development. It collaborates proactively with applicants to find solutions that enable project approval and enhance economic, social, and environmental conditions. Planning applications that comply with the Local Plan and relevant neighbourhood plans will be approved promptly unless material considerations suggest otherwise. If policies are absent or outdated, the Council will grant permission unless significant adverse impacts outweigh the benefits, or specific policies in the Framework restrict development.

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

settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations as possible.

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

Policy 26 of the HDPF requires development in the countryside be of a scale that is appropriate to its countryside character and location and not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside. It also needs to be essential to its countryside location and to meet one of the following criteria:

- Support the needs of agriculture or forestry;
- Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
- Provide for quiet informal recreational use; or
- Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.

Policy 10 of the LBNP states residential development proposals on unidentified sites within the defined built-up area of Lower Beeding will be supported where they are proportionate in scale, relate positively to, and are designed in keeping with the character of the surrounding area, and where they do not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing dwellings or nearby properties.

The proposal is for the conversion and extension of existing detached residential garage and storage building to self-contained residential dwellinghouse. The works would involve segmenting the existing rear expanse of the rear curtilage of 1 Stablehouse Bungalows and repurposing and converting the garage built under DC/22/0735 into a separate, two bedroom dwellinghouse. Entrance to the site would still use the existing access off of Leechpond Road though would have its own separated access to then access the proposed dwelling off of the larger shared driveway. The dwelling would be located around 0.8km from the nearest built up area of Lower Beeding. Under Policy 3 of the HDPF, Lower Beeding is identified as a 'smaller village' which are "[v]illages with limited services, facilities, social networks but with good accessibility to larger settlements (e.g. road or rail) or settlements with some employment but limited services facilities or accessibility. Residents are reliant on larger settlements to access most of their requirements". As Lower Beeding is a smaller village, it is still reliant on larger settlements to fulfil requirements of day to day living.

Given that the proposal is considered using countryside policy contexts, the proposal would be located outside of a defined settlement. Lower Beeding can be accessed via footpath which runs from the site to the village. This distance is approximately 0.8km and is *mostly flat* according to Google Maps. The site however is located a short walk to a bus station which connects to Horsham. This is the closest settlement with services for day to day living and is at present a 15 minute journey. It is recognised that within the statement of case by the appellants that the development would be located close to Mannings Heath and Lower Beeding via bicycle, however it is considered that whilst Lower Beeding may be reached via bicycle there are limited services here and that Mannings Heath would only be available to adept cyclists and again has limited services. However, given the site is outside the built up area and located 0.8km from the nearest built up area, it is not considered that the proposal would meet stipulations of Policy 4 requiring development adjoins an existing settlement edge.

The proposed development would not accord with the spatial strategy as set out in Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF and would therefore be unacceptable in principle. Whether there are other material considerations that would outweigh the conflict as identified, will be discussed in the Planning Balance assessment section below.

### Reason for Refusal 2

Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks that the natural environment and the local character of Horsham District including the landscape, the landforms and development pattern will be protected from inappropriate development. The policy aims to:

- Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, considering areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.
- Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.
- Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development 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.

Policy 12 of the LBNP states “[d]evelopment proposals which are in keeping with the local vernacular will be supported”.

The proposal would see the conversion of a domestic garage to a separate, independent dwelling. The garage itself was approved under DC/22/0735 and features dormers to the front elevation with external staircase. To facilitate conversion, the garage needs to be expanded considerably given its existing dimensions to accommodate space for two bedrooms, living space and internal staircase. This includes a full width rear extension at 1.5 storeys, 3.3m in depth. This requires raising the roof level of the garage by 0.20m to 6.4m. The rear extension introduces a mansard style roof to the development whilst the front dormers are retained. The proposal when viewed from the front elevation would not see much change barring the garage doors changed to a new front door and window. The design of the proposal is not considered to be of detriment to the surrounding character though it does introduce a new roof geometry not yet seen in the locale and would be clad in timber which is not present on principle dwellings located nearby.

However, it is considered that the proposals execution is incompatible with its surrounds. The proposal is thought to be relatively constrained by the plot it sits in with an unusual curtilage to accommodate access which is at odds to the prevailing character of built form present. In addition, due to being a converted garage, the proposal would overwhelm the simple dimensions of the garage which was originally approved. This creates a quality of overdevelopment in order to create a dwelling on a relatively small plot which is thought to be opposition with the surrounding context as dwellings in the vicinity are not as hemmed as the proposal. Whilst the appellants state that the proposal is compliant with national space standards it is considered the proposal is extended beyond its simple dimensions to accommodate this change.

Given this, the proposal is not thought to accurately reflect the character and design of the surrounding area and as such is not supported in terms of design.

### Planning Balance Assessment

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of land and erection of one dwelling. The site is not allocated for development with the HDPF or a made neighbourhood plan, owing to the site's location outside of the built-up area boundary, the principle of the development is resisted under Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), S3, S5 and HO11 of the NPPF (2026), and Policy 12 of the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan (2021). The proposal also conflicts with Policies 25, 32, 33 of the HDPF (2015).

The Council's most recent Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) confirms that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The latest AMR also confirms that the Council is not currently able to demonstrate a Housing Delivery Test score higher than 75%. The NPPF (2026) states that such shortfalls establish an "evidenced unmet need" for housing across the District (in accordance with Policy S5 and Annex D). S5(j)(i) goes on to state that where an unmet need is identified, development should be *'be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure'*. As per the preceding sections of the report, Officers are of the view that that the development is not physically well-related to an existing settlement. Therefore, a formal planning balance is required to weigh the benefits of housing delivery against any policy conflict and site-specific harms.

As above, the Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (SDPAN) was endorsed at Cabinet on 17 September 2025. The SDPAN recognises at 5.12 that the Council is likely to receive applications outside of defined BUABs and on unallocated sites (such as this proposal) as it is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Given this position and the principles behind HDPF Policy 4, it will consider positively applications that meet all of the criteria:

- The site adjoins the existing settlement edge as defined by the BUAB;
- The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement the proposal relates to;
- The proposal demonstrates that it meets local housing needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services;
- The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development; and
- The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape character features are maintained and enhanced.

The site is located in a countryside location, though not isolated in the truest sense, it is a relatively remote location that does not adjoin the settlement edge. Therefore, the proposal fails on the first criterion and therefore the development does not benefit from the provisions of the SDPAN.

In the context of the Council's current 5-year housing land supply position, the provision of housing as a general principle is a matter of significant weight. However, because this proposal would provide for one dwelling, it makes no meaningful contribution toward recovering this shortfall. As such, the weight attributable to this specific scheme's housing delivery is tempered to *moderate weight*.

It is acknowledged that any development would bestow socio-economic benefits, such as the creation of temporary jobs during the construction phase in the short-term, and local expenditure

and contribution to the local economy in the medium to long-term arising from increase occupancy. However, this is not a particularly unique benefit that would result from this development. Nonetheless, this benefit is afforded *limited weight* in the overall planning balance.

The proposal's ability to demonstrate a compliance with other matters including highways are neutral considerations that demonstrate general policy compliance rather than positive benefits weighing in favour of the scheme. No other discernible benefits would arise from the granting of this permission.

As per the preceding sections of this report, the granting of this permission would conflict with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF. This conflict with the development plan is afforded *significant weight*, as it would undermine the strategic process of allocating housing sites for development in appropriate locations, and the democratic process of selecting sites within Neighbourhood Plans. Furthermore, the resultant character harm owing to the development due to its over extended build are also attributed *significant weight* in failing to meet Policy 25; 32; 33 of the HDPF and Policy 12 of the LBNP.

While the Council's 5-year housing land supply deficit establishes an 'evidenced unmet need' under Policy S5 and Annex D of the Framework, this does not grant automatic support for unsustainable development in unallocated locations. The site fails to meet the locational criteria of the Council's SDPAN, which would not be well-related to an existing settlement, contrary to NPPF (2026) S5(j)(i), and the proposal would result in demonstrable adverse impacts on the character and settlement strategy of the local area, alongside identified amenity harms. When weighed under Policy S5 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, these adverse impacts and direct conflicts with HDPF Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 26 substantially outweigh the moderate benefits of delivering 1 market dwellings. Exceptional circumstances do not exist to justify a departure from the spatial strategy. The proposal therefore fails to constitute sustainable development, and the application is recommended for refusal.

## Conclusion

The Council remains of the view that the scheme as submitted would be contrary to the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework and NPPF. The Inspector is therefore respectfully requested to dismiss the appeal. However, should the Inspector be minded to approve the appeal, a List of Recommended Conditions has been detailed in the appendix below.

Yours sincerely,

**Applications Team**  
Horsham District Council

**List of Recommended Conditions**

1     **Approved Plans**

- 2     **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3     **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development other than demolition shall commence until drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4     **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the necessary in-building physical infrastructure and external site-wide infrastructure to enable superfast broadband speeds of 30 megabits per second through full fibre broadband connection has been provided to the premises.

Reason: To ensure a sustainable development that meets the needs of future occupiers in accordance with Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5     **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the cycle parking facilities serving it have been provided within the garage or side or rear garden for that dwelling. The facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times. The cycle parking facilities shall thereafter be retained as such for their designated use.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for the parking of cycles in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6     **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until provision for the storage of refuse and recycling has been provided within the garage or side or rear garden for that dwelling. The facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure the adequate provision of refuse and recycling facilities in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 7     **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a fast charge electric vehicle charging point for that dwelling has been installed. As a minimum, the charge point specification shall be 7kW mode 3 with type 2 connector. The means for charging electric vehicles shall be thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the development on air quality within the District and to sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives

for pollutants in accordance with Policies 24 & 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 8 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a plan showing the layout of the proposed development and the provision of car parking spaces for vehicles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied or use hereby permitted commenced until the parking spaces associated with it have been provided in accordance with the approved details. The areas of land so provided shall thereafter be retained for the parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that adequate and satisfactory provision is made for the parking of vehicles clear of all highways in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 9 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 10 **Regulatory Condition:** The dwelling(s) hereby permitted shall meet the optional requirement of building regulation G2 to limit the water usage of each dwelling to no more than 110 litres per person per day. The subsequently installed water limiting measures shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To limit water use in order to improve the sustainability of the development in accordance with Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SACSPA and Ramsar sites in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and to allow the Local Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

- 11 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and/or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order no development falling within Classes A, AA, B, E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the order shall be erected, constructed or placed within the curtilage(s) of the development hereby permitted without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).