



APPLICATIONS & APPEALS SERVICES

**CLOCK HOUSE FARM, STONEHOUSE LANE,
COWFOLD, WEST SUSSEX, RH13 8DL**

**SUPPORTING PLANNING AND DESIGN &
ACCESS STATEMENT**

JULY 2026



CONTENTS

PAGE

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. PHYSICAL CONTEXT & PLANNING HISTORY	3
3. THE PROPOSAL	7
4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	14
5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT	22
6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT: LAYOUT, DESIGN & APPEARANCE	27
7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	33
8. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT	41
9. ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS	43
10. CONCLUSION	45

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the proposed redevelopment of Clock House Farm comprising the conversion of the existing brick stables into 5no. residential dwellings; construction of a new commercial building; erection of a new Sussex barn; and the removal of 6no. existing agricultural buildings within the wider farm holding, together with landscaping and associated infrastructure works at Clock House Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8DL.

1.2 The details of the proposals 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 proposals;
- **Amount** – the extent of development on the site;
- **Scale** – the physical size of the development;

- **Layout** – the relationship of the proposals 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.

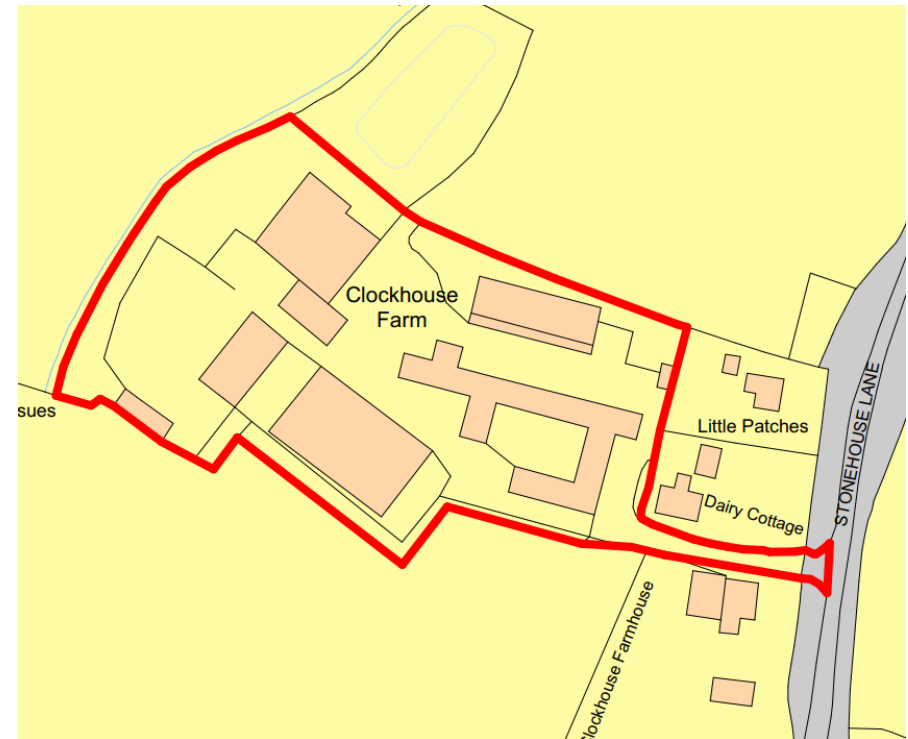
1.3 The Council is requested to consider this Statement alongside the submitted plans and this demonstration that the proposed development accords with the relevant planning policies and is acceptable in all respects. It is hoped that the Council will support the proposal and grant planning permission.

2. PHYSICAL CONTEXT & PLANNING HISTORY

Physical Context

- 2.1 The application site comprises approximately 0.82ha and forms the Clock House Farm holding. The site contains a traditional brick stable/ agricultural block (hereafter referred to as 'the stables') situated around the existing farmyard to the west of Stonehouse Lane. These buildings are in a deteriorating condition. Several agricultural structures are also currently located within the south west section of the yard, these are to be removed as part of the proposal.
- 2.2 The site context and building locations are illustrated on the Existing Block Plan (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 - Existing Block Plan



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

- 2.3 Clock House Farm is located on the west side of Stonehouse Lane, approximately 1.5km to the east of the village of Cowfold and to the south of the A272. The site can be accessed via the east of the site between Clock House Farmhouse and Dairy Cottage.

- 2.4 Cowfold village benefits from a pre-school, primary school, village hall, doctors surgery, parish church and a public house. The site is also located approximately 5km south of Horsham with regular bus services between the two settlements. Horsham provides a comprehensive range of amenities, employment opportunities, and transport connections including mainline rail services into London in under 1 hour.
- 2.5 The site is not subject to any ecological designations. In terms of landscape the site is located in the National Character Area 121 - Low Weald. It is situated within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency, indicating a low risk of flooding. There are no designated heritage assets within the application site itself, although the Grade II listed building of Little Patches lies to the east of the site. Clock House Farmhouse and the brick stables have also been identified as non-designated heritage assets.

Figure 2.2 - Existing Site Photographs



External View of Existing Stables Looking East



Internal View of Existing Stables



External View of Existing Stables Looking East

Source: NJA Town Planning Ltd (2026)

- 2.6 The application site is outside of the built-up area boundary and is therefore considered to be within the countryside for policy assessment.

Planning History

- 2.7 From a review of the Horsham District Council planning application register the below planning applications form the relevant planning history for the site:

- **DC/09/2099** - Conversion of an existing barn to grooms/farm workers accommodation. *Prior Approval Not Required 9th December 2009.*
- **DC/26/0096** - Prior notification for the erection of a dismantled agricultural barn. *Prior Approval Not Required 16th February 2026.*
- **DC/26/0356** - Prior notification for the demolition of an agricultural barn. *Prior Approval Required and Permitted 1st April 2026.*

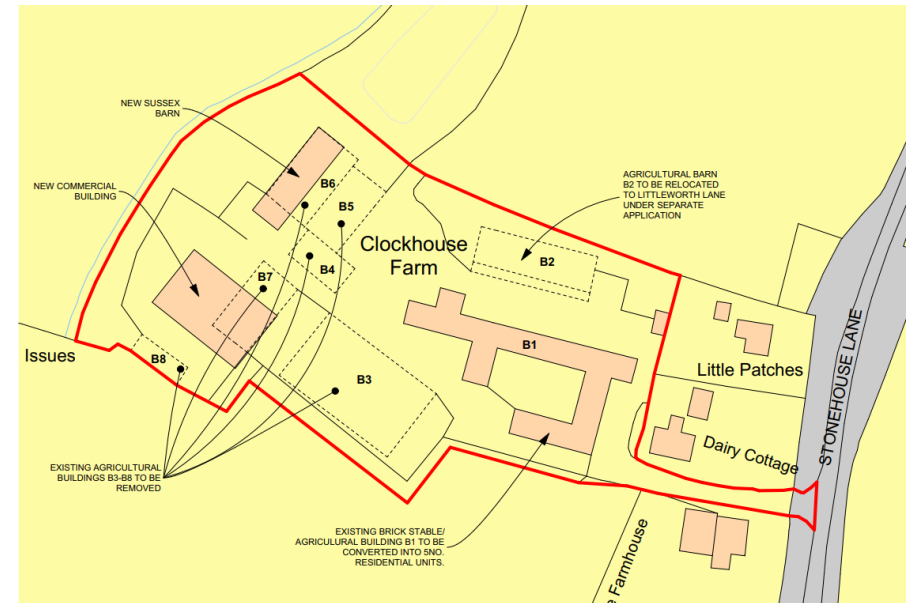
2.8 It is important to note that applications DC/26/0356 and DC/26/0096 relate solely to Building B2, identified on the plans within the northern section of the site. These applications concern the demolition and subsequent relocation of Building B2 elsewhere within the wider holding and do not form part of the current planning application.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal for the redevelopment of Clock House Farm can be split into the following aspects, each aspect is detailed further below.

- The conversion of the existing stables into 5no. residential dwellings;
- Construction of a new commercial building;
- Erection of a new Sussex barn;
- Removal of 6no. existing agricultural buildings; and
- Landscaping and associated infrastructure works.

Figure 3.1 - Proposed Site Plan



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

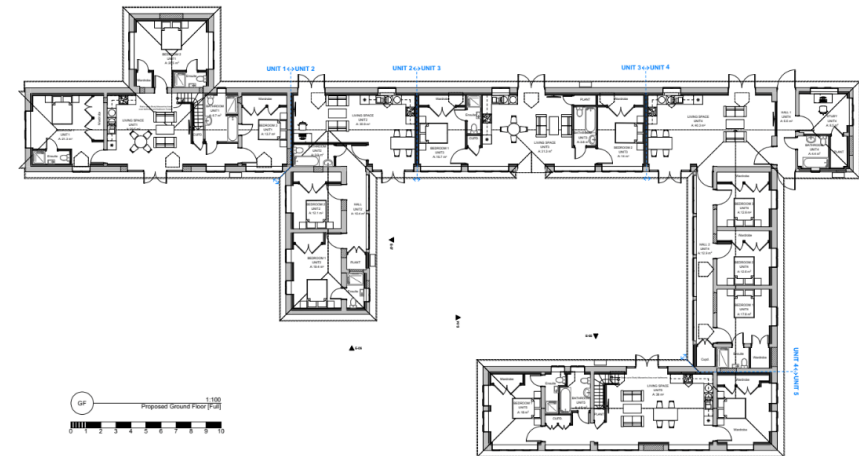
Conversion of Existing Stables into 5no. Residential Dwellings

3.2 The existing stables (B1) are formed of traditional brick with a series of linked wings enclosing a courtyard on multiple sides. The stables are subject to areas of deterioration evident to the roof coverings, doors and windows and hardstanding within the yard. The proposal seeks to reuse the existing footprint and overall form of the stables to deliver 5no. residential units,

while retaining the established courtyard arrangement which reflects the historic function of the site. The proposal retains the established footprint, scale and overall form of the existing stable range.

- 3.3 The proposed dwellings comprise a mix of two- and three-bedroom dwellings, each arranged around generous open-plan living, kitchen and dining spaces with bedrooms and bathrooms located within the existing building envelope. Units 1 and 5 are proposed to incorporate small study mezzanine areas above bathroom and bedroom zones, making efficient use of the building's volume while minimising external alterations. Each dwelling would benefit from defined private garden space, with the retained courtyard providing a shared focal point and circulation area.

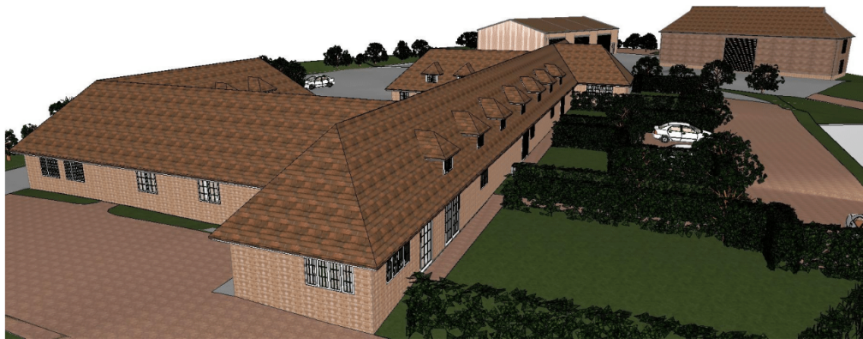
Figure 3.2 - Proposed Residential Units Floor Plans



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

- 3.4 Externally, the existing brick walls would be largely retained and repaired, with alterations limited to those necessary to accommodate the proposed residential use. The existing roof coverings would be replaced with new pitched roofs of traditional appearance, matching the existing form and profile.
- 3.5 Existing openings would be rationalised, with some redundant openings infilled using matching brickwork, and new doors and windows introduced where required to provide suitable levels of light and access.

Figure 3.3 - Proposed Residential Units Elevations



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

- 3.6 The existing concrete farmyard would be reconfigured to form a communal courtyard, reflecting the historic arrangement of the buildings. Areas of hardstanding would be selectively retained where functional, with surplus concrete broken out

and replaced with new landscaped and planted areas. This approach softens the appearance of the courtyard, improves drainage and enhances the setting of the converted buildings, while maintaining the legibility of the former agricultural yard.

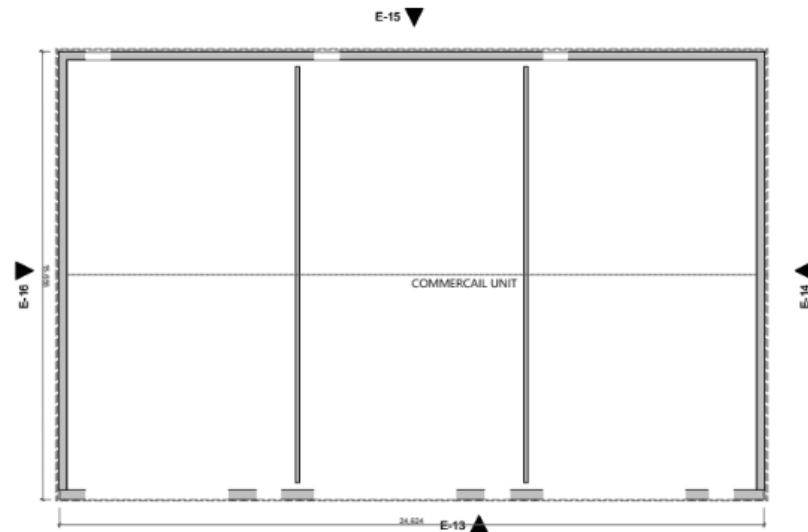
- 3.7 Vehicular access would continue to be taken from Stonehouse Lane via the existing farm access, which is retained. Car parking is provided within the site with two spaces per dwelling and additional visitor parking arranged around the site. Existing areas of hardstanding will be retained and reused where practicable, with new landscaping and planting introduced to soften the appearance of the site, enhance visual amenity and deliver biodiversity enhancements.

Construction of New Commercial Building

- 3.8 A new commercial building is proposed to be located in the southwest corner of the site, where building B7 is currently located. The proposed commercial building would be used for purposes falling within Class E(g) providing flexible commercial floorspace suitable for storage, warehousing and associated business activities.

- 3.9 The building has a simple rectangular footprint measuring approximately 24.6m by 15.7m, providing a gross internal floor area of approximately 362m², as shown on the proposed floor plan. The building would benefit from a shallow pitched roof and would have a height of 7.2m.

Figure 3.4 - Proposed Commercial Building Floor Plan



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

- 3.10 Externally, the building adopts a traditional agricultural form, with brickwork at lower level and the front elevation and vertical timber cladding on the other elevations, reflecting the materials and proportions of the existing stable range on the

site. The roof is finished in a lightweight plain tile-effect system in a bramble brown colour, set at a shallow pitch to maintain a lower overall profile.

Figure 3.5 - Proposed Commercial Building Elevations



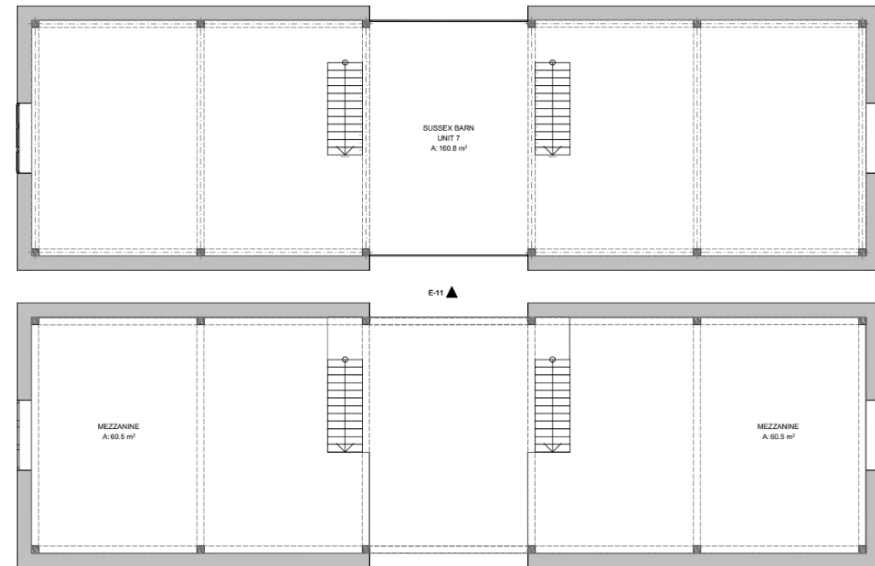
Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

- 3.11 Access is provided via a series of roller shutter doors along the principal elevation, allowing for servicing and operational flexibility, together with personnel doors.
- 3.12 Overall, the building is designed to read as a modern agricultural-style barn, visually subservient to the converted stable buildings and well-integrated within the wider farmyard.

Erection of New Sussex Barn

- 3.13 The proposed Sussex barn comprises a traditional agricultural barn of simple rectangular form, designed to reflect the scale, proportions and architectural character of historic Sussex barns. The proposed barn would also be in commercial use and would be used for purposes falling within Class B8.
- 3.14 The building provides a ground floor area of approximately 160.8m², with additional mezzanine floorspace at first floor level, resulting in a total gross internal floor area of approximately 281.8m².
- 3.15 The building is arranged as a clear-span space at ground floor level, with mezzanine areas accessed via internal staircases, allowing for ancillary farm use while maintaining the openness typically associated with barn structures.

Figure 3.6 - Proposed Sussex Barn Floor Plans



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

- 3.16 Externally, the barn is finished with an English bond brick plinth to match the existing stable buildings, with horizontal shiplap timber cladding above. The roof is pitched at 45 degrees and finished in handmade plain tiles, reinforcing the traditional Sussex barn appearance. Timber casement windows and timber-effect roller doors are proposed, with black half-round gutters and downpipes completing the detailing.

Figure 3.7 - Proposed Sussex Barn Elevations



Source: Philips Surveyors (2026)

Removal of 6no. Existing Agricultural Buildings

- 3.17 Buildings B3-B8 would be removed from the courtyard area, this reduces visual clutter across the site and allows for a more legible and cohesive farmstead layout. This approach not only enhances the character and appearance of the site, but also ensures a clearer separation between residential areas and the working parts of the holding, resulting in a more functional arrangement for both uses.

Landscaping And Associated Infrastructure Works

- 3.18 The landscaping and associated infrastructure works comprise the selective removal of areas of existing concrete hardstanding and their replacement with new soft landscaping and planting; the creation of a landscaped communal courtyard and private garden areas; and the retention and protection of existing trees alongside the introduction of substantial new native species planting. This includes mixed native hedgerow planting, scrub and understorey planting, native tree planting, and areas of species-rich grassland and wildflower seeding, together with reinforcement of boundary vegetation, particularly along the southern edge of the site.
- 3.19 Associated infrastructure includes the retention and reuse of existing access tracks, provision of new access roads and turning areas where required, installation of a new electric access gate, rationalisation of existing fencing and gates, and the provision of car parking and servicing areas.

Figure 3.8 - Proposed Landscaping Plan



Source: Ramsay & Co Landscaping Architecture (2026)

4. 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.
- 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 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

4.6 Paragraph 34 requires local plans and spatial development strategies to be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. In particular, '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 future'.

4.7 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'.

Rural Businesses

- 4.8 Paragraph 85 requires planning policies and decisions to help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. In respect of rural areas, paragraph 88 supports ***'the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings'***.
- 4.9 Paragraph 89 recognises that ***'sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in***

locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycle or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist'.

Housing Provision

- 4.10 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'.***

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- 4.11 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. Within this context, paragraph 64 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.
- 4.12 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, 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.
- 4.15 In rural areas, 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).
- 4.16 Paragraph 84 states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside, unless certain circumstances apply.

Highways and Car Parking

- 4.17 Paragraph 109 requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular

places. This is to ensure that (inter alia) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.

4.18 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.

4.19 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 would be severe'***.

Effective Use of Land

4.20 Paragraph 124 requires planning policies and decisions 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.

4.21 Paragraph 125 states that planning policies and decisions should encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land. Furthermore, paragraph 128 sets out that local planning authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans where this would help to meet identified needs.

4.22 Paragraph 129 states that ***'Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land.....'***

Design

4.23 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).

4.24 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.

4.25 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

4.26 Paragraph 161 requires the planning system to support the transit to a low carbon future and to taking into account flood risk. New development should be planned in ways which avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change (paragraph 164).

Countryside

4.27 Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by: (inter alia) ***‘recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside....’.***

4.28 Paragraph 189 sets out that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which

have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Biodiversity

- 4.29 Paragraph 192 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity. Paragraph 193 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should avoid significant harm to biodiversity which should be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. Development should not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Ground Conditions and Pollution

- 4.30 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).

- 4.31 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).

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 4.32 Local planning policy is set out in the Local Plan, the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) adopted was in 2015. The following policies of the HDPF are most relevant to the proposal:

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 3: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 7: Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
- Policy 10: Rural Economic Development
- Policy 15: Housing Provision
- Policy 16: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 24: Environmental Protection

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- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
 - Policy 26: Countryside Protection
 - 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 Design and Construction
 - Policy 38: Strategic Policy: Flooding
 - Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
 - Policy 41: Parking

Cowfold Neighbourhood Development Plan

4.33 The Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan was made in November 2024 and proposed to influence and guide development within the Parish over the plan period up to 2031. The below policies are of relevance to the proposal:

- Policy 9: Residential Development Principles
- Policy 14: Employment

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT: USE, AMOUNT & SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Principle of Development – Housing

- 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)***. Importantly, paragraph 38 of the NPPF states ***‘Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’***.
- 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).

- 5.4 HDPF Policy 15 sets out that provision is made for the development of at least 16,000 homes and associated infrastructure within the period 2011-2031, at an average of 800 homes per annum. Furthermore, HDPF Policy 16 confirms the appropriate mix of different housing types and sizes for each site will depend upon the established character and density of the neighbourhood and the viability of the scheme.
- 5.5 HDPF Policy 26 states that within the countryside development must be essential to its countryside location and must meet certain criteria. In addition, proposals should be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. The policy also notes that development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves,

and / or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.

5.6 HDPF Policy 33 sets out in order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to ***'Make efficient use of land, and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist'***.

5.7 The provision of 5no. residential units contributes towards the District's housing supply requirement. The Council has published its housing land supply position as of April 2025, which confirms a 1.7 year supply and therefore a lack of a five-year housing land supply. As a consequence of this position, the weight which can be assigned to the policies of the development plan which constrain the availability of housing land, comprising HDPF Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 is limited.

5.8 In these circumstances, paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged (the 'tilted balance'), such that planning permission should be granted unless:

i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

5.9 As set out within this Statement, the proposal does not give rise to harm to any areas or assets of particular importance that would provide a clear reason for refusal, nor does it result in any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. Accordingly, the tilted balance is engaged in favour of granting planning permission.

5.10 The proposal makes clear and effective use of previously developed land through the conversion of an existing stable block. By prioritising the re-use of an existing structure rather than new greenfield development, the scheme aligns fully with

the objectives of Policy 33 as existing infrastructure and access arrangements are utilised.

5.11 The dwellings are created within an existing building envelope, resulting in a form and scale that reflects the established character of the farmstead and surrounding rural context. The resulting dwellings are appropriately sized and arranged in a manner consistent with the conversion of a traditional agricultural building, thereby delivering a suitable mix aligned with local character and site constraints, in accordance with Policy 16.

5.12 The site lies within a rural farm complex and the proposal is inherently linked to this countryside location through the re-use of an existing agricultural building. The proposed scale and footprint of development remain largely unchanged, with no significant encroachment into open countryside. The reorganisation of buildings within the site, including the removal of agricultural structures and introduction of a Sussex barn, is contained within the existing curtilage and maintains the agricultural character of the holding. Furthermore, the level of activity associated with 5no. dwellings, alongside commercial uses, would not result in a significant or harmful

intensification of the countryside compared to the existing farmstead. Overall, the proposal conserves the character of the landscape and represents an appropriate rural development in accordance with Policy 26.

5.13 As such, the plans demonstrate that the proposal is a well-considered re-use of an existing rural building, delivering new housing in a manner that is proportionate, landscape-sensitive and consistent with the continued operation of the farm. The development therefore accords with HDPF Policies 1, 15, 16, 26 and 33 and should be supported accordingly.

Affordable Housing

5.14 HDPF Policy 16 of the seeks the provision of affordable housing on residential developments comprising five or more dwellings. Whilst the proposal would create five residential units, these arise through the conversion of an existing stable complex rather than through a conventional new-build housing scheme. The proposal involves the sensitive re-use of existing rural buildings and significant conversion works, together with the retention and repair of the existing structure.

5.15 The proposal would secure the long-term beneficial use of a rural building, preserve the character of the existing farmstead, and deliver environmental and economic benefits through the wider redevelopment of the site.

5.16 The Applicant considers that these are material considerations which should be taken into account when assessing the requirements of Policy 16. Furthermore, the nature and costs associated with the conversion works may have implications for the viability of the scheme. Should the Local Planning Authority consider that affordable housing provision, or an equivalent financial contribution, is required, the Applicant reserves the right to submit viability evidence in support of the application.

Proposed Commercial Buildings

5.17 The NPPF at paragraph 85 requires planning policies and decisions to help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. In respect of rural areas, paragraph 88 supports ***‘the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of***

business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings’.

5.18 Similarly, HDPF Policy 10 supports sustainable rural economic development within the District to help generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. In the countryside, policy 10 supports development which maintains the quality and character of the area whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and should (inter alia) contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside. Development should wherever possible be contained within existing buildings suitable for conversion.

5.19 Policy 14 ‘Employment’ of the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan states ***‘Proposals that enable the development or enhancement of small-scale businesses will be supported where schemes are (inter alia) on previously developed sites and in appropriate sustainable rural locations.’***

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- 5.20 The proposed commercial building and Sussex barn form part of a coordinated strategy to support the ongoing viability and diversification of the rural enterprise at Clockhouse Farm, in full accordance with national and local policy objectives. The commercial accommodation will provide modern rural employment space, replacing outdated farm buildings and supporting the long-term viability and diversification of the holding.
- 5.21 As shown on the Proposed Block Plan, both elements are carefully sited within the existing farmstead, ensuring that new built form is contained within the established cluster of development and does not encroach into open countryside. This approach reflects a sustainable pattern of rural growth, whereby development is well-related to existing buildings, access and infrastructure.
- 5.22 The introduction of the commercial buildings will provide opportunities for small-scale business use within a rural location, supporting local employment and contributing positively to the rural economy. This is complemented by the provision of the Sussex barn, which facilitates the continued and effective operation of the agricultural holding. Together,

the proposals demonstrate a balanced approach to rural diversification, enabling the site to adapt, expand and remain economically productive over the long term.

- 5.23 It should be acknowledged that NPPF paragraph 85 recognises that ***'sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport'***. In this instance, the proposed commercial buildings are appropriately located within an existing farmstead and are well-related to existing access arrangements and established patterns of movement.
- 5.24 Overall, the proposals create the conditions for sustainable business growth in a rural area, supporting commercial activity in a manner that is proportionate, well-designed and fully aligned with the objectives of national policy, the HDPF and the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT: 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 and Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan Policy 9 require 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 Policy 33 sets out ***“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 proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land through the comprehensive redevelopment of the existing farmstead. This includes the conversion of the existing brick stables to form 5no. residential dwellings, alongside the provision of a new commercial building and a new Sussex barn, together with the removal of existing agricultural buildings within the wider holding. The scheme brings underutilised buildings back into beneficial use whilst rationalising the site layout, representing an efficient and sustainable form of development. 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 site is well-contained within the existing farmstead and located away from neighbouring residential properties. The proposed mix of residential and commercial uses reflects the established character of the site and will not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of overlooking, loss of light, overbearing impact or noise. Appropriate separation distances and the internal arrangement of the site ensure neighbouring amenity is preserved, including in relation to Clock House Farmhouse and Dairy Cottage. 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;

6.6 The scale, massing and layout of the development respond directly to the existing agricultural context. The conversion of the stable building retains its overall form and footprint, whilst the new commercial building and Sussex barn are designed to reflect traditional rural building forms in terms of their proportions, roof profiles and appearance. The removal of a number of existing buildings reduces visual clutter across the site and allows for a more cohesive farmstead layout. Collectively, the proposals sit comfortably within the wider group of buildings and preserve the character of the farmstead. 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;

6.7 The scheme is locally distinctive, drawing on the character of traditional agricultural buildings and farmyard groupings. The development remains contained within the existing cluster of built form and does not result in any harmful encroachment into the wider countryside. The removal of existing structures and replacement with a more considered layout represents a visual enhancement to the site. 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;

6.8 A high-quality palette of materials is proposed across the development, including the retention and reuse of existing materials where possible, alongside appropriate new materials that reflect the agricultural vernacular. The Sussex barn and commercial building adopt simple, functional forms consistent with rural character. The scheme is supported by landscaping proposals, including the removal of sections of existing hardstanding, the introduction of new planting, and the creation of private and communal amenity spaces, which

will enhance biodiversity and the overall appearance of the site. 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;

6.9 The development has been designed to retain existing landscape features wherever possible, whilst enhancing the site through a comprehensive programme of landscaping and site rationalisation. As shown on the proposed site plan, areas of existing concrete hardstanding are to be broken out and replaced with new landscaped and planting areas, alongside the introduction of private gardens, a communal courtyard and softened site boundaries. Overall, the proposals result in an overall enhancement to the landscape setting and a more sympathetic relationship with the surrounding countryside. The proposal 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.

- 6.10 The residential units and commercial buildings are designed to benefit from good levels of natural light through appropriately positioned openings, whilst respecting the character and form of the buildings. The proposal complies with criterion 7.

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

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;

- 6.11 Parking and access areas are carefully integrated within the site, utilising existing concrete where appropriate to minimise additional intervention. Adequate provision is made for bin storage and servicing within the site. Overall, the parking and circulation strategy is functional, visually contained and does not dominate the development. The proposal complies with criterion 8.

9. Incorporate measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour 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 amenity areas by occupants of the site;

- 6.12 The layout provides a clear distinction between public, communal and private spaces, including private residential gardens and shared courtyard areas. The arrangement of buildings supports natural surveillance and contributes to a safe and secure environment across the site. The proposal complies with criterion 9.

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

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

- 6.13 The proposal raises no implications in respect of criteria 10 and 11. Overall it is demonstrated that the proposal complies in full with HDPF Policy 33.

Impact on Amenity

- 6.14 HDPF Policy 32 requires development to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment that contributes positively to a sense of place, both in the buildings themselves and in the way they relate to surrounding spaces. Policy 33 further requires that development is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers and users of nearby property, including through impacts such as overlooking, noise or overbearing form.
- 6.15 The proposed development will deliver a well-designed mix of residential and commercial uses within the existing farmstead.

The residential units are arranged to provide a high standard of accommodation, benefiting from good levels of natural light, private amenity space and a clear relationship to shared and external areas. The commercial buildings are functional in design and appropriately located within the site to operate effectively without conflict with the residential elements.

- 6.16 The layout ensures appropriate separation between uses and from neighbouring properties, such that there would be no unacceptable impacts in respect of noise, overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing appearance or loss of light. The removal of a number of existing agricultural buildings further assists in creating a more organised and higher quality environment, reducing potential conflict between uses. Whilst there will be some increase in activity associated with the proposed uses, this will be modest and consistent with the existing use of the site, with no material impact on the surrounding highway network or residential amenity.
- 6.17 Overall, the proposal will provide a high-quality and functional environment for both residential occupiers and commercial users, without resulting in unacceptable impacts on

neighbouring properties. The development therefore complies fully with the requirements of HDPF Policies 32 and 33.

7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

7.1 The NPPF requires that local planning authorities should preserve and enhance biodiversity and that new development should adequately mitigate against any potential harm. The site is located within National Character Area 121 - Low Weald in terms of landscape, HDPF Policy 25 protects the landscape and habitats of the district and is relevant to this proposal.

Landscape

7.2 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) ***‘recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside’***.

7.3 HDPF Policy 24 requires development to protect the high quality of the District’s environment by minimising exposure to and the emission of pollutants, including noise, air and light pollution, and ensuring that development maintains or

improves environmental quality. Policy 25 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character and the natural environment. Policies 32 and 33 require development to achieve a high standard of design which is locally distinctive, creates a strong sense of place, integrates with its surroundings, and makes efficient use of land whilst respecting environmental constraints.

7.4 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

7.5 The submitted Landscape Appraisal prepared by Ramsay & Co confirms that the site comprises a brownfield farmstead characterised by a mix of agricultural buildings of varying age and quality, together with extensive areas of concrete hardstanding. The report identifies that a number of the larger agricultural buildings are utilitarian in appearance, of limited architectural merit, and contribute to the fragmented and cluttered appearance of the site.

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- 7.6 The proposed development responds positively to the policy requirements through the comprehensive redevelopment and rationalisation of the existing farmstead. The scale, layout and appearance of the development integrate successfully with the existing group of buildings, ensuring the proposals remain sympathetic to the established farmstead character and wider landscape setting.
- 7.7 Importantly, the proposal includes the removal of 6no. existing agricultural buildings, reducing the overall quantum of built form across the site and removing a number of structures identified within the Landscape Appraisal as being of limited architectural merit. This significantly reduces visual clutter and creates a more coherent and legible layout, whilst allowing for a clearer separation between residential and commercial/agricultural areas.
- 7.8 The Landscape Appraisal concludes that the proposed landscaping and rationalisation of the site would benefit the landscape Low Weald landscape character through the introduction of native species planting, reinforcement of existing boundary vegetation, and the creation of new landscaped garden and courtyard spaces. Existing trees and

boundary vegetation are retained, whilst additional native scrub, hedgerows and tree planting further soften and filter views of the development from surrounding public rights of way and the wider landscape.

- 7.9 It is important to consider a recent planning application approved by the Council at Lower Perryland Farm, Dial Post for the *“Demolition of existing agricultural barns and erection of 3no. residential dwellings, with associated car ports, landscaping and parking”* (Officers Report and Decision Notice provided at Appendix NJA/01). The Officers Report states ***“Development on site would constitute a low magnitude of change to landscape receptors of value.”*** As such, the proposal only resulted in a limited degree of landscape change, as is the case at Clock House Farm.
- 7.10 In that case the Council accepted that the removal of existing agricultural structures, reduction in visual clutter and introduction of enhanced landscaping represented an improvement over the existing site arrangement. The same principles apply in this instance, where the proposal similarly rationalises the existing farmstead, removes redundant

agricultural buildings and introduces a more coherent and landscape-led form of development.

- 7.11 Additionally, the Landscape Appraisal further concludes that the proposed development can be accommodated within the site without undue harm to the wider landscape character or visual amenity. Visual effects from surrounding public viewpoints are assessed as predominantly “Negligible Neutral”, with some “Low / Slight Beneficial” effects arising from the removal of existing utilitarian buildings and enhancement planting.
- 7.12 In respect of Policy 24, the scale and nature of the development is such that it will not give rise to significant impacts on the landscape, and the rationalisation of the site, including improved layout and landscaping, will assist in maintaining and enhancing environmental quality.
- 7.13 Overall, the proposal will result in a clear enhancement to the character and appearance of the site and wider landscape. The development makes efficient use of previously developed land, restores and secures the long-term future of the historic farmstead buildings, reduces the extent of visually intrusive

agricultural structures, and introduces a comprehensive landscape enhancement strategy. The proposal therefore fully accords with the objectives of the NPPF and HDPF Policies 24, 25, 32 and 33.

Ecology

- 7.14 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), including a Bat Roost Assessment, and a subsequent Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), both prepared by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, have been submitted in support of this planning application. The reports confirm that the site is generally of low ecological value overall, comprising predominantly existing buildings, hardstanding and areas of sparsely vegetated urban land. The principal ecological interest relates to the boundary vegetation, including areas of bramble scrub, mixed scrub and individual trees which contribute to local habitat connectivity and the wider Green Infrastructure network.
- 7.15 HDPF Policy 25 requires development to maintain and enhance the Green Infrastructure Network and address identified deficiencies within the District.

7.16 The PEA identified that several buildings on site offered varying suitability for roosting bats and recommended further emergence surveys. These surveys were subsequently undertaken between May and July 2025 and are reported within the EclA. The EclA confirms the presence of roosting common pipistrelle and long-eared bats within Building B1. Appropriate mitigation measures are proposed, including the installation of bat boxes, retention of suitable roosting opportunities and the implementation of a sensitive construction methodology under a Natural England licence. Subject to these measures, the EclA confirms that impacts to bats can be appropriately mitigated and that works can proceed in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation.

7.17 No statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites are considered likely to be adversely affected by the proposal. The EclA confirms that there are no statutory designated sites within the relevant zone of influence and, whilst the site falls within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone, the development would not give rise to impacts requiring consultation with Natural England. The reports further conclude that Local Wildlife Sites would not be affected.

7.18 Both the PEA and EclA identify opportunities for ecological enhancement as part of the proposals. These include the retention and strengthening of boundary habitats, additional native planting, ecological enhancements for bats, and wider biodiversity improvements across the site. The EclA confirms that, following mitigation and enhancement measures, the development would deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with current legislative requirements.

7.19 Lizard Landscape have also prepared the Biodiversity Metric for the proposal, this confirms the site comprises predominantly developed land, vacant/derelict land, scrub and individual trees, with a baseline value of 5.39 habitat units. The proposed landscaping scheme currently delivers 5.07 habitat units and therefore results in a temporary shortfall against the mandatory 10% BNG requirement. The deficit will be addressed through the purchase of off-site biodiversity units from an approved habitat provider. Subject to the provision of these off-site units and the implementation of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, the development will achieve the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and comply with the Biodiversity Gain Condition.

7.20 Overall, subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, the EcIA concludes that the impacts of the development upon biodiversity would be negligible and non-significant. The proposal would maintain and enhance the site's Green Infrastructure network, protect ecological interests and secure measurable biodiversity enhancements. The development therefore accords with the biodiversity objectives of the NPPF and the requirements of HDPF Policy 25, with no overriding ecological constraints identified.

Drainage

7.21 HDPF Policy 38 requires development proposals to follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, directing development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding and ensuring that development is safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The policy also requires, where technically feasible, the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that mimic natural drainage processes and manage surface water as close to its source as possible.

7.22 A Sustainable Drainage Strategy has been prepared by CGS Civils to demonstrate that the proposed development can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk. Site investigations confirmed that infiltration drainage is not feasible due to the underlying Weald Clay geology, shallow groundwater levels and failed BRE365 infiltration testing. Accordingly, surface water will be collected within a positive drainage network and discharged to the existing watercourse to the north of the site at a restricted greenfield runoff rate (Q_{BAR}) of 5.4 l/s.

7.23 The proposed drainage strategy incorporates a range of SuDS including a geocellular attenuation tank, an above-ground attenuation swale and bioretention planters to provide attenuation, water quality and biodiversity benefits. Rainwater harvesting will also be incorporated at the detailed design stage once rainwater downpipe locations have been confirmed. The drainage network has been designed to accommodate the 1 in 100-year rainfall event, including a 45% allowance for climate change and 10% urban creep, whilst foul drainage will be treated on site via a package treatment plant before discharging to the adjacent watercourse.

7.24 The submitted Sustainable Drainage Strategy demonstrates that appropriate and sustainable measures are proposed for the management of both surface water and foul drainage. The development can therefore be accommodated without increasing flood risk elsewhere and complies with the requirements of HDPF Policy 38.

Sustainability

7.25 HDPF Policy 35 sets out that development will be supported where it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meet the District's carbon reduction targets. Development must be designed to mitigate the effects of climate change and to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

7.26 Blew Burton Ltd has prepared an Energy and Sustainability Statement in support of this planning application. The report confirms the proposed development has been designed to achieve a high standard of sustainability through a combination of energy efficiency measures, water conservation, biodiversity enhancements and sustainable construction practices. The conversion and reuse of the

existing historic stable buildings significantly reduces the need for new materials, while the dwellings will exceed current Building Regulations energy standards through enhanced insulation, improved airtightness and the use of air source heat pumps.

7.27 Water consumption will be reduced through the installation of water-efficient fixtures and fittings, rainwater harvesting butts and water meters. The scheme also incorporates sustainable drainage measures, ecological enhancements including native planting and habitat creation, and the use of responsibly sourced construction materials with low environmental impacts. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure and adaptable building layouts further ensure the development is resilient to future needs and supports the transition to a low-carbon lifestyle.

7.28 Details may be agreed and secured by condition to ensure compliance with the NPPF and HDPF policies 35, 36 and 37 and the Council's target to become carbon neutral by 2030 (direct emissions) and by 2050 (indirect emissions).

Ground Conditions and Pollution

- 7.29 HDPF Policy 24 sets out taking into account any relevant Planning Guidance Documents, developments will be expected to minimise exposure to and the emission of pollutants including noise, odour, air and light pollution and ensure that they address land contamination by promoting the appropriate re-use of sites and requiring the delivery of appropriate remediation.
- 7.30 A Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment prepared by EAS Ltd has been submitted in support of the application. The report confirms that no significant contamination has been identified on site; however, there is some potential for contamination associated with the site's historic agricultural use. Potential sources include the storage of fuels, oils, pesticides and herbicides, as well as the presence of agricultural machinery and waste.
- 7.31 The risk assessment concludes that the overall level of risk to future site users is low to moderate, particularly in the context of the proposed residential use with gardens and soft landscaping. The principal potential pathway relates to direct

contact with soils in garden areas and exposure to asbestos-containing materials during demolition and construction works.

- 7.32 The report confirms that the site can be made suitable for its proposed use subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation and remediation measures. These include:
- investigation and testing of soils within proposed garden and landscaped areas following the removal of existing hardstanding;
 - where necessary, remediation or replacement of soils, including the use of clean imported topsoil;
 - the identification, management and safe removal of any asbestos-containing materials by suitably qualified contractors; and
 - the implementation of appropriate construction phase health and safety measures to protect site workers.

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- 7.33 It is recommended that any necessary remediation strategy and verification measures are secured by condition, ensuring that the site is suitable for its proposed mixed-use redevelopment and that risks to human health and the wider environment are appropriately managed.
- 7.34 On this basis, and having regard to the findings of the Contamination Risk Assessment, the proposal accords with the requirements of HDPF Policy 24, with no unacceptable risks identified that would preclude development.

8. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Section 16 of the NPPF refers to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The Framework requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting (Paragraph 207). NPPF paragraph 212 sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 8.2 Any harm to, or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) will require justification (Paragraph 213). In line with the NPPF, HDPF policy 34 sets out that the Council will sustain and enhance the historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. It further requires development proposals to make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area

and ensure that the development is consistent with the special character of those areas.

- 8.3 A Heritage Report has been prepared by Chilcroft Heritage Planning in support of this application. The assessment identifies that there are no designated heritage assets within the application site itself, although the Grade II listed building of Little Patches lies to the east of the site and Clockhouse Farmhouse is identified as a non-designated heritage asset ("NDHA"). The report further identifies that the existing stable block dates from the 1930s, remains largely unaltered and is of above average architectural and material quality, such that it may itself be considered a NDHA.
- 8.4 The Heritage Report concludes that the significance of Little Patches and Clockhouse Farmhouse is principally derived from their architectural form, historic interest and their principal elevations facing Stonehouse Lane, away from the application site. Whilst the application site forms part of their wider setting and there is an awareness of the existing farmstead from the rear curtilages of the heritage assets, the report concludes that the proposals would preserve this

historic farmstead legibility and enhance the setting of the heritage assets overall.

- 8.5 The report notes that the site currently contains extensive areas of hardstanding and a number of utilitarian modern agricultural buildings of no historic merit. The proposals would restore and secure the long-term viable use of the historic stable block through sensitive conversion, whilst removing or relocating modern agricultural buildings and introducing new soft landscaping and planting in place of existing hardstanding. The Heritage Report concludes that these changes would improve the setting of the heritage assets and provide an overall enhancement compared to the existing site condition.
- 8.6 The report further concludes that the proposed commercial buildings are appropriately positioned to the western side of the site, set away from the stable range, and that the proposals would preserve the significance and setting of nearby heritage assets whilst securing a sustainable long-term use for the stable buildings.

- 8.7 As such, no interests of acknowledged importance are harmed as a result of the proposal. On the contrary, the proposals would preserve and enhance the setting of nearby heritage assets through the removal of visually intrusive structures, restoration of the stables and introduction of coordinated landscaping. It has therefore been demonstrated that the proposal complies with the heritage requirements of the NPPF and HDPF Policy 34.

9. ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

- 9.1 The NPPF sets out at paragraph 116 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.
- 9.2 HDPF policies 40 and 41 seek to ensure that proposals incorporate safe and adequate means of access and that there is appropriate car parking provision.
- 9.3 A Transport Statement prepared by GTA Civils and Transport has been submitted in support of this planning application. This statement confirms vehicular access to the site will be taken from the existing access onto Stonehouse Lane and can achieve appropriate visibility splays in accordance with Manual for Streets. The access will also be locally widened to approximately 5.5m allowing safe two-way movement and enabling larger vehicles, including service and emergency vehicles, to enter and exit the site without conflict.
- 9.4 The proposed development will generate a modest level of vehicle movements, proportionate to its scale. These movements will be more regular and predictable than the existing agricultural use, which can generate intermittent movements by larger vehicles. Overall, the development will not result in any material impact on the operation or safety of the surrounding highway network.
- 9.5 Car parking provision has been designed in accordance with West Sussex County Council standards. The scheme provides 2no. spaces per residential unit together with 5no. visitor spaces, ensuring an appropriate level of provision across the site. Cycle parking is also incorporated in line with guidance.
- 9.6 The internal layout allows for safe and convenient manoeuvring within the site, including appropriate turning provision. Tracking demonstrates that refuse and emergency vehicles can safely access and exit the site in a forward gear. Parking and circulation areas are well integrated within the layout and do not dominate the development.

9.7 Overall, the Transport Statement demonstrates that safe and suitable access can be achieved, parking provision is policy compliant, and the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the operation of the local road network. The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of the NPPF and HDPF Policies 40 and 41.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This Statement supports the proposal for the proposed redevelopment of Clock House Farm comprising the conversion of the existing brick stables into 5no. residential dwellings; construction of a new commercial building; erection of a new Sussex barn; and the removal of 6no. existing agricultural buildings within the wider farm holding, together with landscaping and associated infrastructure works at Clock House Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8DL.
- 10.2 Overall, the proposal represents an enhancement over the existing site condition. In accordance with NPPF paragraphs 85 and 88, HDPF Policy 10 and Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan Policy 14, the development will support sustainable rural economic growth, provide opportunities for local employment, and enable the ongoing productive use of the site.
- 10.3 The proposal also delivers important social and environmental benefits. The conversion of the existing stable block will make a meaningful contribution towards the District's housing

supply at a time when the Council can only demonstrate a 1.7-year housing land supply. The development makes efficient use of previously developed land and existing infrastructure, whilst remaining proportionate in scale to its countryside setting in accordance with HDPF Policies 26 and 33.

- 10.4 Importantly, the wider redevelopment strategy includes the removal of 5 no. existing agricultural buildings, reducing visual clutter and enabling a more coherent and attractive farmstead layout. This is reinforced through a comprehensive landscaping scheme including native planting, habitat enhancement, private gardens and a communal courtyard, resulting in a clear enhancement to the character and appearance of the site and its relationship with the wider landscape.
- 10.5 The supporting technical evidence demonstrates that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts in respect of heritage, ecology, neighbouring amenity, contamination, drainage or highway safety. Safe and suitable access can be achieved, appropriate parking and servicing provision is provided, and the development would not result in severe impacts on the local highway network.

10.6 Overall, the proposal represents a well-considered and policy-compliant form of sustainable development. The development accords with the relevant policies of the development plan when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should be withheld. Therefore, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, planning permission should be granted.