

Planning Statement

Charwood House, Wilberforce Way, Southwater

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Chess Dynamics Ltd.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1. Vail Williams have been instructed by Chess Dynamics Ltd. (Chess) to prepare this Planning Statement to support this full planning application for the, *'change of use to Class E(g)/B8 with associated alterations to parking and landscape layout, installation of external plant enclosure and minor alterations to existing building'* at Charwood House, Southwater.
- 1.2. This planning statement will consider any relevant planning history, national and local planning policy and make an assessment of the proposed development against these relevant policies.
- 1.3. The planning statement should be read in conjunction with the suite of technical documents which support the application which are as follows:
 - Noise impact assessment
 - Arboricultural impact assessment
 - Ecological assessment
 - Biodiversity net gain assessment
 - Transport statement
 - Travel plan
 - Proposed landscape plan

2 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site is located within the administrative boundary of Horsham District Council and within the settlement boundary of Southwater. The site is located approximately 400m to the west of the A24 with access from Blakes Farm Road. The site is also approximately 1.5km to the north of Southwater centre and approximately 4km to the south of Horsham.



- 2.2. The site lies within an established employment area known as Oakhurst Business Park with existing commercial buildings located to the north, east and west of the site. To the south of the site (approximately 50m from the boundary of the site to the nearest rear property elevation) are residential dwellings. There is an established tree belt between the site boundary and the residential dwellings to the south so the dwellings are not easily visible from the site.
- 2.3. The site area is approximately 0.79ha.
- 2.4. The site has two accesses, one to the north of the site which is used for staff and visitor cars and another to the south which provides access to the yard area for commercial vehicles.
- 2.5. The building itself contains three storeys of office/administrative space toward the front of the building and a full height storage area to the rear of the building. The building is currently vacant but was previously used for storage and distribution (B8) purposes with supporting office functions.
- 2.6. The site is located within flood zone 1. There are no listed buildings on site and the site is not within a Conservation Area.
- 2.7. There are two existing trees with a TPO designation to the east of the site. There are a number of other trees located along the northern boundary of the site which reflect the business character of the site and surrounds.

3 Planning History

3.1. The following planning history has been identified:

Reference	Proposal / Description	Decision	Decision Date
C/25/0179	Change of use of Charwood House from Class B8 (storage and distribution) to Class E, with ancillary office floorspace.	Application Permitted	20.06.2025
DC/15/2871	Variation of condition 7 to previously approved application DC/08/2464 (Storage and distribution warehouse with associated office, basement parking and new access road) to amend condition wording to de-restrict vehicular (vans and cars) deliveries to and from the site and to allow for processes to be undertaken within the building (amended).	Application Permitted	05.05.2016
DC/09/1619	Retrospective planning for the installation of an above ground fuel storage tank for the use of company vans and temporary storage of pallets and controlled waste within the yard area awaiting weekly collections.	Application Permitted	13.11.2009
DC/08/2464	Modifications to south west and east elevation of the building under construction being increase in width of the 2 sectional loading doors from 4.5 metres to 6 metres, increase the projection of the canopy over these doors from 3m to 6m and provide ground floor windows to warehouse office and mess room (amendments to previously Approval of Reserved Matters DC/07/2748).	Application Permitted	04.03.2009
DC/07/2748	Storage and distribution warehouse with associated office, basement parking and new access road (Approval of Reserved Matters) SQ/91/92)	Application Permitted	03.06.2008

3.2. As set out above, a change of use application has been submitted in recent times for a change of use to Class E(g)(ii) which was approved (C/25/0179). Within the delegated report for the application it was confirmed that, *'The proposed Research and Development use of the application site under Class E(g)(ii) is considered to accord with Policies 7 and 9 of the HDPF, Policy 21 of the SNP, and Section 2 and Paragraph 85 of the NPPF 2024.'*

3.3. It should also be noted that no objection was raised by WSCC highways, Environmental Health Officer or other statutory consultees subject to planning conditions. In relation to residential amenity, a number of conditions were included on this decision:

Condition 4: Regulatory Condition: No heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), forklifts, plant or machinery shall be operated from the service yard area of the site outside the following times:

0700 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive,

0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays;

and not on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in accordance with policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) document (2015)

Condition 5: *Regulatory Condition: Any process undertaken at the application site, except for the movement of cars and vans within the service yard area, shall only be undertaken within the building with the roller doors closed (with the exception of when cars or vans are entering or exiting the building), outside the following times:*

0700 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive,

0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays;

and not on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in accordance with policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) document (2015).

- 3.4. It should be noted that a recent application has also been approved to the east of the site on the former RSPCA Headquarters site (ref DC/22/2077) which was approved on 04 June 2024 and sought, 'Demolition of existing building and the erection of 3no buildings to provide flexible industrial and storage and distribution floorspace (Use Class B2/B8) and ancillary office floorspace, with associated hard and soft landscaping, car and cycle parking, supporting infrastructure and retention of existing attenuation pond.'
- 3.5. This proposed development will deliver approximately 100,000sqft of new commercial floorspace on the site across 7no. new units. The approval of this permission highlights that the character of the area surrounding Charwood House will continue to be commercial in nature.

4 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1. The NPPF was updated in August 2026 and sets out national planning policy in a clearer and more comprehensive manner and incorporates a number of substantive reforms designed to boost housing supply and unlock economic growth in the years ahead.

- 4.2. Policy S3(1) relates to the presumption in favour of sustainable development and states:

Decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means:

a. Policy S4 in this Framework should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements;

b. Outside settlements, policy S5 should be applied; and

c. In all locations, development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in this Framework should be approved without delay. (our emphasis)

- 4.3. Policy S4 goes on to set out the principle of development within settlements and states:

*Development proposals within settlements should be approved unless **the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects**, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework. (our emphasis)*

- 4.4. Policy E2(1) related to meeting the need for business land and premises and states:

*To support business growth, **substantial weight should be given to:***

*a. The **economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt**; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area, the implementation of the Industrial Strategy, support improvements in freight and logistics and/or reflect proposals for Industrial Strategy Zones and AI Growth Zones; and*

b. Benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through proposals for development for farm and agricultural modernisation. (our emphasis)

- 4.5. Policy L2 (1) sets out that, ‘Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following:

a. Remediating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

*b. **Making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings (such as: by bringing back into residential use empty homes and other suitable buildings; converting space above shops; redeveloping underutilised retail and business sites; and building on or above service yards, lockups, car parks and other transport infrastructure which are no longer required);**’*

- 4.6. Policy TR1(1) sets out that, *‘Sustainable transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that it is reflected in the vision for the plan area and its specific proposals and forms an integral part of a plan’s strategy for creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places.’*

Sections a, b and d are most relevant and set out that development proposals should:

- a. *‘Making sustainable transport considerations part of early engagement with local communities, highway and transport authorities, transport infrastructure providers, operators, land promoters and neighbouring councils. This is so that proposals reflect local views, evidence relating to accessibility, capacity and transport service provision, and take opportunities for prioritising and maximising sustainable movement across the area. Plans should align land use policies and allocations with wider strategies (such as Local Transport Plans, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and Rights of Way Improvement Plans) and investments in transport to ensure that the potential impacts of development on transport networks are understood and addressed;*
- b. *Locating proposed development where it can support sustainable patterns of movement and make effective use of existing or proposed transport infrastructure, reflecting the principles in policy TR3. The Connectivity Tool (Connectivity Tool - GOV.UK) should be used to inform the assessment and selection of sites for development alongside other relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence;*
- d. *Identifying and protecting sites and routes which will widen transport choice and are essential to facilitate sustainable development, including networks for walking, wheeling and cycling, and public transport infrastructure;’*

- 4.7. Policy L1(1) relates to effective use of land, of which section a, i, relates most. The policy sets out that *‘To support the effective and efficient use of land the development plan should, at the most appropriate level:*

- a. *Identify ways of accommodating as much as possible of the identified need for development in the area on previously developed land, including by:*
- i. *Allocating sites of all sizes which have the potential for redevelopment to secure a more effective use, such as through the reuse of service yards, lock-ups, car parks and other transport infrastructure which are no longer required, the reuse or intensification of underutilised retail and business sites, and estate regeneration schemes;’*

- 4.8. Policy N2(1) relates to improving the natural environment and Biodiversity Net Gain and states that *‘To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature’s recovery, development proposals should:*

- a. *Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);*
- b. *Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;*
- c. *Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;*
- d. ***Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate***

landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;

- e. *Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation*
- f. ***Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.*** *Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and*
- g. *Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.'*

Policy N2(2) goes on to state that: ***'If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.'***

Local Planning Policy

Horsham District Planning Framework 2015

4.9. Policy 7 states,

Strategic Policy: Economic Growth

Sustainable employment development in Horsham district for the period up to 2031 will be achieved by;

1. *Allocating land for a high quality business park at Land North of Horsham.*
2. ***Redevelopment, regeneration, intensification and smart growth of existing employment sites.***
3. *The formation and development of small, start-up and move-on businesses, as well as home working and home based businesses, by encouraging provision of small units through development proposals.*
4. *Encouraging appropriate workspace and ICT infrastructure, such as high speed broadband, as an integral part of development, including residential development to support flexible working, home working and businesses with the flexibility to operate anywhere.*
5. ***Retention of Key Employment Areas, for employment uses.***
6. *Promotion of the district as an attractive place to stay and visit to increase the value of the tourism economy.*
7. *Encouraging sustainable local employment growth through Neighbourhood Development Plans.*

8. Encouraging the expansion of higher education facilities related to research and development and employment training activity.

9. Identifying additional employment areas to meet the need for appropriate new business activity. (our emphasis)

4.10. Policy 9 relates Employment Development

*1. **Redevelopment in the Key Employment Areas must not result in the overall loss of employment floorspace.** Proposals for alternative uses within the Key Employment Areas will be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the sequential approach has been applied to the redevelopment of the site, and the proposals support their integrity and function as centres of employment.*

2. Redevelopment of employment sites and premises outside Key Employment Areas, must demonstrate that the site/premises is no longer needed and/or viable for employment use.

3. In the case of relocation from a Key Employment Area or other employment areas within a built-up area boundary, the proposal must demonstrate that the sequential approach has been applied, and that development will be in a suitable new location and will resolve any existing issues arising from badly sited uses. In addition, an acceptable future use of the vacated site must be secured.

4. Expansion of existing employment sites and premises within the built-up area boundary will be supported where the business requirements cannot be met within the existing site/premises, through acceptable on-site expansion or intensification; and that relocation to existing stock is not preferable.

5. Provision of small, start-up and move-on business units will be supported to enable them to reach their fullest potential.

4.11. Policy 31 relates to green infrastructure and states:

Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.

Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.

4.12. Policy 33 relates to development principles and states:

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;***
- 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;***

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;*
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;*
5. *Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;*
6. *Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. **Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development;** and,*
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.*

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

8. ***Incorporate where appropriate convenient, safe and visually attractive areas for the parking of vehicles and cycles, and the storage of bins/recycling facilities without dominating the development or its surroundings;***
9. *Incorporate measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial 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 areas by occupants of the site;*
10. *Contribute to the removal of physical barriers; and,*
11. *Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces within the site. (our emphasis)*

4.13. Policy 41 relates to parking as states,

1. *Development should seek to improve parking in town centres so it is convenient, safe and secure. Parking provision must ensure a balance between good urban design, highway safety, residential amenity and promoting town centre attractiveness and vitality.*
2. ***Adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users. Consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, charging plug-in or other low emission vehicles and the mobility impaired.***
3. *Development which involves the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere or the need for the development overrides the loss of parking and where necessary measures are in place to mitigate against the impact.*
4. *Planning permission will not be granted for off-airport parking facilities related to Gatwick Airport unless a need can be demonstrated and all realistic alternatives have been examined. (our emphasis)*

Draft Horsham Local Plan 2045

- 4.14. HDC recently published a timetable for progressing with a new Local Plan with hearings anticipated to start in October 2026 and plan adoption in January 2027. As the draft plan still

requires Examination it carries limited weight in the planning balance and therefore has not been considered further. However, this will continue to be monitored during the determination of this current planning application.

- 4.15. In addition, HDC's new local plan for 2045 will be known as 'Horsham District 2045'. The progression of this new local plan began with the request of Call for Sites in August 2026. This new local plan is being prepared alongside and in relation to the ongoing examination and modifications of the current HDPF, while also operating within the wider context of the recently updated NPPF and upcoming local government changes.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Southwater Neighbourhood Plan 2020

- 4.16. The site is located within the Built Up Area Boundary but is not allocated as a Parish Employment Area. The Neighbourhood Plan does make reference to Oakhurst Business Park and states, *'Oakhurst Business Park in Southwater is a 30 acre park developed in phases over several years to accommodate a range of businesses from multi-national organisations such as the National Headquarters of the RSPCA and Nursing & Hygiene to local companies. The business park is located near to the A24 and offers easy access to Gatwick Airport, the South Coast ports and the motorway network via the M23. This is allocated as a Key Employment Area in the HDPF and not considered further by this plan.'*
- 4.17. Policy SNP18 relates to trees and states in SNP 18.1, *development proposals should produce measurable enhancements to the treed environment to ensure biodiversity net gains (regardless of land ownership). Where existing trees or an area of woodland is to be lost, it must be replaced with trees or new woodland of greater environmental value on site or elsewhere within the Plan Area. Trees planted should be suitably mature and, as a minimum, conform to British Standard BS 3936-1 / Standard 10-12cm girth.'* The remaining aspects of the policy aren't considered relevant to the development proposals.

5 Proposals

- 5.1. This planning application is seeking full planning permission for a *'change of use to Class E(g)/B8 with associated alterations to parking and landscape layout, installation of external plant enclosure and minor alterations to existing building'*
- 5.2. As has been set out earlier in this statement, the current use of the building is currently B8 storage and distribution and permission has also previously been granted to a change of use to E(g)(ii) under application C/25/0179.
- 5.3. This proposal follows a similar approach to the previous change of use but requires additional uses under Class E(g) as the building will incorporate office, R&D, production and storage space. These uses are required to meet Chess' operational requirements based on their current operations at Quadrant House in Horsham. Alongside the change of use, Chess also requires some minor alterations to the external layout of the site to reflect their intended operations at the site.
- 5.4. The proposals will result in an additional 71no. parking spaces marked on site which will be delivered within the existing service yard area and in areas which are currently areas of soft ground within the site. The remainder of the car parking will be made up of the existing visitor car parking area at the front of the site plus relining of the rear service yard area to create a total of 126no. parking spaces within the site boundary. The rear service yard can be utilised for parking as a result of the change in use from the previous occupier who used the site for storage and distribution purposes which had a higher proportion of HGV vehicles accessing and parking on site compared to Chess who will utilise the building for an increased level of E(g) office, research and production space.
- 5.5. To mitigate the loss of soft ground, additional landscaping is proposed in areas of the site which are not to be used for car parking. A small additional area of plant with an associated enclosure is proposed along the northwestern elevation of the building.
- 5.6. There are no proposed changes to the two existing accesses into the site.
- 5.7. Minor alterations are also proposed to the existing building. This includes the addition of some windows to the northeast, southeast and southwest elevations. The windows will be installed to match existing. A new fire escape door is also proposed. An additional area of internal mezzanine floor is also proposed at second floor level. The mezzanine will provide an additional 345sqm of floorspace within the building envelope. No extensions are proposed to the existing building footprint.

6 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 6.1. Chess Dynamics operates primarily within high-tech engineering design and manufacture. They are a well-established Horsham-based employer specialising in high-tech surveillance, targeting and fire control systems for Land and Maritime domains around the world. They are currently based at Quadrant House, Business Park, N Heath Ln, Horsham RH12 5QE which is approximately 5 miles from the application site.
- 6.2. Chess' existing site is fragmented and no longer meets their operational requirements so need to relocate to continue to maintain business operations and are seeking to relocate within Horsham to the Charwood House site.
- 6.3. Chess is an important employer within the district, employing approximately 201 staff at their existing site. They are seeking to relocate within Horsham so they can maintain their local talent pool and minimise impacts on existing business operations.
- 6.4. The retention of an existing high quality employer within Horsham should carry substantial weight in the determination of this planning application as it will allow Chess to invest and adapt in accordance with NPPF Policy E2(1) and will support economic development within the district.
- 6.5. Furthermore, Chess is seeking to relocate to an existing key employment area within a settlement boundary to enable an existing commercial building to be brought back into use for an appropriate commercial use. Ensuring there is no net loss in employment land, which strongly complies with Local Plan policies 7 and 9.
- 6.6. Finally, the site has already been operational for a significant number of years for B8, storage and distribution purposes and the Council have also recently granted a E(g)(ii) research use on the site, which has not been implemented. Therefore, the principle of development is acceptable.
- 6.7. As required by NPPF Policy S4, the proposal should therefore be approved (as the site is within the settlement) unless the benefits of doing so would be **substantially outweighed** by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.
- 6.8. The following sections will demonstrate that there are no substantial adverse effects which would outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission for the proposals.

Highways and Parking

- 6.9. A Transport Statement and draft Travel Plan have been prepared to support this planning application. The Transport Statement identifies that the proposed 126no. parking spaces is appropriate for an E(g) use based on a worst-case scenario (and a B8 use has a lower anticipated staffing numbers and associated parking requirements). The proposals will also retain the existing cycle parking in the basement of the building and includes an additional 2no. spaces at surface level. The statement also concludes that even with the 345sqm of additional floorspace, the proposed development is shown to result in no material increase in traffic movements, no unacceptable parking impacts, and no adverse effects on the operation or safety of the local highway network.

- 6.10. The submitted Travel Plan proposes a number of sustainable transport to encourage staff to use alternative modes of transport than private car. A key part of the travel plan is for the applicant to offer a shuttle bus to provide a commuting service for employees between key locations in the Horsham area, including the train station and Charwood House. Alongside this there will be incentives for car sharing, cycling and public bus usage. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken once Chess are occupying the unit to identify any additional sustainable travel measures should be introduced into the site based how employees are accessing the site.
- 6.11. Chess are an existing employer within Horsham and it has been demonstrated that the relocation of their business to an alternative premises within Horsham will not result in any severe adverse effects on the highway network. An appropriate level of car parking can also be provided on-site alongside other sustainable travel opportunities in accordance with the development plan.

Amenity

- 6.12. It is noted that the applicant has agreed to maintain the noise conditions set out in previous applications which are:

Condition 4: Regulatory Condition: No heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), forklifts, plant or machinery shall be operated from the service yard area of the site outside the following times:

0700 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive,

0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays;

and not on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays.

Condition 5: Regulatory Condition: Any process undertaken at the application site, except for the movement of cars and vans within the service yard area, shall only be undertaken within the building with the roller doors closed (with the exception of when cars or vans are entering or exiting the building), outside the following times:

0700 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive,

0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays;

and not on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays.

- 6.13. The applicant has already therefore agreed to limit HGV movements during nighttime hours to address comments raised by the Environmental Health Officer in earlier applications.
- 6.14. Additionally, subject to compliance with the above conditions, the site can already be lawfully used for B8 (current use) or E(g)(ii) uses (approved use under application C/25/0179). The Council have therefore already previously assessed the site for commercial uses and concluded there would be no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity subject to the aforementioned conditions. The same approach should therefore be applied to this subject application to change the use to a flexible E(g)/B8 use.
- 6.15. It should also be noted that the nature of Chess' business means that there will be a reduction in HGVs accessing the site compared to the previous occupier using the site for solely B8 storage and distribution purposes. Chess only anticipate up to 3 HGV deliveries per day and up to 15 vans

which we understand will be a significant reduction in HGVs compared to the previous occupier which will impact amenity compared to previous operations.

- 6.16. For completeness, a noise impact assessment has been undertaken and includes an assessment for noise levels of the proposed plant to be located along the northwestern elevation of the existing building. The report concludes that there should be no adverse impact as a result of the development and will result in no unacceptable harm to amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the development plan. It is proposed to install a 1.8m acoustic fence along the south western boundary of the site to avoid adverse effects in relation to residential amenity in accordance with Policy 33.

Trees

- 6.17. A tree survey and impact assessment has been undertaken and identifies the trees which will require removal and protection to accommodate the development. The proposals have been designed to avoid the loss of the highest quality trees on site, most notably the two oak trees which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The trees which are necessary for removal are Category C trees and a proposed landscaping scheme supports this application to demonstrate where replacement tree planting will be accommodated on the site.
- 6.18. Where the proposals will result in some encroachment into the RPAs, this encroachment has been minimised as far as possible and the proposals will deliver a no-dig construction technique in these areas as set out on the tree protection plan.
- 6.19. Overall, subject to an appropriate condition securing an arboricultural method statement, the proposals will not result in any substantial impacts in relation to trees.

Ecology

- 6.20. A Preliminary Ecological Report, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Landscape Plan and strategy have been prepared to support the planning application.
- 6.21. Overall, the habitats within the site were assessed as being of broad low ecological value and comprised predominantly developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland, mixed scrub, individual trees and two tree groups. The developed land; sealed surface provided negligible ecological value, while the modified grassland was species-poor and regularly managed. These habitats do not represent significant ecological constraints to development.
- 6.22. As the proposals require the loss of some small areas of landscaping from the site, the biodiversity net gain assessment has been undertaken which identifies that the proposed approach landscaping will result in a net gain of 0.81% (an increase in 0.02 habitat units). In order to achieve the mandatory 10% and off-site provision will be secured for the additional 0.24 units which are required.
- 6.23. Subject to securing the necessary biodiversity requirements either by condition or legal agreement, the proposals will not result in any adverse impacts in relation to ecology and biodiversity and are considered in accordance with Local Plan and Policy SNP18 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

7 Planning Balance and Conclusions

- 7.1. This planning statement has been prepared to support the planning application for the change of use from B8 (storage/distribution) to E(g)/B8 with associated alterations to car parking and landscaping layout.
- 7.2. The revisions to the NPPF make clear within Policy S4 that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.
- 7.3. As has been set out within this statement, Chess Dynamics is an important employer already located within Horsham, providing a range of employment opportunities for the district. The proposal will enable Chess to relocate their business to create a site which meets their current and future operational needs, whilst remaining within Horsham District. The proposals will also ensure there is no net loss of employment floorspace within a strategic employment area. Supporting an existing employer should carry **substantial** weight in favour of the development.
- 7.4. Furthermore, the relocation will re-use an existing vacant commercial site within an allocated employment area, which has permission already for both B8 and E(g)(ii) uses and is located within the settlement boundary. The proposals do not fundamentally move away from the permitted uses on site. The re-use of this site should also carry **substantial** weight in favour of the development.
- 7.5. The technical reports which support this application in relation to trees, ecology, noise and transport have all demonstrated that the proposed change of use will not result in any substantial adverse effects. Any identified impacts have been suitably mitigated through the proposed design or through the management of the site which can be dealt with via planning conditions. Consequently, there are no substantial adverse effects which would outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission.
- 7.6. The proposals have been shown to accord with the development plan and should be granted planning permission as required by section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

8 Suggested Conditions

- 8.1. The following conditions are proposed if the Local Planning Authority are minded to approve the application. We would be happy to discuss these further with the Local Planning Authority during the course of the determination period.

1	Regulatory Condition: Plans Condition
2	Regulatory Condition: 3 year implementation condition
3	Pre-Commencement Condition: No development shall commence until an Arboricultural Method Statement detailing all trees/hedgerows on site and adjacent to the site to be retained during construction works, and measures to provide for their protection throughout all construction works, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented and thereafter carried out at all times strictly in accordance with the agreed details. Any trees or hedges on the site which die or become damaged during the construction process shall be replaced with trees or hedging plants of a type, size and in positions agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
4	Pre-Occupation Condition: No internally and/or externally located plant, machinery equipment or building services plant shall be operated until an assessment of the acoustic impact arising from the operation of all such equipment has been undertaken and has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with BS 4142:2014 and shall include a scheme of attenuation measures to mitigate any adverse impacts identified in the acoustic assessment and ensure the rating level of noise emitted from the proposed building services plant is no greater than background levels. The scheme as approved by the Local Planning Authority shall be fully installed prior to first operation of the plant and shall be retained as such thereafter.
5	Regulatory Condition: No heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), forklifts, plant or machinery shall be operated from the service yard area of the site outside the following times: 0700 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, 0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays; and not on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays.
6	Regulatory Condition: Any process undertaken at the application site, except for the movement of cars and vans within the service yard area, shall only be undertaken within the building with the roller doors closed (with the exception of when cars or vans are entering or exiting the building), outside the following times: 0700 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays inclusive, 0700 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays; and not on Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays. Reason: In the interests of amenity and in accordance with policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) document (2015).
7	Regulatory Condition: No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority. Any that is installed with the

	permission of the local planning authority shall be maintained in accordance with those approved details. Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality and in accordance with policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) document (2015).
8	Regulatory Condition: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020) (or any order amending or revoking and/or re enacting these Orders), the premises hereby permitted shall be used for Use Class E(g)(i), E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii) and B8 purposes only and for no other purposes whatsoever, without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.
9	Pre-Occupation Condition: The development shall not be occupied until the Applicant has implemented the measures incorporated within the approved travel plan. The Applicant shall thereafter monitor, report and subsequently revise the travel plan as specified within the approved document. Reason: To encourage and promote sustainable transport and in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
10	Regulatory Condition: No construction works for the implementation of the development hereby approved shall take place outside of 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or public Holidays Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
11	Regulatory Condition: The approved landscaping scheme (ref: XXXX) shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Unless otherwise agreed as part of the approved landscaping, no trees or hedges on the site shall be wilfully damaged or uprooted, felled/removed, topped or lopped without the previous written consent of the Local Planning Authority until 5 years after completion of the development. Any proposed or retained planting, which within a period of 5 years, dies, is removed, or becomes seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

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