



**Horsham
District
Council**

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/2100

Land To The North of Warnham Lodge Farm, Mayes Lane, Warnham, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 3SG

DESCRIPTION:

Erection of a self-build dwelling with associated landscaping

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

PE/25/0136	Erection of one dwelling with associated landscaping	Pre-Application Given on 15.08.2025	Advice
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DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located to the north of Warnham Lodge, a large property set in substantial grounds. The application site extends 3.5 hectares and comprises a field historically used for sheep grazing. The site is located approximately 1.6km to the north of Warnham Village Centre. The site is largely screened on all sides by established trees with glimpses possible from the existing field access and through trees on Mayes Lane. To the western edge of the site is Hoopers Copse which is an area of Ancient Woodland. The site has an existing gated field access off Mayes Lane. Running along the southern boundary but outside of the site is a public footpath no.1420.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application proposes to construct a two-storey detached dwellinghouse with landscaping across the wider site. The dwelling would be a traditionally proportionated building, with a simple form with a pitched roof and regularly spaced window openings. The dwelling will be located centrally within the plot; access would be provided off Mayes Lane via a long driveway. On the western side of the house would be a secure private garden with paved patio and terraced garden. A stable building and garage would be situated to the north of the dwelling, with an equestrian paddock to the north of the site. Soft landscaping would be provided across the site, and the scheme would deliver measurable biodiversity gains.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

- Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
- Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 28 - Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Warnham Neighbourhood Development Plan (2017-2031):

Policy W1: Built-Up Area Boundary
Policy W5: Design of residential development
Policy W9: Parking standards for new residential development

Warnham Parish Design Statement

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

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

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

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

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs

Planning Advice Notes:

Shaping Development in Horsham District (SDPAN)

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

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

Consultations:

HDC Arboriculture: Comment. No significant Arboricultural concerns subject to amendments to curtilage delineations to respect adjacent Ancient Woodland and comply with NPPF statutory advice in

this respect. A tree protection condition would be appropriate to conserve remaining trees and woodland abutting the site.

HDC Landscape Architect: Not supportive on landscape grounds. Adverse landscape character and visual effects are anticipated to the site, the immediate surroundings, the southern PRoW and Mayes Lane. We recognise that the effects will be partly localised, owed to the surrounding wooded character.

Notwithstanding this, from a landscape perspective we cannot be supportive of introducing a new dwelling within an undeveloped area of the countryside, in accordance with Policy 26 of the HDPF.

However, if minded for approval, we advise that our recommendations are taken into consideration within the design proposals. We also request further information on the levels.

HDC Drainage: The Flood Risk assessment and Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy report (FRA report) is thorough, it meets the standard expected by HDC Drainage and demonstrates that the design of the surface water drainage strategy has taken a pragmatic approach.

In principle, HDC Drainage do not object to the proposed surface water drainage strategy, but we advise that the scheme dependencies discussed on page 38 of the FRA report are resolved as soon as possible, in addition to providing the requested information in the Main Comments Section below. As the site cannot rely on infiltration, the drainage infrastructure is reliant upon a suitable outfall location. Currently, an outfall location for the drainage strategy has not been confirmed, which may be considered a major constraint for the development.

HDC Drainage require more information to determine that the site drainage meets the requirements of the NPPF and PPG, National standards for sustainable drainage systems (June 2025), and the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) – Policy 35 and Policy 38.

Ecology Consultant: No Ecological Objection subject to attached conditions.

The site is adjacent to an area of ancient, replanted woodland, which is classed as an irreplaceable habitat type. The submitted PEA shows the site has been maintained as shortly grazed, species poor grassland, with the report stating the site is actively grazed. The plans show there will be a buffer of more than 15 metres in most locations, except for around the edge of the proposed equestrian paddock, where the buffer will be the minimum buffer distance of 15 metres. We are satisfied this proposal is in line with Government Guidance, however, the plans currently describe the buffer planting as ornamental planting. We are concerned that this could compromise a species mix which could negatively impact the adjacent ancient woodland. As such we recommend the need for an Ecological Design Strategy (EDS) to be secured by a condition of any consent.

Nature Space (Newts): Not satisfied that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that there will be no impact on great crested newts and/or their habitats as a result of the development being approved.

In line with guidance from Natural England, there is a reasonable likelihood that great crested newts will be impacted by the development proposals and therefore, the applicant must either:

- Provide further information on the ponds with ecological connectivity to the site, in line with Natural England's Standing Advice, to rule out impacts to great crested newts, or
- Submit a NatureSpace Report or Certificate to demonstrate that the impacts of the proposed development can be addressed through the Council's District Licence.

Southern Water: Comment: -

If it is the intention of the developer for Southern Water to adopt the proposed SuDS, the system shall be designed and constructed in line with the Design and Construction Guide.

No soakaways should be connected to the public surface water sewer.

WSCC Public Rights of Ways: No Objection.

WSSC Highways: Comment: -

The site is served by an existing vehicle access points on Mayes Lane. From inspection of local mapping, visibility appears suitable for the anticipated road speeds in this location. In addition, the proposals are not anticipated to give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing access point.

Six car parking spaces have been demonstrated within the proposed pairing area, with a further two available within the proposed outbuilding garage. This would be considered a suitable quantum of car parking provision for a dwelling of this size and location. On-site turning also appears achievable, allowing vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear.

The site is situated in a rural location, approximately 1.2km north of Warnham Village. The village would be considered within walking/cycle distance, though the lack of footways and street lighting may encourage trips via the private car instead. Cycling is a viable option for more experienced cyclists, and the proposed outbuilding appears to exhibit suitable space within the garage to store bicycles.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Representations:

None received.

Parish Comments:

Warnham Parish Council: Objection: -

- Conflict with local and national planning policy – local plan seeks to protect intrinsic character of the countryside by controlling development. The proposal fails to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify departure from policy.
- Lack of demonstrable need – no evidenced local need for development. Proposal fails to demonstrate any exceptional circumstances that would justify a departure from policy.
- Harm to rural character and visual impact – significant and unacceptable harm to the rural character of the area. Urbanise a rural area, disrupt long-established landscape character and be visually intrusive within open countryside.
- Highways and access concerns – Mayes Lane unsuitable for the level and type of traffic generated by the development.
- Ecological impact – site is environmentally sensitive and supports biodiversity. Proposal risks irreversible harm to local ecology.
- Inaccuracies in the application – contains misleading information.
- Precedent and cumulative harm – set dangerous precedent for similar development.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

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

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

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policies 3 (Development Hierarchy) and 4 (Settlement Expansion) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) (HDPF) seek to ensure development takes place in a manner that ensures that the settlement pattern and the rural landscape character of the District is retained and enhanced, but still enables settlements to develop in order for them to continue to grow and thrive. The mechanism by which this will be achieved is through the designation of built-up area boundaries and the planned expansion of existing settlements through the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Planning.

The site is located outside of the built-up area boundary and is therefore considered to be located within a countryside location. Policy 26 of the HDPF would be relevant and requires development outside the Built-Up Area boundaries (BUAB) to be essential to its countryside location in order to protect the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside against inappropriate development. In addition, it must meet one of the following criteria:

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

Policy 1 of the Warnham Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to focus development within the built-up area boundary and resist proposals outside of the boundary unless they confirm with policies of the HDPF.

The proposal seeks to erect one dwelling on an existing (assumed agricultural) field, thus introducing a residential use into a rural location. The site is located outside of the built-up area and does not form part of Horsham's adopted development plan (comprising the HDPF or a 'Made' Neighbourhood Development Plan). As a result, residential development in this location would conflict with the requirements of Policies 1 and 2 of the HDPF as well as with Policy 4 (Settlement Expansion) and is therefore not considered to be acceptable in principle. In addition, the development would conflict with the countryside protection policy of the HDPF (Policy 26) owing to its siting outside the built-up area boundary and as the proposed residential development is not considered to be essential to this countryside location and Policy 1 of the WNDP.

As the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (1.7 years at the time of writing), Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF would thus be engaged in the overall planning balance and considerations of any future application. In recognition of this, the Council published the Shaping Development in Horsham District Document in September 2025. The document recognises that the Council is likely to receive applications outside the defined BUABs and on unallocated sites (such as this proposal) as it is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that *"to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."*

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF outlines that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - ii. would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

While the site is not considered to be within an isolated rural location for the purposes of paragraph 84 of the NPPF, due to the residential dwellings to the north, east and south, it is nonetheless a site that lies beyond any built-up area boundary. While it is acknowledged that the edge of Warnham is approximately 0.95km from the application site, which is a medium village, it is worth noting that in order to reach these facilities, occupants would have to walk along Mayes Lane and Tilletts Lane which lack formal footways and street lighting. There are no formal footways north on Mayes Lane and no formal footways until 1.14km south of the application site along Mayes Lane and Tilletts Lane. WSCC Highways, in their consultation response, also noted that while the village would be considered walking/cycle distance from the site, the lack of footways and street lighting may encourage trips via the private car instead. It is further noted that there are two bus stops on School Hill, providing transport to the centre of Horsham, however, these are approximately 1.13km from the site. Warnham train station is also, based on aerial measurements, approximately 1.81km from the site. Therefore, there would likely be reliance upon the private car in this location.

The nearest built settlement, based on aerial measurements, is Warnham, which is 0.95km away from the edge of the site. Warnham is defined as a 'medium village' which has limited services and facilities but good accessibility to larger settlements. While there are public rights of ways that provide routes to Warnham, these are not a desirable route. The Planning Inspector for an appeal at Clockhouse Cottage (ref: DC/25/0108) highlighted that *the alternative of using a footpath across fields is susceptible to changes in weather and daylight and not suited to regular use...I therefore consider it unrealistic to expect future residents to access local facilities [...] on foot*; this assessment can be applied equally to the application site, where there are public footways available but these do not provide a realistic option to meet the day-to-day needs of potential occupiers.

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding

Reference to self-build housing is mentioned within paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of the planning statement. The Council recognises that there is a need to facilitate self-build projects within the District. The Council can confirm that the applicants are listed on the Council's Self and Custom Build Register of Interest, joining the register on 31/10/2025 (7-weeks prior to the submission of this application).

PPG 011 Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Reference ID: 57-011-20210208) clarifies how the population of a self-build and custom housebuilding register in terms of plan making should be considered as part of a Council's local housing need:

'Assessment of local housing need as a whole should be conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups should be assessed including people wishing to self-build or custom-build their own homes.'

Local planning authorities should use the demand data from the registers in their area, supported as necessary by additional data from secondary sources (as outlined in the housing and economic development needs guidance), to understand and consider future need for this type of housing in their area. Secondary sources can include data from building plot search websites, enquiries for building plots recorded by local estate agents and surveys of local residents. Demand assessment tools can also be utilised.

Plan-makers will need to make reasonable assumptions using the data on their register to avoid double-counting households.'

The PPG on Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Reference ID: 57-025-20210508) clarifies that Council's can increase the number of planning permissions which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding:

'Relevant authorities should consider how local planning policies may address identified requirements for self and custom housebuilding to ensure enough serviced plots with suitable permission come forward (for example, as a number of units required as part of certain allocated sites, or on certain types of site).

More widely, relevant authorities can play a key role in brokering and facilitating relationships to help bring suitable land forward. This can include:

- supporting Neighbourhood Planning groups where they choose to include self-build and custom build housing policies in their plans;*
- effective joint working across service delivery areas and with local delivery partners including Housing Associations, Arms Length Management Organisations and housing developers;*
- using their own land (if available and suitable) for self-build and custom housebuilding and marketing it to those on the register;*
- working with Homes England to unlock land and sites in wider public ownership to deliver self-build and custom build housing;*
- when engaging with developers and landowners who own sites that are suitable for housing, and encouraging them to consider self-build and custom housebuilding, and facilitating access to those on the register where the landowner is interested.*
- working with local partners, such as Housing Associations and third sector groups, to custom build affordable housing for veterans and other groups in acute housing need.'*

The applicant has stated that the proposal should be viewed positively and weighed heavily in favour due to the tilted balance and self-build status. The Planning Statement states that due to the district wide need for self-build plots and the lack of adverse impacts significant enough to outweigh the benefits of an additional self-build dwelling (*in their view*), the principle of the development should be accepted. However, it is not considered that the benefit of a self-build dwelling in this location would outweigh the harm already identified with regard to the sustainability of the location. The tilted balance is considered further in the final planning balance section of this report.

Appeal Decisions

The appeal decisions referenced in the Planning Statement are acknowledged. Cowfold Lodge (DC/22/2250) was located outside the settlement boundary of Cowfold, a 'medium village'. Marlpost Meadows (DC/22/0495) was located outside the settlement boundary of Southwater, a 'small town/larger village', and Clockhouse Cottage (DC/25/0108), located outside Cowfold.

In the case of the Cowfold Lodge Cottage appeal, the site was located some 0.2km from the built-up area. The Inspector resolved (at paragraph 8) that the proposal was not a suitable location for a new dwelling, and that there was conflict with core policies. However, it was concluded that in the overall planning balance, the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the conflict with these policies. In the Marlpost Meadows appeal, the site was located closer to the built-up area of the nearest settlement (some 0.6km). The Inspector acknowledged that the proposal did represent conflict with the restrictive policies contained within the HPDF, though placed great weight on the nearby settlement expansion of Southwater to the east, owing to the strategic allocation and building out of 600 homes. In addition, the road and public footpath network weighed in favour of the Inspector's decision in the case of this appeal, noting that any increase in case use *'would be tempered by the short distance to the village centre'*. This appeal case is not considered directly comparable to the present application, in that the site is located further from the settlement and lacks safe and suitable public pedestrian routes to the settlement.

Similarly, the Clockhouse Cottage appeal is most comparable to the application site, as the application site was approximately 1km from the built-up settlement of Cowfold. The Planning Inspector for Clockhouse Cottage (DC/25/0108) noted *there was an agreed failure to provide a five-year supply of*

housing land and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development applied. Even so, the theme linking these decisions is that to provide occupiers in rural areas with a realistic alternative to the car, local roads need to provide safe and suitable pedestrian and cycle routes to nearby services and/or bus stops. In situations where such provision is not available, new dwellings in the countryside would give rise to inappropriate patterns of transport, resulting in heavy reliance on the car. The appeal decision and the application site are comparable, as they both lack formalised footways and have limited sustainable transport methods to reach built-up settlements, situated approximately 1km away. The reliance is therefore on the private car for occupants to reach built-up areas.

Furthermore, an appeal decision at Lancasters Cottage (DC/24/0669) – for one dwelling outside the built-up area boundary – was refused due to the location not being considered sustainable by the Inspector. The Inspector highlighted that *there is no footpath, nor is there a separate cycleway. Even if traffic levels are low, it is still unlikely that this would be an attractive walking or cycling option for future occupiers, particularly in the dark or in poor weather. It is unlikely that future occupiers would use the bus services that would also require travelling this route. While there is a public right of way opposite the site, it is still some distance until the next village. Although there is a footpath from Littleworth to Partridge Green, this would not overcome the issues that exist between the site and Littleworth.... Even taking account of its rural location, the appeal site is not in a location which would allow for ready use of means of travel other than the private car.*

It remains the case that even though the Council cannot provide a five-year housing supply and that the sustainability of the location is of significant weight in decision-making for dwellings outside of the built-up area boundary. The proposed dwelling subject of this application would be remote from day-to-day services where the provision of one market dwelling, not linked to a rural use, would be contrary to Policy 26 of the HDPF and would not be in accordance with the overarching spatial strategy for development as set out in Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF. It is therefore considered to be contrary to the spatial strategy and principles of the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Plan.

It is a fundamental principle of the planning system that all applications are determined on their own merits. The presence of appeal decisions from elsewhere in the District would not establish any binding precedent which would overcome identified deficiencies in the relationship between the proposed development and surrounding settlements and services.

Equestrian Use

Policy 29 of the HDPF states that developed for equestrian related development will be supported provided that it can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on site for related equestrian use is not appropriate, the proposal would be appropriate in scale and level of activity and in keeping with its location and surroundings, and should where possible be well related to a bridleway network.

As the application proposes to erect a stable building as well as create a grazing paddock, the equestrian use of the site should be considered alongside the residential use. The current use of the site is agricultural and therefore, the erection of a dwellinghouse and stables and paddock would change the use to mix of residential and equestrian uses. The equestrian use, however, in this instant will be considered separately to the residential use.

It is considered that an equestrian use in this location would be expected. The total gross internal floor area of the stable building would be 191m² and would appear as a large structure, although would be suitably situated within the site. There are a number of Public Bridleways in close proximity to the site, and due to the nature of the area, it is considered that these, and the road network, could be utilised for equestrian purposes, in accordance with Policy 29 of the HDPF.

Visual Amenity and Landscape Character:

Policy 25 of the HDPF requires development to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character of the district, whilst Policy 26 of the HDPF requires development to protect, conserve and enhance the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located including the development pattern of the area.

Policy 32 of the HDPF requires development, to amongst other matters, complement locally distinctive character and heritage of the district and contribute a sense of place in the way that integrate with their surroundings and the historic landscape in which they sit. Policy 33 of the HDPF requires development, amongst other matters, to recognise any constraints that exist to ensure that the scale, massing, and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout, are locally distinctive, favour the retention of important landscape and natural features and create safe environments.

Policy W5 of the Warnham Neighbourhood Plan sets out design criteria for residential development. In particular that the scale and character of proposals should respect the landscape and its features, there will be no unacceptable loss of amenity and high-quality design is in keeping with the scale and existing character of buildings and layout in the area. Proposals must, where appropriate, provide adequate off-road parking, high quality boundary treatment, respect and protect the buildings and environment of the conservation area and other heritage assets.

Paragraph 193(c) of the NPPF states '*development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless they are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.*'

The site comprises a single assarted grassland parcel, surrounded by established trees. Hoopers Copse Ancient Woodland is located adjacent to the site. The site sits adjoining a Public Right of Way which runs along the southern boundary of the residential curtilage. While this sits outside of the red line boundary, the design strategy states that new scrub and hedgerow planting is proposed. WSCC PRow noted that landowners are responsible for the maintenance of side vegetation, which are on or beside a Public Right of Way to ensure it does not obstruct or narrow the public path. No objections were raised provided this requirement was adhered to.

In relation to agriculture, Hoopers Copse Ancient Woodland is located adjacent to the site, and the land is bound by mature hedgerow, trees and woodland that are significant to the local landscape character. HDC Arboriculture raised that the change of use desired for the whole land parcel as residential curtilage would conflict with the requirements of the NPPF in respect of potential future pressures of increased residential proximity to the Ancient Woodland parcel abutting to the West. A buffer of 15m deep beyond the recognised curtilage would need to be retained as a naturalised buffer to the designed Ancient Woodland (AW), in accordance with the NPPF standing advice.

The Applicant provided a plan which indicated that the domestic curtilage would only extend around the house and gardens, with the remainder of the field either paddock or wildflower grassland with native scrub planting and hedging to boundaries preventing access within the 15m ancient woodland buffer. The field is to be enhanced for ecology and not domestic purposes. HDC Arboriculture raised no significant arboricultural concerns subject to curtilage delineations to respect the adjacent Ancient Woodland and comply with NPPF statutory advice.

The site is well-contained within an enclosed field, which benefits from a strong vegetation boundary, in an area characterised by sporadic residential development. Following pre-application advice (PE/25/0136), the design and architecture was amended to appear more rural in character. The proposal now adopts a traditional form, appropriate materials and proportions which would be reflective of a local vernacular. The stable building, although sizeable, incorporating a number of stables, grooming room and garages, would be subservient in form and function and would appear complementary.

The site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) I2 Warnham and Rusper Wooded Ridge within the Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (2003), with key characteristics of this LCA include:

- *Undulating wooded ridge*
- *Secretive wooded ghylls*
- *Strong pattern of shaws and hedgerows*
- *Intricate patchwork of small pasture fields*
- *North to south running narrow lanes*
- *Farms and cottages dispersed along lanes*
- *Mostly rural character*

The LCA has a high sensitivity to change, particularly noting small-scale incremental change. Guidelines state: *“Ensure any small-scale new development responds to traditional settlement pattern and local design and building materials.”*

The site is located within a gently undulating rural landscape characterised by pastoral fields and limited built development. Existing development along Mayes Lane consists of isolated dwellings, small clusters of housing, and occasional commercial and farm units, but the wider area retains a distinctly rural character. The Landscape Architect highlighted that no Landscape and Visual Appraisal accompanies the application, with professional assessment indicating that the proposed dwelling, stables, and associated features would introduce a noticeable shift from an undeveloped field to a managed residential plot. Although, the surrounding woodland and established field boundaries would help contain wider landscape character impacts.

From a visual perspective, the most significant effects would occur from the public right of way along the southern boundary and from certain viewpoints on Mayes Lane, particularly during winter when vegetation is thinner. Views from the PRow would experience substantial change due to the current absence of built form. Proposed scrub planting along the southern boundary would help mitigate these effects and is consistent with the wooded character of the local landscape, though additional tree planting would provide more effective screening. Some elements of the proposed landscaping, such as new hedgerows and scattered tree planting, are not characteristic of the local landscape pattern.

Overall, it is considered that the development would result in notable adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Therefore, the proposal is not supportive on landscape grounds, and the overall scale of the development would cause adverse landscape harm through eroding the existing landscape character, contrary to Policy 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF (2015).

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The proposed development would be located at a sufficient distance from existing dwellings in the surrounding area so that no adverse harm to existing properties would likely occur. There is sufficient screening along the boundary with Mayes Lane which is intended to be retained to ensure that there would be no adverse amenity harm as a result of the proposed dwelling.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF deals with sustainable transport and seeks new developments to provide safe and suitable access for all vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horses riders, public transport, and the delivery of goods. Policy 41 which relates to parking requires adequate parking and facilities to be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users.

Six car parking spaces have been demonstrated within the proposed parking area, with a further two available within the proposed outbuilding garage. The existing access point would be utilised, with no changes required to facilitate the proposed development. Gates would be provided further into the site,

to WSCC Highways confirmed that the level of parking provision provided would be a suitable quantum of parking provision required for a dwelling of this size and location, with on-site turning achievable. The proposal would not be considered to give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing access point. It was highlighted by the Local Highways Authority (LHA) that the site is situated in a rural location and due to the lack of formal footways and street lighting, may rely upon trips through the private car. Cycling may be a viable option but for those more experienced, and the outbuilding provides suitable space for the storage of bicycles. The LHA concluded that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network. It is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with the above policies.

Ecology:

Policy 31 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate.

The site lies approximately 14.6km northeast of The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore outside the 12km Wider Conservation Area for this SAC, for which significant impacts or severance to flightlines must be considered (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The site lies 18.34km east of Ebernoe Common SAC and is therefore outside the 12km Wider Conservation Area for this SAC (Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol). The site lies approximately 19.5km northeast of Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site.

The application details that the scheme proposes to deliver meaningful ecological enhancements through creation of species-rich grassland, native scrub, woodland edge buffers, wetland features, and long-term management of ecological corridors. The application states that there will be no adverse impact on protected species or ancient woodland. The proposal can also deliver measurable biodiversity net gains on site through creating mosaics of habitats, increasing species and structural diversity, and improving ecological connectivity. Woodland edge and scrub enhancement, wetland creation, and grassland diversification will all contribute to the long-term ecological value on site. It is considered that these enhancement measures are acceptable and should be implemented in full should the application be approved.

The application site is adjacent to an area of ancient, replanted woodland, which is classed as an irreplaceable habitat type. Ecology was consulted on the application and were satisfied with the current buffer distance to the Ancient Woodland. However, concerns were raised as the plan describes buffer planting as ornamental planting, but this could compromise a species mix which could negatively impact the adjacent ancient woodland. Ecology recommended that an Ecological Design Strategy (EDS) is secured by condition, detailing how the habitat will be mitigated and protected during construction and post-development. No other concerns were raised with the proposal, and the mitigation measures and ecological enhancements should be implemented in full.

The development falls within the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. There are 7 ponds within 500m of the development proposal, one of which falls in close proximity, approximately 60m from the site boundary. There is direct connectivity between the development and surrounding features in the landscape. NatureSpace were not satisfied that the applicant had adequately demonstrated that there would be no impact to great crested newts and/or as a result of the development being approved. Further information is required, as potential impacts to protected species are a material consideration and sufficient information must be submitted prior to determination. In the absence of sufficient information to determine whether there would not be an adverse impact on protected species, most notably great crested newts, it is considered that the proposal would be contrary to Policy 31 of the HDPF and Paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF.

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the

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

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

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

Officers have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment which demonstrates that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, Officers consider that the proposed development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Drainage and Flood Risk:

The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1, with no recorded history of flooding. The Planning Statement states that the risk of fluvial, surface water, groundwater, sewers and reservoirs is assessed as very low or negligible. Appropriate mitigation is proposed which includes raising the dwelling's finished floor level by at least 150mm above surrounding ground level and ensuring external landscaping directs surface water away from buildings. The submitted Surface Water Drainage Strategy states that surface water runoff from the proposed new impermeable area will be managed through a SUDs treatment train which would provide sufficient attenuation. It is therefore considered that the proposed development could be delivered safely with regard to flood risk and drainage.

HDC Drainage had no objections to the proposed surface water drainage but the outfall location for the drainage strategy has not yet been confirmed, and this may be a major constraint for the development. Further information was requested to determine that the site drainage meets the requirements of the NPPF and PPG, National standards for sustainable drainage systems (June 2025), and the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). If the application was being approved, a suitably worded condition could be attached to secure this information.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of

development on climate change. The proposed development includes the following measures to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions:

- Requirement to provide full fibre broadband site connectivity
- Dedicated refuse and recycling storage capacity
- Opportunities for biodiversity gain
- Cycle parking facilities
- Electric vehicle charging points

The above measures could be secured through condition in the event of an approval.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

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

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'self-build or custom housing' under Regulation 8 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusion and Planning Balance:

As the site is not allocated for development within the HDPF or a made neighbourhood plan, owing to the site's location outside the built-up area boundary, the principle of development is contrary to Policies 1, 2, 4, and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Housing Land Supply

Chapter 3 of the Council's most recent Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) revealed that the Council currently benefits from a deliverable supply of housing sites of 1 year. On the basis of the Council's lack of 5-year housing land supply, the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged in this instance.

NPPF paragraph 11(d)(ii) states that where there are no relevant development plan policies in place, the policies that are considered most important for the determination of applications (in this case, Policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the HDPF, owing to the lack of a five-year housing land supply) permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Development Plan Policies

In circumstances where Paragraph 11(d) is engaged, NPPF Paragraph 225 (Annex 1) sets out that due weight can be given to the most important policies for determining an application according to their degree of consistency with policies in the Framework. However, the Framework does not prescribe the

weight to be given to conflict with development plan policies. This is affected by the purpose of the policy and the circumstances of the case.

In this case the most important policies include those relating to the spatial development strategy as set out at HDPF Policies 1, 2, 3 and 4. Policy 1 reflects the Framework presumption in favour of sustainable development and is thus fully consistent with the NPPF. Policies 2, 3 and 4 set out how sustainable growth will be achieved, though as they seek to focus development within settlements and only allow expansion on allocated sites, they have a restrictive element. Nonetheless, they generally reflect the Framework preference for development to be well located in relation to services and facilities. Therefore, moderate weight is applied to these policies.

HDPF Policy 26 refers specifically to countryside protection outside built up area boundaries, requiring development to be essential to this location. Whilst again this reflects the Frameworks preference for development to be well located in relation to services and facilities, as the definition of built-up areas is based on out-of-date housing numbers, this policy is afforded moderate weight.

As per the preceding sections of this report, the granting of this permission would conflict with Policies 1, 2, 4 and 26 of the HDPF. Whilst the proposed would not support the spatial strategy for the District, these policies are not fully framework compliant. Furthermore, the issues associated with the Council's current five-year housing land supply situation result in moderate weight being applied to these policies in the overall planning balance.

Planning Balance

The proposal would provide for one market dwelling. As above the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing supply, the provision of an additional dwelling towards this supply is afforded *limited* weight. However, the Council considers that this benefit would be *limited* given the modest overall contribution to the supply.

The proposal's ability to demonstrate no adverse amenity impacts, safe access and suitable parking are not considered to be benefits to the scheme but would rather be necessary to demonstrate compliance with local planning policies. No other discernible benefits have been identified that would weigh in favour of granting permission.

The Council published the Shaping Development in Horsham District Document in September 2025. The document recognises that the Council is likely to receive applications outside the defined BUABs and on unallocated sites (such as this proposal) as it is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Given this position and the principles behind HDPF Policy 4, it will consider positively applications that meet all of the criteria:

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

While the current housing shortfall is a material consideration of significant weight, and the contribution of one market dwelling would bestow socio-economic benefits in the form of housing delivery, the site is not adjacent to nor adjoining an existing settlement edge therefore, the proposal would not benefit from the provisions of the Shaping Development in Horsham District document as above.

The cumulative benefits (the provision of one market dwelling (limited weight) and the socio-economic (moderate weight) would be outweighed from the identified adverse impacts of the development. Namely the conflict with the development plan (moderate weight), the site's unsustainable location

(significant weight), adverse landscape harm (significant weight) and insufficient ecology information on great crested newts (significant weight). It is considered the identified harm would demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, the proposal is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason for Refusal:

1. The development is within a countryside location outside of the built-up area boundary of any settlement on a site which has not been allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework. Consequently, this scheme would be contrary to the overarching strategy and hierarchical approach on concentrating development within the main settlements. It has not been demonstrated that there are any material considerations of significant weight to justify a departure from this overarching spatial strategy. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies 2, 3, 4, and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the Warnham Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The development, by reason of its overall scale, the subdivision of the site and proposed landscaping, would be detrimental to the rural landscape character of the site and surrounding area. The development is therefore contrary to Policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
3. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on protected species and its habitat, most notably great crested newts, contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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

Plans list for: DC/25/2100

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents not approved:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		157-01	16.12.2025
Block plan	Proposed	157-02	16.12.2025
Supporting Statement	Tree Survey	26/01/06/NH	19.02.2026
Site plan	Existing	000	16.12.2025
Floor plan	Proposed	157-03	16.12.2025
Roof plan	Proposed	157-04	16.12.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed	157-05	16.12.2025
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed Outbuildings	157-06	16.12.2025

