



The Copse Phase 2 – Full Planning Application

Planning Statement – including Affordable Housing Statement

Star Build Ltd.

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Basis of Report

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the construction of up to 23 residential dwellings (including 9 affordable homes), including access, parking, landscaping and other associated infrastructure works (the ‘proposed development’) at The Copse, Worthing Road, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9AL (the ‘site’). Access is from Worthing Road, as approved through planning application ref. DC/24/0622 for a 70-bed care home, as Phase 1 of the overall proposal.
- 1.2 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting technical documents as listed in Appendix A.



2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located within the large village of Southwater, approximately 2km southwest of Horsham, 2.5km southeast of Broadbridge Heath, and 6.5km northeast of Billingshurst, as shown in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1: Site Location Plan

- 2.2 The central grid reference of the site is TQ 15892 28134, located west of Worthing Road, Southwater.
- 2.3 The main A24 route into Horsham lies approximately 500m from the site. Worthing Road provides a direct link to Lintot Square, the Southwater Village Centre, located about 1.3km to the south, while the A24 connects to Horsham Town Centre approximately 3.4km to the northeast.
- 2.4 The site falls wholly within the boundary of Horsham District Council (HDC) and within West Sussex County Council.
- 2.5 The site is partially within, and immediately adjacent to, the built-up area boundary of Southwater, as defined by the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan proposals map, and as shown in Figure 2.2.2 below.



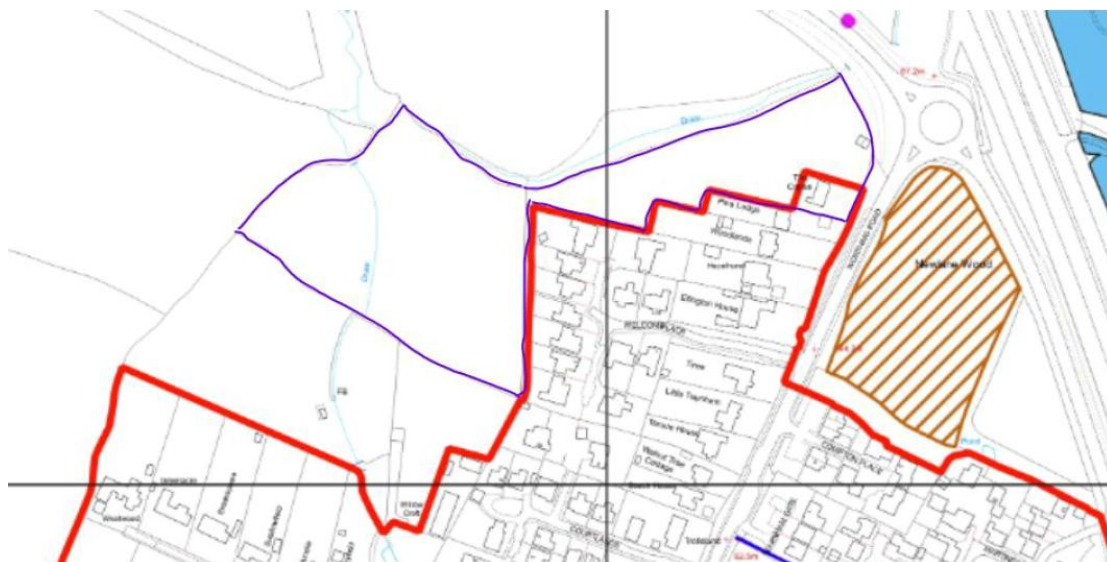


Figure 2.2: Extract from BUAB plan

- 2.6 Details of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and Horsham local policies are provided in further detail in this statement.
- 2.7 The application site consists of predominantly managed grassland extending to approximately 1.81 hectares. The land slopes down from east to west, resulting in the formation of several natural streams that converge toward the north-west corner of the site. These watercourses, along with the mature trees and areas of woodland, provide valuable habitats for wildlife and contribute to the site's ecological character.
- 2.8 A central ditch runs through the rear portion of the site and will be retained as part of the development. Built form will be located to the east of this ditch, with a minimum 3-metre easement maintained along its length to ensure access for drainage maintenance and ecological protection.
- 2.9 At the eastern access point, the site is visually screened from adjacent arable fields by the consented Care Home development and a mature line of oak, ash, and hazel trees. Along Worthing Road, established trees and hedgerows on the highway verge provide additional visual containment, helping to integrate the development into its surroundings.
- 2.10 The site is bordered to the north and west by open countryside comprising grassland and arable fields, interspersed with hedgerows, woodland, and plantations. Visual impacts are limited to short-distance views from Worthing Road and Welcome Place, while distant views from Public Rights of Way are screened by natural vegetation.
- 2.11 Directly adjacent to the north-east is the site of a previously consented care home scheme, including associated parking and a drainage pond located to the north. The wider landscape includes smaller settlement clusters such as Christ's Hospital, Barns Green, Brooks Green, and Broadbridge Heath, contributing to the semi-rural character of the area.
- 2.12 The site is in a sustainable and accessible location, within close reach of services and facilities and other larger nearby settlements. Southwater itself is served by a number of local services and facilities, including shops, pubs, restaurants, local cafés, schools,



healthcare services and churches. Southwater is also located close to Horsham Town, which is the major centre within the district.

- 2.13 There are a number of bus stops throughout the area, including bus service routes 23 and 98, with the closest bus stop located on Worthing Road (Warnham Gate Stop), approximately 380m from the eastern boundary of the site. This enables residents and visitors to use sustainable modes of transportation to access the proposed residential development owing to its close proximity to Worthing Road and the bus routes that run along it.
- 2.14 The site does not include any ecological designations within it and there are no listed buildings or historic designations within close proximity likely to be affected by the proposals. However, to the east of the application site, and on the opposite side of Worthing Road is Newlane Wood, which is designated as Ancient Woodland in the West Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey.
- 2.15 According to the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning, the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. A detailed Flood Risk Assessment has confirmed that surface water can be safely managed through a sustainable drainage strategy designed for the 1 in 100 year rainfall event including climate change, which has been reviewed with the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 2.16 The drainage strategy has also been reviewed and accepted by the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 2.17 Figure 2.3 shows an extract from the flood map for planning service.

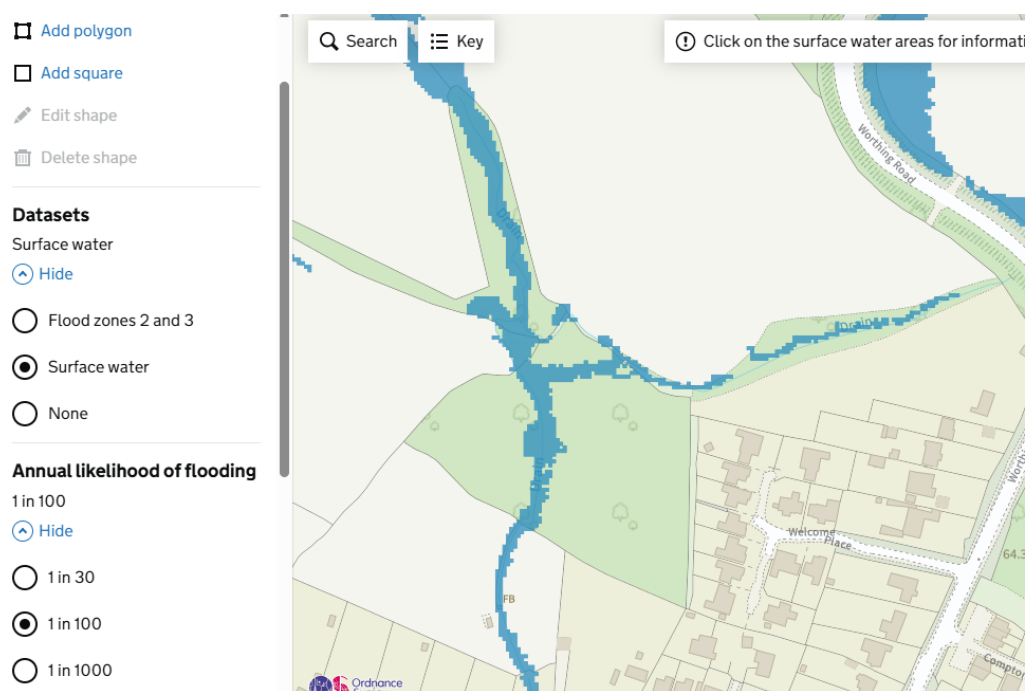


Figure 2.3: Surface Water Flooding (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk>)



3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The proposed development forms Phase 2 of a wider residential scheme and comprises up to 23 dwellings, alongside associated parking, landscaping, and ancillary works. Phase 1 involved the care home at the entrance to the site. Vehicular access will be provided via Worthing Road, utilising the approved access road from Phase 1 (planning reference DC/24/0622).
- 3.2 The description of development is:
- ‘Construction of up to 23 residential dwellings, (including 9 affordable homes), including access, parking, landscaping and other associated infrastructure works.’*
- 3.3 The scheme delivers a policy-compliant provision of affordable housing, in accordance with Horsham District Council’s Shaping Development (SD) guidance. A total of 9 affordable units are proposed, equating to approximately 39% of the overall scheme, with the remaining dwellings offered on the open market.
- 3.4 The proposed housing mix includes approximately 9 one- and two-bedroom homes, responding to the identified local need for smaller units suitable for first-time buyers, younger families, and those seeking to downsize.
- 3.5 Parking provision has been designed in line with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) standards, ensuring sufficient and compliant arrangements across the site. Each dwelling benefits from a minimum of two dedicated parking spaces, with visitor parking integrated throughout. Larger detached four-bedroom homes are allocated detached garages, providing additional parking and storage.
- 3.6 Parking is sensitively arranged to the front or side of dwellings, with the design referencing courtyard typologies where possible, and avoiding the visual dominance of modular parking courts. The development also incorporates electric vehicle charging points within covered carports, supported by a renewable photovoltaic (PV) system, promoting sustainable energy use. Secure bicycle storage is provided within rear garden sheds to encourage active travel.
- 3.7 The eastern boundary, adjoining the rear gardens of properties along Welcome Place, is defined by a timber post fence and hedgerow, with additional tree clusters in the south-eastern corner. An existing ditch runs along this boundary and will be retained. The Welcome Place boundary is also managed due to the close location of the properties; this includes trimming trees and vegetation and keeping the ditch clear. The separation distance between existing and proposed dwellings has been considered to ensure the protection of residential amenity.
- 3.8 Additional landscaping and vegetation will be incorporated throughout the site to create a soft, green, and rural character that complements the surrounding area. New tree planting will include 69 new trees, in alignment with HDPF Policy 31 and in excess of the 1 tree per 40m² required by policy SNP18.
- 3.9 A potential footpath connection is also proposed to the north west of the site to enhance pedestrian links with the wider Berkeley Homes strategic allocation.



- 3.10 Given the presence of mapped surface water flow routes within part of the site, sustainable drainage (SuDS) measures are proposed, including a retention basin and a 3 m-wide easement to the existing ditch corridor. No buildings, escape routes, or ground level modifications are proposed within this area, thereby maintaining existing overland flow pathways.
- 3.11 The proposed development will introduce additional impermeable surfaces; however, runoff will be managed through the proposed SuDS strategy to restrict discharge to greenfield rates and provide attenuation for the 1 in 100 year rainfall event including climate change, ensuring no increase in off-site flood risk.
- 3.12 Landscape buffers will be provided, along with access for SuDS maintenance. The wet woodland to the north western corner will be protected forming a wider open space within the site. The existing streams lead to this wet woodland and therefore suggests this to be a suitable location for attenuation ponds on site.
- 3.13 A copy of the proposed site layout plan is shown below in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1: Proposed site layout plan



4.0 Planning Policy and History

Planning History

- 4.1 A planning search history search has been undertaken for the site via HDC's online search system. There have been four planning applications at the site in the past; mostly related to the land parcel known as Phase 1.
- 4.2 Table 1 provides a summary of planning applications for this site and similar relevant developments within the surrounding area in the past ten years.

No.	Planning Ref:	Proposal and Location	Decision	Decision Date
1	DC/24/0622	Erection of a 70-bed care home, access, landscaping and associated infrastructure.	Permitted	26/03/2025
2	DC/23/1350	Hybrid planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling and phased development comprising 33 dwellings, access, landscaping and other associated infrastructure (Full Planning); and erection of a 76 bed care home (Outline Planning) with all matters reserved except for access to the site.	Withdrawn	02/02/2024
3	DC/22/1916	Berkeley Homes - Outline application with all matters reserved for a mixed use strategic development to include demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 1,500 dwellings, up to 15,750 sqm (GIA) of flexible employment space (Use Classes E/B2/B8), up to 2,900 sqm (GIA) flexible community facilities (Use Classes E/F1/F2); education facilities; sports facilities; 5 gypsy and traveller pitches; public open space; landscaping and related infrastructure.	Withdrawn	22/02/2023
4	PE/22/0236	Pre-application enquiry for the erection of 44 dwellings, access, garages, car parking and 60-bed care home	Advice provided	30/06/2022
5	DC/19/2219	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 15 dwellings, garages, creation of parking and associated landscaping.	Refused	31/01/2020



6	DC/17/2195	Demolition of The Copse. Erection of 15 dwellings, access garages and car parking	Refused	19/02/2018 Appeal dismissed - 09/07/2019 High Court Challenge refused - November 2019
7	DC/15/0290	Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of 13 dwellings, with associated garaging, car parking and landscaping, served by altered access from Worthing Road.	Refused	12/10/2015
8	DC/14/1606	Planning permission was granted for the erection of 6 x 2-storey dwellings at the rear of the properties known as Ellington House and Hazelhurst, immediately to the south or, and sharing a boundary with, part of the application site.	Permitted	Nov-14

Table 1: list of applications relating to site or nearby

- 4.3 Whilst the outline application (Ref: DC/22/1916 – Berkeley Homes) was withdrawn in Feb 2023 the red line boundary for the proposal would have surrounded the Phase 2 site, as shown below in Figure 4 below (The Care Home and Phase 2 site shown with green boundary).

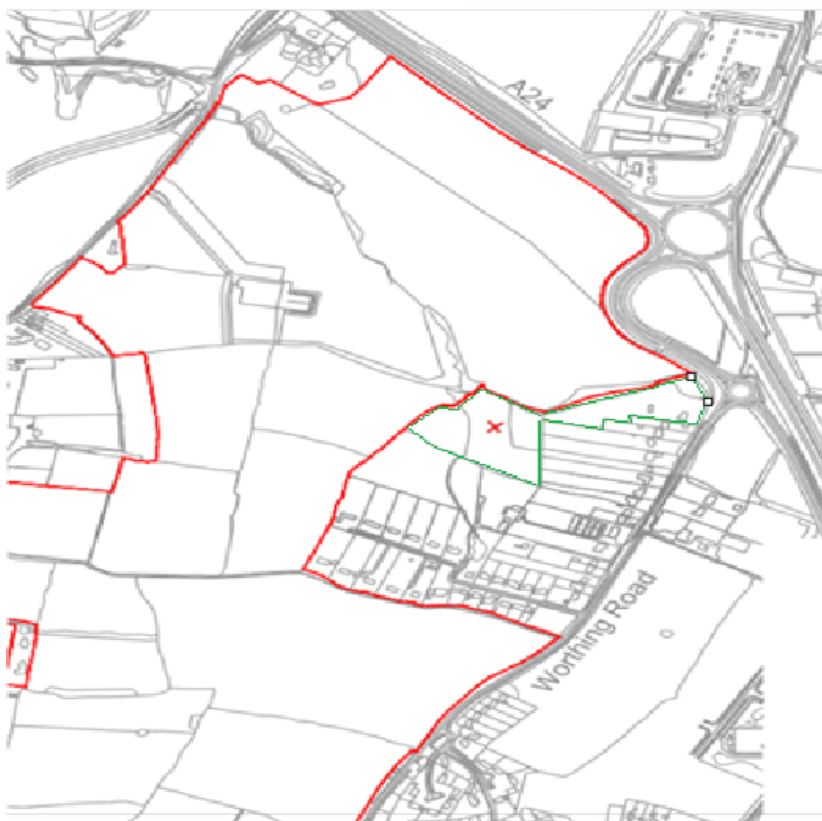


Figure 4.1: Red line boundary of application DC/22/1916



- 4.4 It is understood that the site was identified for potential development under the emerging Strategic Policy HA3 within the withdrawn Regulation 19 draft of the Horsham Local Plan. Although the plan was not formally adopted, discussions between the applicant and Horsham District Council (HDC) indicated a continued intention to allocate the site in future iterations of the Local Plan. It was understood that the relevant policies were unlikely to undergo significant change prior to public consultation.
- 4.5 Given this context, there remains a realistic prospect of the site coming forward for development. This would result in the creation of a developed boundary around the proposed Phase 2 site, reinforcing its development potential.

Planning Policy and Material Considerations

National Planning Policy

- 4.6 The key national policy and guidance documents to be considered are listed below:
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024) – Amended February 2025 an updated version is currently out for consultation until 6th March 2026;
 - Planning Practice Guidance ;
 - National Design Guide (as amended Jan 2021) ;
 - Planning Reform Working Paper: Reforming Site Thresholds (May 2025)
- 4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), was published in December 2024 and amended in February 2025, this last update corrected cross-references in footnotes 7 and 8 and clarified the wording at the end of paragraph 155. Importantly, the government stated that this amendment did not constitute a change in policy but was intended to make the paragraph’s intent clearer.
- 4.8 The December 2024 version of the NPPF continued to place a strong emphasis on delivering a sufficient supply of homes through sustainable and well-designed development. Under Chapter 5 ‘Delivering a sufficient supply of homes’, paragraph 60 of the NPPF states: “To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.” This policy underpins the presumption in favour of sustainable development and reinforces the importance of housing delivery as a national priority.
- 4.9 More broadly, national guidance documents such as the Planning Practice Guidance, National Design Guide (as amended Jan 2021) promote high-quality, inclusive residential environments that support long-term community wellbeing. The Planning Reform Working Paper: Reforming Site Thresholds (May 2025) advocate for planning to accelerate housing delivery, diversify the market, and remove barriers for small and medium-sized developers. Together, these documents form a coherent national policy framework that prioritises residential development as a key driver of economic growth, social equity, and sustainable placemaking.
- 4.10 An updated version of the NPPF is currently out for consultation until 10th March 2026 so the changes do not hold significant weight as yet, but the following changes, relevant to this application, have been noted:



- **Policy S3** takes forward the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It retains the existing principle that proposals which accord with the various development plans should be approved without delay.
- **Policy S5** proposes a new “tilted balance” to assessing development proposals outside settlements. It says only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements. These include developments that would address “an evidenced unmet need” (including where the council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply) and where development would be well related to an existing.

These developments, it says, should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

- **Policy HO2** proposes that where SDSs are not in place, the housing requirement figure should be higher than the identified local housing needs assessment “where appropriate”. This would include situations where more homes are required to meet the needs of neighbouring authorities, or where authorities have “significant growth ambitions”.
- The consultation proposes introducing a medium-size site category into the planning system, covering developments of 10-49 homes, with an area of up to 2.5 hectares in size. This definition is to be linked into various policy easements – for example, that medium-sized sites be allowed to pay cash-in-lieu contributions for affordable housing.
- Under **Policy HO6**, the consultation proposes local plans should allocate at least ten per cent of the housing requirement to sites of between one and 2.5 hectares. The policy also retains the existing requirement for plans to allocate a further 10 per cent to sites of one hectare or smaller.
- The ministry of housing, communities and local government is consulting on whether to allow developers of medium-sized sites from the requirement to deliver on-site affordable housing. The consultation has requested views on whether it should insert text into policy HO8 on providing affordable homes, such that “a cash payment in lieu should be accepted” where developments meet the medium-site definition.
- A proposed decision-making **Policy L2** on making effective use of land calls for “substantial weight” to be given to various types of proposals that reuse existing sites. It specifically encourages schemes that remediate land; make better use of underutilised land; provide temporary uses; make use of airspace above existing development; or provide “sensitive redevelopment or additional development within existing plots”, including mansard roof extensions.
- Residential or mixed-use developments within settlements should increase the density in the area in which they are proposed, according to new decision-making policy L3. It says that while an area’s character should be taken into account in decisions, this “should not preclude development which makes the most of an area’s potential”.
- Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes for birds, known as “swift bricks”, into their construction “unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use”. Decision-making policy N2 proposes that developments should also include features to support other threatened species including bats and hedgehogs.



Local Planning Policy

- 4.11 Horsham District Council's current adopted Local Plan is the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), which was adopted in November 2015. It sets out the planning strategy for the district, including policies on housing, employment, infrastructure, and the environment. The HDPF continues to be used to guide planning decisions and assess development proposals.
- 4.12 A new Local Plan covering the period 2023–2040 was submitted for examination in July 2024. In April 2025, the Planning Inspector issued interim findings advising that the plan should be withdrawn, citing a failure to meet the legal Duty to Cooperate, particularly in relation to housing need and water neutrality. However, a new Inspector has now been appointed and it appears new hearings sessions will take place. At this stage, it is not known if the plan will progress or not.
- 4.13 Natural England withdrew its Water Neutrality Position Statement on 31 October 2025, following agreement that Southern Water's efficiency savings now allow development to proceed without water neutrality statements, although the licence change underpinning this is not due until March 2026. New homes must still comply with 110 litres per person per day water efficiency under Policy 37
- 4.14 The following policies from the HDPF are considered to be relevant to the proposed development:
- Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
 - Strategic Policy 2: Strategic Development
 - Strategic Policy 3: Development Hierarchy
 - Strategic Policy 4: Settlement Expansion
 - Strategic Policy 7: Economic Growth
 - Strategic Policy 15: Housing Provision
 - Strategic Policy 16: Meeting Local Housing Needs
 - Strategic Policy 24: Environmental Protection
 - Strategic Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
 - Strategic Policy 26: Countryside Protection
 - Strategic Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
 - Strategic Policy 37: Sustainable Construction
 - Strategic Policy 38: Flooding
 - Strategic Policy 40: Sustainable Transport
 - Strategic Policy 41: Parking
- 4.15 The following plans and guidance documents are also considered to be relevant for the proposed development:
- Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019 – 2031 (2021)
 - The Local Plan 2019-2036 (Regulation 19) (Draft Plan) July 2021 (albeit attracting minimal weight)



- Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) Document October 2022 - superseded by the Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note¹
 - Shaping Development in Horsham District - Planning Advice Note
 - The West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan 2018
 - The West Sussex Waste Local Plan 2014
- 4.16 The West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and Waste Local Plan (2014) form part of the statutory development plan, supporting sustainable growth. The Minerals Plan (Policy M12) promotes development that meets the County's social and economic needs, while the Waste Plan supports sustainable communities. Both plans align with wider spatial and infrastructure strategies, encouraging residential proposals that respect safeguarding zones and demonstrate sustainable design.
- 4.17 Although the Local Plan 2019–2036 (Regulation 19 Draft, January 2024) has not been adopted, it identifies a requirement to deliver sufficient housing to meet identified needs and confirms that development should also contribute towards addressing unmet needs arising in neighbouring authorities (paragraph 3.24).
- 4.18 Horsham's annual housing requirement, calculated using the Government's Standard Method, is 1,338 dwellings per year. This equates to 6,690 for the five-year period (1 April 2025 – 31st March 2030).
- 4.19 As of December 2025, Horsham District Council is only able to demonstrate a 1.7-year housing land supply, based on the Council's most recently published position², significantly below the five-year requirement. In accordance with national policy, this deficit engages the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.
- 4.20 Only 62% of the required housing was delivered between 2020 and 2023, resulting in the need for a 20% buffer to be applied to the Council's five-year housing land supply. This increases the total five year supply requirement to 8,028. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to relevant housing proposals, consistent with paragraph 79(c) of the NPPF.
- 4.21 The Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD) Document October 2022 was intended to guide planning applications for housing development, especially in light of the Council's challenges in maintaining a five-year housing land supply. This document is now superseded by the Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note.
- 4.22 The advice note's key points are as follows:
- Purpose: To support sustainable housing development in areas not currently allocated in the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans.
 - Context: The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, which triggers the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

¹ [Shaping-Development-in-Horsham-District-Planning-Advice-Note.pdf](#)

² [Horsham District Council Authority Monitoring Report](#)



- **Content:** It includes guidance on locational suitability and scale, deliverability, meeting housing needs, biodiversity, climate change, transport, design, heritage, employment/retail, infrastructure.
- **Status:** While not a statutory document, it carries weight in planning decisions due to the current housing supply shortfall.

Relevant Policies

- 4.23 **Strategic Policy 1** is a key strategic policy which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is contained in Paragraph 14 of The Framework. As such, development proposals that accord with the policies in the new Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.24 **Strategic Policy 2** provides the Council's spatial strategy for development in the District and seeks to focus development in and around the key settlement of Horsham, allowing for growth in the rest of the District in accordance with the identified settlement hierarchy. The policy also seeks to support the provision of rural housing, which contributes towards the provision of affordable housing where there is a demonstrable need.
- 4.25 **Strategic Policies 3 and 4** provide the principles which guide development hierarchy and settlement expansion in the District. The supporting text for these policies recognises that in order for some communities to continue to be able to grow and develop it will be necessary for them to be able to expand beyond their current built form. This would be done principally through allocating sites in the Local Plan or in Neighbourhood Plans, where it is possible to meet the identified local needs of individual settlements and provide an appropriate level of market and affordable housing.
- 4.26 **Strategic Policy 3** provides the Council's settlement hierarchy, and places Southwater within the 'Small towns and Larger Village' category. The village is regarded as possessing "a good range of services and facilities, strong community networks and local employment provision, together with reasonable rail and/or bus services. The settlements act as hubs for smaller villages to meet their daily needs but also have some reliance on larger settlements".
- 4.27 **Strategic Policy 4** is a key policy consideration for the Council, it sets out the circumstances where expansion of existing settlements will be permitted and where development outside Built-Up Area Boundaries (BUABs) in Horsham District, will be supported if:
- The site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge. Part of the Phase 1 site is within the BUAB of Southwater whilst the Phase 2 site sits adjacent to the existing settlement edge as shown in Figure 2.2.
 - The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type. The proposed development is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type.



- The development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs and/or employment needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services. The proposed development meets identified local housing needs. As of December 2025 Horsham District Council has a published 1.7 year Five-Year Housing Land Supply, based on the Council's most recently published position, far below the required five years.
 - The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long term development, in order not to conflict with the development strategy. The development does not prejudice comprehensive long-term development, nor does it conflict with Horsham's overall development strategy.
 - The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced. The development is contained within a clearly defined boundary and landscape and townscape character features will be maintained and enhanced.
- 4.28 **Strategic Policy 16** sets out that development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the District's communities. Development proposals for over 15 houses should provide 35% affordable housing contribution.
- 4.29 **Strategic Policy 32** requires a high quality and inclusive design for all developments within the District. Development should inter alia be attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable. Development should also contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and surrounding spaces.
- 4.30 **Strategic Policy 33** sets out criteria to be achieved by all new development within the District. This includes inter alia making efficient use of land and prioritising previously developed land to ensure that no harm will result to the amenities of occupiers/users of nearby properties and by ensuring that the scale, massing and appearance of development is a high standard of design. A high standard of building materials, finishes and landscaping should also be included.
- 4.31 Electric vehicle charging points will be installed, in line with **Policy 41 (Parking)**.

Neighbourhood Planning Policy

- 4.32 The Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan (SNDP)³ was formally adopted by Horsham District Council on 23 June 2021 and is current up to 22 June 2026; it forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. This means it carries full weight in the determination of planning applications within Southwater Parish.
- 4.33 The SNDP sets out policies on housing, infrastructure, environment, design, and community facilities. The plan aims to protect local character, support sustainable development, and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure. It includes a Policies Map and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to guide future growth and investment. The

³ [Southwater Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031 Referendum version](#)



- existing SNDP provides strong local support for housing growth, stating its aim to allow appropriate development over the plan period and deliver a better place to live and work.
- 4.34 This proposal for up to 23 residential dwellings has been carefully designed to align with the policies and objectives of the SNDP and forming part of the statutory development plan for the area.
- 4.35 **SNP1 – Core Principles** states that developments must reflect Southwater’s semi-rural character, respect local heritage, and integrate with the surrounding landscape. Proposals should demonstrate high-quality design and sustainability. The development reflects Southwater’s semi-rural character through sensitive design, retention of natural features, and integration with the surrounding landscape. It promotes sustainable development and contributes positively to the local community.
- 4.36 **Policy SNP2 – Allocation for Residential Development**, supports proposals for residential development to meet local needs and emphasises the need to adhere to overarching policy direction on the provision of new housing. While the site is not specifically allocated in the SNDP, it is adjacent to existing development and benefits from an approved access via Phase 1. The proposal demonstrates a sustainable and logical extension to the settlement, supported by infrastructure and ecological enhancements.
- 4.37 **Policy SNP3 – Housing Mix** encourages a balanced mix of housing types and tenures, including smaller homes for first-time buyers, families, and older residents. Affordable housing should be integrated and indistinguishable from market housing. The scheme includes a balanced mix of dwelling sizes, with approximately 9 one- and two-bedroom homes, addressing local needs for smaller units. 39% of the dwellings will be affordable housing, integrated seamlessly with market housing.
- 4.38 **Policy SNP4 – Home Standards** sets out that new homes should meet national space standards and provide adequate internal and external amenity space. All of the proposed dwellings will meet national space standards and provide appropriate internal and external amenity space, including private gardens and communal landscaping.
- 4.39 **Policy SNP5 – Specialist Accommodation**, supports provision of housing for older people and those with specific needs, including care homes and accessible dwellings.
- 4.40 **Policy SNP7 – A Treed Landscape** requires the retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows. Landscaping schemes should use native species and contribute to biodiversity net gain. The layout retains and enhances existing trees, hedgerows, and watercourses. Indigenous planting and ecological corridors support biodiversity net gain and create a soft transition to the surrounding countryside.
- 4.41 **Policy SNP8 – Design** emphasises context-sensitive design that reflects local vernacular, materials, and layout patterns. Developments should be legible, safe, and attractive. The design approach draws on local vernacular and courtyard typologies, ensuring a legible, attractive, and context-sensitive neighbourhood. Materials and detailing will reflect the character of Southwater and the High Weald.
- 4.42 **Policy SNP9 – Site Levels** states that developments on sloping sites must demonstrate how topography has informed the layout and design, avoiding excessive cut-and-fill or



visual intrusion. The sloping topography has informed the layout, with minimal cut-and-fill and careful orientation of dwellings to respect views and drainage patterns.

- 4.43 **Policy SNP10 – Adequate Provision of Car Parking** requires that parking must meet WSCC standards and be well-integrated into the site layout. Large, dominant parking courts are discouraged. Parking will be provided in accordance with WSCC standards, with a minimum of two spaces per dwelling, visitor parking, and garages for larger homes. Parking is well-integrated and avoids dominant modular courts.
- 4.44 **Policy SNP11 – Enhancing Non-Motorised Transport**, supports walking and cycling infrastructure, including safe routes and secure cycle storage. Secure cycle storage is provided in rear garden sheds, promoting active travel.
- 4.45 **SNP12 – Infrastructure Contributions**, encourages use of CIL funds to support local infrastructure, including schools, transport, and community facilities. The development will contribute to local infrastructure through CIL payments, supporting education, transport, and community facilities in Southwater and the wider Horsham District.



5.0 Principle of Development

- 5.1 The site is mostly located outside the settlement boundary of Southwater, as set out in the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). However, the housing and locational policies contained within the HDPF are now long out of date with a considerably increased demand for housing now required, and a supply of housing that falls far short of the five year requirement at around one year. Therefore, the tilted balance contained within the NPPF, paragraph 11 is engaged, and so sustainable development should be supported unless there are any adverse impacts that would “significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.” (para. 11(d)ii of the NPPF).
- 5.2 The Council has acknowledged it has a significant shortfall in housing against a high demand and has an advice note called Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note. This is not a policy document but is accepted guidance to assist in assessing the best sites that should be supported to meet the shortfall. The tests to consider an application against are set out below:
- **Locational suitability and scale** – The Phase 2 site lies adjacent to an established settlement boundary and is considered to be in a sustainable location, with access to local services and facilities. The site benefits from a sustainable and well-connected location, with established pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, alongside accessible public transport options. It is also considered to meet the other criteria within this requirement as it is considered to be appropriate in scale and function to Southwater, meets local housing needs, does not prejudice long-term development, and is contained within a defensible boundary.
 - **Deliverability** – the site is currently vacant and can therefore be delivered quickly.
 - **Meeting housing needs** – The proposed scheme seeks to contribute to Horsham District’s Five-Year Housing Land Supply while delivering affordable housing provision that exceeds the policy requirement of 35%. The layout includes 9 affordable units, representing approximately 39% of the total dwellings, thereby ensuring full compliance with local planning policy.
 - **Biodiversity** - The scheme will deliver enhanced biodiversity through habitat retention, enhancement, and creation and will achieve the required 10% net gain in biodiversity.
 - **Climate change** – Surface water flooding has been carefully considered in the design process and no buildings, escape routes, or alterations to ground levels are proposed in areas identified as susceptible to flooding. The scheme incorporates renewable and low-carbon technologies where appropriate, supporting the transition to net zero and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Sustainable construction materials will be prioritised to minimise embodied carbon, while the orientation and layout of the dwellings are designed to optimise natural light and promote passive solar gain. Together, these measures will deliver high-quality, energy-efficient homes that reduce environmental impact and offer lower running costs for future residents, aligning with both local and national sustainability goals.



- Transport - A local bus service operates along Worthing Road, with conveniently located stops situated just south of the application site, offering sustainable transport options for future residents. The current proposal builds upon principles established through previous applications and consultations, ensuring continued alignment with agreed highways and transport requirements.
 - Design – The proposed layout and street design prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement, fostering opportunities for social interaction. Streets are designed with a landscape-led approach, incorporating shared surfaces, traffic calming features, and strong connections to adjacent green spaces and pedestrian pathways. The scheme preserves open vistas to the surrounding countryside and settlement, where they are not limited due to the existing hedgerows, with primary frontages oriented towards the central road and the open green space to the west. Architectural detailing and materials reflect the character of the Horsham area, blending traditional influences with a refined, contemporary aesthetic.
 - Infrastructure - enhancements to existing infrastructure, or new infrastructure provision, to offset impacts and make the proposed development sustainable have been considered and included.
- 5.3 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note and the principle of development, within the context of the tilted balance and this guidance note, is assumed to be accepted.
- 5.4 The Phase 2 site lies adjacent to an established settlement and is considered to be in a sustainable location, with access to local services and facilities. This aligns with Policy 3 (Development Hierarchy), which supports appropriately scaled housing growth in settlements that can accommodate it. The proposal would contribute to the district's housing supply and help meet the demand for a mix of dwelling sizes, in line with Policy 15 (Housing Provision) and Policy 16 (Meeting Local Housing Needs).
- 5.5 The development also responds to the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Given the current pressures on housing delivery across the district, the proposal offers social, economic and environmental benefits, including support for local services, improved housing choice, and efficient use of land.
- 5.6 The principle of development is supported by the current planning context in Horsham, where there is a significant shortfall in housing land supply. Furthermore, the Council is currently without an up-to-date Local Plan following its withdrawal, which further limits the weight that can be given to existing policies. The Inspector's recommendation to withdraw Horsham's emerging local plan was based on a failure to meet the legal Duty to Cooperate, particularly in relation to unmet housing need.
- 5.7 The housing shortfall, in terms of past delivery and future 5 year supply, both trigger the presumption in favour of sustainable development, increasing the weight given to proposals that contribute to housing delivery.
- 5.8 Furthermore, the paragraph 11(d) 'tilted balance' is applied whereby any negatives arising from the development must 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'. This



context reinforces the need for sustainable housing delivery in suitable locations, and the proposed residential development represents a timely and appropriate opportunity to help address the district's housing needs in line with the 'tilted balance' and the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.



6.0 Pre-app summary

- 6.1 A Pre-application was undertaken with Horsham District Council back in 2025 with a formal response received on 21st November 2025.
- 6.2 The pre-application advice related to the proposal for 23 residential dwellings, including parking, landscaping and other associated works and focused on the Council's view of the principle of residential development on this site, as well as the extent to which the proposed development accords with the policies contained within the planning policy framework.
- 6.3 The Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note SD PAN provides clarification on the weight to be afforded to existing and emerging local policies and has been prepared to ensure that Horsham Council can continue to support sustainable housing delivery in a proactive manner.
- 6.4 For proposals located outside the defined BUAB, the SD PAN (paragraph 5.12) reflects the requirements of Policy 4 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and confirms that applications will be considered positively where all of the following criteria are satisfied:
- The site directly adjoins the existing settlement edge as defined by the BUAB. **The site is partially within, and immediately adjacent to, the built-up area boundary of Southwater, as defined by the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan proposals map;**
 - The scale of development is proportionate to the size, role and function of the settlement to which it relates. **The proposed development is proportionate for the locality;**
 - The proposal demonstrates that it responds to identified local housing needs or contributes to the retention or enhancement of community facilities and services. **Taking into consideration Horsham's low housing numbers, the development responds well to identified local housing needs;**
 - The development, whether individually or cumulatively, does not prejudice opportunities for comprehensive, long term planning – **the development has been designed with the Berkely Homes strategic site in mind;** and
 - The scheme is contained within an existing defensible boundary and maintains and enhances the site's landscape character features. **The site is contained within its own boundaries on all sides. Should the Berkely Homes Strategic site come forward then this would result in the creation of a developed boundary around the proposed Phase 2 site.**
- 6.5 Horsham's pre-app response states that the proposal is considered broadly capable of meeting all of the above SD PAN criteria.
- 6.6 The pre-application response from Horsham District Council offered a number of constructive points that positively informed the development of this subsequent planning application.
- 6.7 The Council acknowledged that the overall site layout and density were broadly acceptable, with the proposed green infrastructure, SUDS basin and pedestrian connections forming a coherent and sustainable structure for development.



- 6.8 Officers also noted that the site was well positioned in relation to local and emerging facilities, and that the inclusion of pedestrian links was welcomed as it will promote sustainable and active travel.
- 6.9 The scheme exceeds the policy requirement for 35% affordable housing, and no heritage concerns were raised, with the Council confirming that the development would not impact any designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 6.10 The proposed layout provides appropriate separation distances to neighbouring properties, ensuring suitable residential amenity, while the arrangement of open space is considered beneficial in providing an effective buffer to future development to the west.
- 6.11 Importantly, the Council confirmed that recent changes to Natural England’s position on water neutrality would now enable development to proceed without additional mitigation, subject only to standard water-efficiency controls.
- 6.12 The intention to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain onsite is also supported, and the principle of utilising the existing consented access on Worthing Road is accepted, alongside the provision of EV charging and adequate parking.
- 6.13 Overall, the Council’s feedback provided a clear and constructive basis on which to advance the proposals and identified a number of positive elements that could be incorporated and strengthened within a formal submission. These have been taken on-board. An example of these changes are:
- moving the private gardens outside any riparian zones and the RPAs of the boundary trees where possible;
 - Consideration of the proposals in connection with the adjacent Horsham Golf and Fitness site, and potential development of the strategic site to the west;
 - A pre-app was undertaken with the LLFA to ensure that the drainage proposals and hydrological modelling was acceptable;
 - The Landscaping proposals have taken on board comments made at pre-app stage and incorporated where possible.



7.0 Technical Considerations

Design and Access (DAS)

- 7.1. The purpose of the DAS is to support a planning application for a residential development of up to 23 sustainable homes (14 open-market and 9 affordable units) with associated parking, landscaping, and infrastructure. The proposed development has been guided by a clear set of design principles that respond to the site's context and comply with relevant planning policy. The architectural approach reflects the Sussex vernacular, incorporating traditional materials such as locally sourced brick, clay roof tiles, and timber detailing, in line with the guidance set out in the Southwater Parish Design Statement (2011) and Policy SNP16 (Design) of the Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019–2030). These policies emphasise the importance of maintaining local character through the use of complementary styles, traditional roof forms, and high-quality detailing.
- 7.2. A landscape-led approach underpins the scheme, ensuring that green buffers, rain gardens, and a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) pond are integrated throughout the development. This strategy supports Policy 31 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) and Policy 38 (Flooding) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), which require developments to enhance biodiversity and manage surface water sustainably. The inclusion of SuDS features also aligns with national guidance in promoting climate resilience and ecological enhancement.
- 7.3. Street design prioritises pedestrian movement and connectivity, creating safe, attractive routes that link to existing footpaths and cycleways, including the Downs Link. This approach reflects Policy SNP2 (Proposals for Residential Developments) and Policy 40 (Sustainable Transport), which encourage developments to reduce car dependency and improve access to sustainable travel options. Shared surfaces and traffic-calming measures have been incorporated to maintain low vehicle speeds and foster a sense of community.
- 7.4. Parking provision includes 46 resident spaces and 5 visitor spaces, complemented by EV charging points and secure cycle storage, in line with Policy 41 (Parking) and Policy 40 (Sustainable Transport), promoting sustainable travel choices. Building heights range from 1 to 2.5 storeys, ensuring the development respects the scale and character of the surrounding area, consistent with Policy SNP16 (Design) and Policy 33 (Development Principles).
- 7.5. Environmental sustainability is central to the proposal, with features such as SuDS for surface water management, water-efficient fixtures, and a fabric-first energy strategy, meeting the requirements of Policy 38 (Flooding) and Policy 32 (The Quality of New Development), as well as national guidance in the NPPF. The scheme also addresses biodiversity and arboricultural considerations by retaining key trees, removing diseased Ash trees affected by Ash Dieback, and introducing new planting to enhance ecological value, supported by a long-term landscape management plan. These measures comply with Policy 31 (Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity) and Policy SNP18 (A Treed Landscape), ensuring the development contributes positively to the local environment.



- 7.6. In design terms, the proposal is fully consistent with the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to deliver high-quality housing that meets local needs while respecting the parish's rural character. It also complies with the Horsham District Planning Framework, particularly Policy 32 (The Quality of New Development) and Policy 33 (Development Principles), which require schemes to demonstrate good design, sustainability, and integration with their surroundings. Furthermore, the development supports national objectives set out in the NPPF, including the creation of sustainable, well-connected communities and the delivery of biodiversity net gain.

Affordable Housing

- 7.7. The proposed development includes a balanced mix of dwelling types, designed to meet a range of housing needs in accordance with Policy 16 (Meeting Local Housing Needs) of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and Policy SNP2 (Proposals for Residential Developments) of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.8. The scheme delivers 9 affordable housing units (39%), exceeding the policy requirement of 35%, and aligns with Policy 15 (Housing Provision) and Policy SNP10 (Residential Space Standards). The tenure split—approximately 70% affordable rent and 30% intermediate rent—reflects local housing officer guidance and supports the creation of a mixed and inclusive community.

Highways and Access

- 7.9. The proposed access is to use the existing and approved access from Worthing Road to the east of the development. As part of the approved Care Home development DC/24/0622, works to Worthing Road have been secured through planning approval. This site will link into the access road for the care home.
- 7.10. The site benefits from a sustainable and well-connected location, with established pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, alongside accessible public transport options. These provisions support alternative modes of travel and reinforce the site's suitability from a transport planning perspective.
- 7.11. A previous hybrid planning application for the site (reference DC/23/1350), proposing 33 dwellings and a 76-bed care home, was submitted in 2023 but later withdrawn for reasons unrelated to transport or highways. As part of that application, West Sussex County Council, acting as the Local Highway Authority, raised no objection and concluded that the scheme would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in severe cumulative effects on the surrounding network. Given that the current proposals relate to a lower number of residential units, their impact would be correspondingly reduced.
- 7.12. In addition, a separate planning application for a 70-bed care home was submitted in 2024 and approved in 2025.
- 7.13. A Transport Statement and travel plan have been prepared to assess the access, movement and transport implications of the proposed development. The assessment demonstrates that the development can be safely and sustainably accommodated within the existing transport network.



- 7.14. The site will be served by an upgraded access onto Worthing Road (B2237), which has been subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit with no outstanding safety concerns. Recent Automatic Traffic Count data confirms good compliance with the 40 mph speed limit, and a review of five-year Personal Injury Accident records shows no recorded collisions in the vicinity of the site, confirming a safe local highway environment.
- 7.15. The location offers strong opportunities for sustainable travel, with footways and crossing facilities providing safe pedestrian access to bus stops located 200–250 metres from the site. Regular services connect to Horsham, Crawley and Worthing, while Christ’s Hospital railway station lies within easy cycling distance (approximately 1.7 km). Everyday amenities, schools and employment areas fall within recognised walking and cycling catchments. All key local destinations lie within a 5 km cycle, consistent with Department for Transport guidance.
- 7.16. The proposed internal layout provides safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, while car and cycle parking provision fully accords with West Sussex County Council standards, delivering 48 car parking spaces (including visitor spaces), 38 cycle parking spaces, and an EV charging point for every dwelling. Refuse and emergency vehicles can be safely accommodated in accordance with Manual for Streets requirements.
- 7.17. Trip-generation modelling using the TRICS database confirms that the development will generate only 12 two-way vehicle trips in the morning peak and 11 in the evening peak, representing a negligible addition to existing flows on Worthing Road. West Sussex County Council has previously accepted a higher level of development on the site, and the current proposals fall well within parameters previously judged acceptable. Accordingly, the scheme will not result in an unacceptable or severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.18. To encourage sustainable travel from first occupation, a package of measures will be implemented by the developer, including:
- A Travel Information Leaflet for all residents, highlighting local walking and cycling routes, bus and rail services, and the location of nearby facilities.
 - Promotion of sustainable travel options within sales and marketing information.
 - Provision of secure, covered cycle storage for all dwellings.
 - Clear information on the health, environmental and financial benefits of walking, cycling and public transport use.
 - Installation of EV charging points for each home, supporting the transition to low-emission vehicle use.
- 7.19. The TPS demonstrates that the site is well connected to sustainable transport networks and that the development incorporates appropriate infrastructure and measures to promote non-car travel. The proposed approach is proportionate to the scale of the scheme and aligns with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, the West Sussex Transport Plan and Horsham District Council’s sustainable transport objectives. Collectively, the measures outlined will support reduced reliance on private car use and help encourage healthier, lower-carbon travel choices for future residents.



- 7.20. In summary, the development is safe, sustainable and fully compliant with national and local transport policy, and there are no transport or highways reasons to withhold planning permission.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 7.21. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by Price & Myers demonstrates that the proposed development complies with the NPPF (Section 14), the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), DEFRA SuDS Standards and the requirements of Horsham District Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).
- 7.22. As the site lies within Flood Zone 1, the Sequential Test is satisfied in accordance with national policy. Surface-water modelling confirms that the narrow high-risk strips associated with the existing watercourse lie outside the developable area.
- 7.23. The site layout has followed a sequential approach to surface water risk, locating built development outside mapped flow routes and retaining these areas within open space and drainage features. This approach has been developed in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority, who have confirmed that the proposed layout and mitigation measures are acceptable. As the development avoids areas at risk of surface-water flooding and maintains safe access and egress, the Sequential Test is satisfied and is not required to be applied further.
- 7.24. In accordance with national and local drainage policy, infiltration has been ruled out due to ground conditions, and the proposed SuDS strategy will restrict discharge to the on-site watercourse at greenfield Qbar rates via a hydrobrake, supported by a detention basin, underground attenuation, permeable paving and rain gardens, providing treatment and storage for events up to 1 in 100 years plus 45% climate change.
- 7.25. Exceedance flows will be directed safely along the existing watercourse corridor and finished floor levels will be set 150 mm above surrounding ground. Foul drainage will be discharged to the nearest public sewer via a pumped system with 24-hour emergency storage, consistent with Building Regulations, and Southern Water has confirmed that network capacity is available subject to a Section 106 connection.
- 7.26. Overall, the FRA concludes that the development can be delivered with an acceptable level of flood risk and provides a policy-compliant surface water and foul drainage strategy in accordance with the NPPF, PPG, DEFRA SuDS Standards and Horsham District Planning Framework policies on flooding and water management.
- 7.27. In parallel, a separate Pre-Application process (reference: WSCC-719750830) has been undertaken between Price & Myers and the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA). To date, the responses received from the LLFA have been positive. The LLFA has also been provided with the supporting modelling report for the proposed drainage and flood mitigation measures.

Landscape

- 7.28. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal, (reference: LLD3554-LPL-REP-001) prepared by Lizard Landscapes concludes that the proposed development will have an overall minor



adverse effect on landscape character post-construction, reducing to negligible in the long term as mitigation planting matures.

- 7.29. The site will retain and reinforce mature boundary vegetation and watercourses, with new native tree planting and biodiversity enhancements in line with Southwater Neighbourhood Plan Policy SNP18 and Horsham District Planning Framework Policies 25, 26, and 31.
- 7.30. The historic landscape pattern and countryside gap between Southwater and Christ's Hospital remain unaffected (Negligible effect). Visual impacts are limited to short-distance views from Worthing Road and Welcome Place (Minor adverse, reducing to Negligible), while distant views from Public Rights of Way are screened by vegetation (Negligible effect).
- 7.31. Mitigation measures include sensitive design, dark roof materials, and avoidance of urbanising elements, supporting NPPF Paragraph 174 and Policy 32 (Quality of New Development).
- 7.32. The proposed development incorporates a comprehensive design and landscape strategy to ensure high-quality placemaking and compliance with planning policy. The landscape design principles for the Site have been informed by the proposals for the adjacent strategic development to the north and west, ensuring coherent integration with the wider emerging context.
- 7.33. Although the outline application for approximately 1,500 homes to the west of the site (ref. DC/22/1916) has been withdrawn, the accompanying Design Code prepared by PRP provides a valuable reference point for establishing a coordinated approach to landscape character. This site fits into the overall strategy.
- 7.34. The landscape strategy retains and enhances mature boundary vegetation and the existing stream, while delivering extensive biodiversity enhancements including native tree planting, wildflower meadows, and ecological features such as log piles, bee banks, and bird and bat boxes.
- 7.35. Public Open Space to the west provides informal recreation, natural play elements, and circular footpaths, in line with Southwater Neighbourhood Plan Policies SNP12, SNP17.5, and SNP18, and promotes biodiversity net gain in accordance with NPPF (2023) and Horsham District Planning Framework Policies 31, 32, and 33.
- 7.36. Sustainable design measures include spoil reuse for landscape mounds and species selection suited to climate resilience. Together, these proposals ensure the development integrates sensitively with its rural setting, enhances ecological value, and delivers a high-quality living environment.
- 7.37. The scheme integrates with the settlement edge, protects landscape character, and delivers biodiversity net gain, ensuring compliance with national and local planning policy. It reflects the Sussex vernacular through the use of brick, clay tiles, and timber detailing, and adopts a landscape-led approach with green buffers, rain gardens, and a SuDS attenuation basin to manage surface water sustainably



7.38. A Landscape Masterplan is submitted with this application (ref: LLD3554-LAN-DWG-010-01), along with a Landscape Design Strategy; an extract of which is shown below in Figure 7.1 below.



Figure 7.1: Extract from Landscape Design Strategy

Trees

7.39. A tree condition survey was undertaken in June 2025 by Ruskins Tree Consultancy on behalf of Starbuild. The survey assessed 105 individual trees and groups within and adjacent to the site boundary, with the aim of informing future development proposals.

7.40. Key findings include:

- The majority of trees were classified as Category C (low quality with limited landscape value) or Category B (moderate quality with collective or individual landscape value). A small number of trees were classified as Category U, deemed unsuitable for retention due to poor condition, structural defects, or advanced decline.
- A significant number of ash trees across the site are affected by Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus Fraxineus*), with many exhibiting severe decline or being dead. These trees are recommended for removal due to safety concerns and poor long-term viability. Felling is recommended for trees in poor or dangerous condition, particularly those affected by Ash Dieback or with structural instability.

7.41. No works are proposed for the majority of trees, pending confirmation of the final site layout. Some of the trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and will require appropriate permissions for any intervention.

7.42. Several mature oaks and boundary trees contribute positively to the site's landscape character and biodiversity. These are generally recommended for retention where feasible.



Ecology and BNG

- 7.43. The site is not subject to any formal ecological designation, but ecological matters have been fully considered through an Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment.
- 7.44. The assessments show that the site contains neutral grassland, scattered scrub and areas of boundary woodland, with the most ecologically valuable features being the retained treelines and the UK Priority Habitat woodland along the northern boundary.
- 7.45. Surveys have identified moderate levels of bat activity, mainly common and soprano pipistrelle, with occasional records of barbastelle, while targeted surveys confirmed the likely absence of great crested newts and reptiles.
- 7.46. Potential ecological impacts have been addressed through a range of built-in mitigation measures, including the protection of boundary vegetation, sensitive lighting to safeguard bats, and Reasonable Avoidance Measures for badgers, hedgehogs and nesting birds.
- 7.47. To compensate for historic woodland loss and to achieve the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, the scheme combines on-site habitat enhancements—such as new native tree and scrub planting, wildflower meadow establishment, wetland-species planting in SuDS features, and provision of bird, bat and invertebrate boxes—with off-site delivery of woodland habitat units.
- 7.48. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment shows an existing baseline of 11.53 habitat units, with 0.99 units retained on site and 2.09 units created through enhancements. However, the scheme currently has a deficit of 6.46 habitat units due to the need to replace lost lowland mixed deciduous woodland. To resolve this, the applicant intends to secure additional off-site units from a habitat provider, along with a bespoke agreement to deliver at least 6.98 woodland units to satisfy trading rules.
- 7.49. A draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) sets out how habitats will be created, enhanced and maintained, including retention of priority woodland to the north and west, improving existing woodland through new planting and coppicing, raising water levels in ditches, and creating additional habitats such as wet woodland, neutral grassland and mixed scrub.
- 7.50. The HMMP provides a long-term management structure for a 30-year period, with a full review to take place after the first five years. Together, these measures ensure compliance with the NPPF, Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 31 and the mitigation hierarchy, delivering negligible residual ecological effects and a clear net gain in biodiversity.

Water Neutrality

- 7.51. In line with Horsham District Council's updated local validation requirements and Natural England's revised position⁴—confirmed in late 2025—the proposed development is no longer required to demonstrate water neutrality, following Natural England's formal

⁴ [Statement on Natural England withdrawing Position Statement on water neutrality | Horsham District Council](#)



withdrawal of its September 2021 Position Statement for the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

- 7.58. Natural England's updated advice (October–November 2025) confirms that the earlier water neutrality restrictions have been lifted due to new evidence on abstraction impacts, a reduced abstraction licence cap for Southern Water, and an agreed package of ecological mitigation measures that collectively ensure no adverse effect on the Arun Valley's protected habitats. Despite this change, the application acknowledges the importance of sustainable water resource management
- 7.60. The site is currently undeveloped and has no existing mains water consumption. Although water neutrality is no longer a policy requirement, the proposed development will continue to be supplied via the private borehole solution established for Phase 1, including the adjacent care home site. This system - originally designed to deliver full water neutrality - remains a robust and sustainable approach and continues to avoid any reliance on Southern Water's public network or abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone
- 7.61. Borehole abstraction is an established and accepted method for potable water supply in Horsham District, with precedent in comparable schemes at Cowfold and Broadbridge Heath.
- 7.62. The withdrawal of the water neutrality requirement does not alter the viability or regulatory acceptability of this approach. Natural England's updated guidance confirms that development may now proceed without water-use offsetting, provided it complies with standard water-efficiency expectations. For Horsham District, this means meeting the 110 litres per person per day requirement under Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, which now forms the basis for water-related planning conditions across the district.
- 7.63. A feasibility study undertaken by Carbon Zero Consulting has previously demonstrated that the borehole can reliably extract up to 20m³ per day, with treatment to potable standards via on-site filtration and reverse osmosis. Water is stored in sectional tanks to provide demand buffering and operational resilience. The borehole's capacity significantly exceeds demand from the Phase 1 care home and comfortably accommodates the additional consumption anticipated for the Phase 2 residential development.
- 7.64. To reduce water demand, the following measures are proposed:
- Dual-flush toilets and low-flow taps and showers
 - Water-efficient appliances (e.g. washing machines, dishwashers)
 - Smart meters and leak detection systems
 - Landscaping with drought-tolerant plants and drip irrigation
- 7.65. These measures are expected to reduce water consumption to below the required 110 litres/person/day.



Sustainability

- 7.66. The proposed development has been designed with a strong emphasis on sustainability and long-term energy efficiency. A fabric-first approach will be adopted to minimise energy demand, with homes constructed to high standards of insulation and airtightness to reduce heat loss and enhance thermal performance.
- 7.67. Each dwelling will incorporate energy-efficient glazing, low-energy lighting, and modern appliances as standard, further reducing overall energy consumption.
- 7.68. Where appropriate, the scheme will integrate renewable and low-carbon technologies, supporting the transition away from fossil fuels and contributing to broader net zero objectives. The use of sustainable construction materials will be prioritised to reduce embodied carbon.
- 7.69. In addition, the layout and orientation of the homes have been carefully considered to maximise natural daylight and encourage passive solar gain, enhancing comfort and reducing reliance on artificial heating and lighting.
- 7.70. These measures will collectively deliver high-quality, energy-efficient homes that not only reduce environmental impact but also ensure lower running costs for future residents, contributing to both local and national sustainability objectives.

Noise

- 7.71. An acoustic assessment has been undertaken by RF Environmental Ltd to evaluate the suitability of the site for residential development and to ensure compliance with national and local planning policy. The survey identified that the dominant noise source is road traffic on the A24, with secondary contributions from Worthing Road (B2237).
- 7.72. In accordance with ProPG: Planning & Noise (2017), the site is classified as Low Risk, requiring a Stage 2 assessment. This assessment confirms that, with appropriate mitigation, internal and external noise levels will meet the guideline values set out in BS8233:2014, WHO Environmental Noise Guidelines, and local authority requirements.
- 7.73. Mitigation measures include:
- Glazing: All habitable rooms to be fitted with double glazing achieving a minimum sound insulation performance of Rw30dB.
 - Ventilation: Background ventilation to comply with Approved Document F, ensuring acoustic integrity without reliance on open windows.
 - Overheating Strategy: Assessment under Approved Document O demonstrates that opening windows for cooling during summer months will not result in significant adverse noise impacts.
- 7.74. External amenity areas have been assessed and predicted noise levels fall below the 50 dB LAeq,T guideline recommended by BS8233, ensuring a good standard of outdoor amenity. Internal noise levels, including maximum night-time events, will remain below WHO thresholds for sleep disturbance.
- 7.75. In conclusion, the proposed development is acoustically suitable and complies with the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE), NPPF, and local planning guidance. The



recommended design measures will safeguard residential amenity and ensure a high-quality living environment.

Air

- 7.76. The Air Quality Assessment, prepared in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, Air Quality Strategy for England (2023), and National Planning Policy Framework (2025), confirms that baseline concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} at the site are well within UK Air Quality Strategy objectives and are predicted to decline further by the proposed operational year (2028).
- 7.77. The site is not within or near an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and monitoring data from Horsham District Council indicate compliance with annual mean objectives for all pollutants.
- 7.78. Construction activities have the potential to generate dust; therefore, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and dust risk assessment will be conditioned in line with IAQM guidance to ensure negligible impacts.
- 7.79. Operational impacts from traffic are screened against EPUK/IAQM criteria and predicted to be negligible, with trip generation well below thresholds for detailed modelling.
- 7.80. Energy provision via air source heat pumps and solar panels ensures no combustion-related emissions.
- 7.81. In line with Sussex Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance (2021), a damage cost appraisal calculated a mitigation target of £1,657; however, designed-in measures, including EV charging points (as required by Approved Document S) and cycle storage exceeding £20,000 in value, far surpass this requirement.
- 7.82. The proposals therefore comply with Horsham District Planning Framework Policy 24, NPPF Paragraphs 110 and 199, and the mitigation hierarchy, ensuring negligible residual impacts and delivering sustainable transport and air quality improvements.

Lighting

- 7.83. The Lighting Impact Assessment, as prepared by SLR Consulting sets out a comprehensive lighting strategy designed to ensure safety and amenity for future residents while minimising impacts on neighbouring properties and ecologically sensitive areas.
- 7.84. The Site lies within Environmental Zone E2 (low district brightness), and the proposed lighting scheme has been designed to comply with the ILP's requirements for obtrusive light, as well as relevant national guidance, British Standards and ecological lighting principles, including ILP GN01:2021 and ILP/BCT GN08:2023 on Bats and Artificial Lighting.
- 7.85. A detailed risk-based approach was used to determine the required lighting classes, resulting in the primary access road being designed to Lighting Class P5, and secondary roads to Lighting Class P6. All luminaires are full cut-off fittings with 0% upward light ratio, mounted at 5–6 metres and using warm-white 2700K LEDs to minimise ecological disturbance. In the vicinity of mature treelines and known bat habitat, two luminaires will



use monochromatic red LEDs, following best-practice guidance to significantly reduce ecological impacts.

- 7.86. To further limit light spill, most internal roads will operate on a part-night lighting regime (23:00–05:00), with only essential luminaires remaining active through the night for safety. Photometric modelling confirms that all lighting levels meet or fall below required thresholds for vertical illuminance, luminous intensity and sky glow control at all identified residential and ecological receptors.
- 7.87. The assessment concludes that the scheme will not give rise to adverse lighting effects. Adjacent residential properties, including those on Welcome Place, would not experience obtrusive light above recognised limits. Ecologically sensitive boundaries—particularly the mature woodland and the Railway Sidings Local Wildlife Site—remain within strict lux limits recommended for bat foraging and commuting routes.
- 7.88. Through careful selection of luminaires, appropriate colour temperatures, targeted illumination, and restricted operating hours, the proposed development achieves a sensitive, policy-compliant lighting solution that protects both residential amenity and local biodiversity.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 7.89. A letter has been sent out to local residents and the Southwater Parish Council informing them of the upcoming planning application and sharing with them a copy of the proposed site layout.
- 7.90. Comments have been invited back which will be considered and will inform any amends to the layout if necessary.
- 7.91. An email has also been sent to the Parish Council asking them if they would like to attend a meeting to discuss the proposals.



8.0 Summary

- 8.1 On behalf of our client, Starbuild Ltd., this full planning application is submitted for a proposed residential development comprising 23 dwellings with associated parking, landscaping, and infrastructure. The site will be accessed from Worthing Road via the approved access road delivered under Phase 1 (planning reference DC/24/0622).
- 8.2 Site analysis has informed a sensitive and context-led design approach that responds to the site's characteristics, including its sloping topography, existing watercourses, and mature tree cover. The proposals seek to retain and enhance these features, reinforcing the ecological value and visual amenity of the site.
- 8.3 Key ecological assets, including the western wet woodland and associated watercourses, are protected and incorporated within the sustainable drainage strategy, supporting biodiversity and contributing to the site's green infrastructure network. Indigenous planting, hedgerows, and tree belts provide a soft transition between the proposed development and the surrounding landscape.
- 8.4 Surface water has been assessed through site-specific modelling, and a sustainable drainage strategy has been developed and agreed in principle with the Lead Local Flood Authority. The system has been designed to accommodate the 1 in 100 year rainfall event including climate change, ensuring the development will remain safe and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- 8.5 The proposed layout promotes a legible, safe, and attractive residential environment, balancing movement, accessibility, and residential amenity. The scheme will deliver 23 high-quality homes that respond to identified housing needs while respecting environmental constraints.
- 8.6 The development is underpinned by sustainable design principles, including:
- Efficient use of land in a sustainable and well-connected location
 - Ecological enhancement and delivery of biodiversity net gain
 - High-quality design and materials
 - Sustainable transport measures, including electric vehicle charging and cycle storage
- 8.7 The site is considered suitable and deliverable for residential development, with no overriding technical constraints identified. Any site-specific considerations can be appropriately addressed through standard mitigation and design measures. Flood risk is not considered a constraint to the proposed development.
- 8.8 The proposal will deliver a range of planning benefits, including:
- Provision of up to 23 new homes contributing to local housing supply
 - Delivery of policy-compliant affordable housing
 - Ecological and landscape enhancements supporting biodiversity
 - A well-designed scheme that responds positively to local character



- Efficient use of land, reducing pressure on more sensitive locations
- Alignment with local and national planning objectives
- Economic benefits during construction and ongoing support for local services

8.9 Paragraph 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, and the delivery of 23 new dwellings, including policy-compliant affordable housing, should therefore be afforded substantial weight in the planning balance.

8.10 The proposals represent sustainable development when assessed against the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The benefits associated with the scheme are substantial, and no adverse impacts have been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh those benefits. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

SLR Consulting Limited

Debra Higginbotham

Senior Consultant - Planning





Appendix A List of submitted documents

The Copse Phase 2 – Full Planning Application

Planning Statement – including Affordable Housing Statement

Star Build Ltd.

SLR Project No.: 433.066607.00001

23 February 2026

Report Name	Reference	Date
Reports		
Draft Air Quality Report	RFE-0690-25-02-01	Dec 2025
Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey	1225 - 100701 Rev 1	Dec 2025
Ecological Impact Assessment	LLD3554-ECO-REP-001-01	Dec 2025
Landscape Design Strategy	LLD3554-LAN-REP-010-01	Feb 2026
Landscape and Visual Appraisal	LLD3554-LPL-REP-001-01	Feb 2026
Noise Report	RFE-0690-25-01-01	Dec 2025
Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy	31276-2 Rev 3	Jan 2026
Transport Statement Draft	31276 Rev P00	Feb 2026
Travel Plan Statement Draft	31276 Rev 00	Feb 2026
Lighting Impact Assessment	Rev 01	Jan 2026
Noise Assessment	RFE-0690-25-01-01	Dec 2025
Photo Montage		Feb 2026
Copy of Residents Letter		Feb 2026
Plans		
Architect Plans	Various	Feb 2026
Site Location Plan	FL25 - 2301-050	Dec 2025
Landscape Masterplan	LLD3554-LAN-DWG-010-01	Feb 2026
LLD3554 - BNG PROPOSED 02	02	Dec 2025
LLD3554 - BNG BASELINE 01	01	Dec 2025





Appendix B Location Plan

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Appendix C Copy of Pre-app response

The Copse Phase 2 – Full Planning Application

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