



Planning Statement

Replacement of office building

Anglo European Studbrook, New Barn Farm, Capel Road

prepared by

WPS Planning

Planning Statement
Land at New Barn Farm

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Date:	April 2026
Project Number:	108/2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the demolition of an existing office building and its replacement with a new purpose-built office facility at the Anglo European Studbook (AES) site.
- 1.2** The Anglo European Studbook is a well-established and internationally recognised equestrian organisation, responsible for horse registration, pedigree verification, breeding services, performance recording, and DNA testing. Its operations form an integral part of the wider equestrian industry and are inherently linked to rural land uses.
- 1.3** The existing office building on site is modest, dated, and no longer capable of meeting the functional requirements of the organisation. The proposed development seeks to replace this building with a high-quality, appropriately scaled, and operationally efficient facility that supports both current activities and future growth.
- 1.4** This statement demonstrates that the proposal:
- Is acceptable in principle;
 - Is supported by national and local planning policy;
 - Represents a clear improvement in design, scale, and functionality;
 - Delivers economic and operational benefits to a rural enterprise.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site forms part of an established rural holding associated with equestrian and administrative uses. The wider area is characterised by a mixture of:

- Agricultural land and open countryside;
- Equestrian paddocks and associated infrastructure;
- Scattered rural buildings, including residential dwellings and ancillary structures.

2.2 The site itself has an established built form, with the existing office building forming part of a cluster of development that supports the ongoing use of the land. The surrounding context is therefore not one of undeveloped countryside, but rather a working rural landscape where buildings associated with agricultural and equestrian activities are typical.

2.3 The existing office building is small in scale and utilitarian in appearance. As shown on the existing plans, it provides limited accommodation, including a single office space, small kitchen and WC facilities, and minimal storage. The building does not reflect the scale or nature of the current AES operations and makes only a limited contribution to the overall character of the site.

2.4 In visual and spatial terms, the site is capable of accommodating additional built form of an appropriate scale. The proposed replacement building has been carefully designed to sit comfortably within this context, responding to the established pattern of development while improving the overall quality and coherence of the site.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site benefits from an established and lawful use associated with the Anglo European Studbook and its equestrian and administrative functions. The existing office building forms part of this long-standing use and has historically supported the operational requirements of the business.
- 3.2 While the current building has served its purpose, it reflects an earlier stage in the development of the organisation and is no longer suitable for the scale and complexity of its activities. The need to modernise and expand the office accommodation is a direct consequence of the growth and evolution of the business over time.
- 3.3 The absence of any conflicting or restrictive planning history is notable, and there is a clear precedent for built development on the site in connection with its lawful use. The proposal therefore represents a logical progression and reinvestment in the site, rather than a departure from its established function.
- 3.4 This context is an important material consideration, as it confirms that the principle of development, specifically built form associated with the AES operations, is already accepted.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the replacement of the existing office building with a new, purpose-built facility designed to meet the operational requirements of the Anglo European Studbook.
- 4.2 The proposed building has been carefully developed to provide a comprehensive and efficient internal layout. As shown on the proposed plans, the ground floor will include a reception area, waiting room, main office space, DNA testing laboratory, kitchenette, WC facilities, and storage. These spaces are designed to accommodate both staff and visitors, providing a functional and professional environment that reflects the nature of the organisation.

- 4.3 At first floor level, additional accommodation is provided to support administrative and operational flexibility. This includes space capable of being used for ancillary purposes, including rest and overnight accommodation where required. Due to the nature of the Anglo European Studbook's operations, there are occasions where DNA testing procedures must be completed within a strict 24-hour timeframe, necessitating continuous on-site monitoring and processing. In such circumstances, it is essential for a member of staff to remain on site overnight to ensure the integrity, security, and timely completion of testing procedures. The inclusion of this ancillary accommodation is therefore directly linked to the functional requirements of the business and does not represent the creation of an independent residential use, but rather a necessary and proportionate operational provision.
- 4.4 In terms of scale and form, the building adopts a two-storey design with a pitched roof, reflecting traditional rural building typologies. The proposed elevations demonstrate a balanced and coherent design, with well-proportioned openings and a clear architectural hierarchy. The use of simple and appropriate materials ensures that the building integrates successfully within its rural context.
- 4.5 The proposal represents a significant improvement over the existing structure in terms of:
- Internal functionality and efficiency;
 - Provision of specialist facilities;
 - Quality of design and appearance;
 - Overall contribution to the site.
- 4.6 Importantly, the development remains within the established footprint of the site and does not extend into undeveloped areas, ensuring that it respects the wider rural setting while delivering a modern and fit-for-purpose building.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this should run through both plan making and decision taking. In terms of the determination of planning applications this should mean the approval of developments that accord with the development plan without delay, and that where the development plan is silent or relevant policies are out of date, that permission be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies of the NPPF indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 Sustainable development is seen within the NPPF as having three roles, namely an economic, social and environmental role which should be a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking.
- 5.3 The following sections within the NPPF (2024) are important factors in the assessment of the proposal:
- Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
 - Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Local Plan

- 5.4 In terms of the local planning policy context for the Application Site, the adopted Development Plan for the Horsham District is composed of the following relevant documents:
- Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) – Adopted November 2015.
 - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
 - Policy 10 – Rural Economic Development
 - Policy 32 – The Quality of New Development

- Policy 33 – Development Principles
- Policy 41 – Parking
- Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)
 - Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
 - Policy 8 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 - Policy 19 - Development Quality
 - Policy 20 – Development Principles
 - Policy 24 – Sustainable Transport
 - Policy 25 – Parking

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 Paragraph 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides clear and unequivocal support for the growth and expansion of existing businesses in rural areas, recognising the need to sustain and develop rural economies. This position is reinforced locally through Horsham District Council Policy 26, which permits development within the countryside where it is necessary to support rural uses and can be accommodated without harm to the character of the area. In this context, the Anglo European Studbook (AES) represents a well-established and highly specialised equestrian organisation operating at both a national and international level. Its core functions, including horse registration, pedigree verification, breeding services, performance tracking and DNA testing, are intrinsically linked to rural land uses and the wider equestrian sector.
- 6.2 The application site is already in lawful use as part of this established enterprise, and the existing office building forms an integral component of its operational infrastructure. The proposal therefore does not introduce a new or unrelated form of development into the countryside, but instead represents the continuation, consolidation and enhancement of an existing lawful use. The development ensures that the business can continue to operate effectively within its

established rural context, which is essential given the direct relationship between its activities and the surrounding equestrian environment. Furthermore, by facilitating the evolution of the business within its current location, the proposal avoids the need for fragmented or off-site operations, which would be less sustainable in planning terms. The principle of development is therefore not only acceptable but is strongly supported by both national and local planning policy, with significant weight afforded to the role of rural businesses in supporting economic growth.

Operational Need and Justification for Increased Scale

- 6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework supports the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses, including through the redevelopment of existing sites where there is a clear functional requirement. Similarly, HDC Policy 33 requires development to be appropriate in scale and justified by its intended use. In this case, the operational need for the proposed development is both clear and compelling. The existing office building is demonstrably inadequate for the scale and complexity of the current AES operation. As shown on the existing plans, the building provides only a small office of approximately 15.0m² alongside minimal ancillary accommodation, offering very limited capacity for staff, storage, or client interaction.
- 6.4 Since its original use, the operational requirements of AES have evolved significantly. The organisation now undertakes a far broader range of activities, including increased administrative workloads, client-facing services and specialised functions such as DNA testing and verification. These activities require dedicated, secure and appropriately designed spaces that cannot be accommodated within the existing building. The absence of suitable facilities currently constrains the efficiency of the business and limits its ability to operate to modern standards.
- 6.5 The proposed building directly addresses these deficiencies through a comprehensive and purpose-designed layout. It provides a significantly larger

and more functional office environment, alongside dedicated spaces for reception, waiting, and client interaction, as well as a purpose-built DNA testing laboratory. The inclusion of appropriate storage, staff facilities and flexible first-floor accommodation further ensures that the building can support both current operations and future growth. The increase in scale is therefore entirely justified by operational need and is proportionate to the requirements of the business. It is not excessive but represents the minimum necessary to enable the organisation to function effectively and sustainably. Without such expansion, the business would likely be forced to rely on off-site facilities, leading to inefficiencies and increased travel, which would be contrary to the objectives of sustainable development.

- 6.6 A further component of the operational requirement relates to the need for occasional overnight staff presence on site, which is directly linked to the specialist nature of the services undertaken by the Anglo European Studbook. In particular, DNA testing and verification processes are time-sensitive and, in certain cases, must be completed within a strict 24-hour period to ensure accuracy, integrity, and compliance with industry standards. This necessitates continuous monitoring and handling of samples, which cannot be interrupted or deferred. As such, there are instances where it is essential for a member of staff to remain on site overnight to oversee these processes. The inclusion of ancillary accommodation within the proposed building is therefore a functional and operational necessity, intrinsically linked to the primary use of the site. It does not constitute the creation of an independent residential unit, but rather a subordinate and occasional requirement that supports the effective operation of the business. This approach aligns with national and local policy objectives by enabling a rural enterprise to function efficiently within its established location, avoiding the need for off-site facilities or unsustainable working practices.

Design Quality and Visual Enhancement

- 6.7 Section 12 of the NPPF places great importance on achieving high-quality design, while HDC Policy 32 requires development to be visually attractive and

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sympathetic to local character. The existing building is of a purely utilitarian form, with limited architectural merit and a minimal contribution to the visual quality of the site. Its appearance reflects a functional structure rather than a considered design response to its rural context.

- 6.8 In contrast, the proposed replacement building represents a significant improvement in design quality. It adopts a traditional rural form, incorporating a pitched roof and balanced proportions that are consistent with agricultural and equestrian buildings commonly found within the countryside. The proposed elevations demonstrate a coherent and well-considered architectural approach, with a clear hierarchy of elements, symmetrical composition, and carefully positioned openings that provide natural light while maintaining visual balance.
- 6.9 The use of simple, appropriate materials and the overall form of the building ensure that it integrates successfully with its surroundings. At the same time, the design reflects its functional role as a modern office facility, achieving an appropriate balance between traditional character and contemporary requirements. As a result, the proposal delivers a clear visual enhancement, replacing an outdated and visually limited structure with a building that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the site.

Site Redevelopment, Rationalisation and Betterment

- 6.10 The NPPF encourages the effective use of land and supports the redevelopment of existing sites where this leads to improved functionality and environmental quality. HDC Policy 33 similarly promotes development that enhances the overall quality and usability of a site. In this case, the proposal delivers a comprehensive and meaningful redevelopment of the existing office area, addressing the limitations of the current arrangement.
- 6.11 The existing building is constrained by its small footprint and inefficient internal layout, resulting in poor functionality and limited operational capacity. The lack of space and organisation restricts the ability of the business to operate efficiently and creates a fragmented working environment. The proposed development

replaces this arrangement with a single, well-designed building that consolidates all functions within a cohesive and logical structure.

- 6.12 This rationalisation of the site results in significant functional improvements, enabling streamlined workflows, improved staff efficiency, and better coordination of activities. The internal layout has been carefully designed to ensure clear relationships between different operational areas, including administrative spaces, client-facing facilities and specialist functions. In addition, the improved spatial organisation allows for more effective use of the site, reducing the need for ad hoc arrangements and ensuring that all activities are accommodated within a purpose-built structure.
- 6.13 Beyond functional improvements, the proposal also delivers substantial visual and environmental betterment. The removal of the existing low-quality building and its replacement with a well-designed structure enhances the overall appearance of the site and reinforces its identity as a well-managed rural enterprise. The development therefore represents not simply a replacement, but a comprehensive upgrade that significantly improves both the operation and presentation of the site.

Impact on Rural Character

- 6.14 HDC Policy 26 seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside by ensuring that development is appropriate in scale, form and location. The application site is already developed and forms part of an established rural enterprise, with built form and activity that are consistent with its use. The proposal does not extend development into previously undeveloped land but instead remains within the established footprint of the site.
- 6.15 While the proposed building is larger than the existing structure, this increase in scale is clearly justified by operational requirements and is mitigated by the building's appropriate design and form. The use of a pitched roof, traditional proportions and a simple material palette ensures that the building reflects the character of rural structures and integrates effectively with its surroundings.

Furthermore, the replacement of a utilitarian building with one of higher design quality results in a net improvement to the visual character of the site.

- 6.16 Given these factors, the proposal does not result in harm to the character of the countryside. Instead, it enhances the appearance and coherence of the site, ensuring that it continues to function as a well-integrated and appropriate element within the rural landscape.

Economic and Sustainability Benefits

- 6.17 The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity, particularly within rural areas where businesses play a vital role in sustaining local economies. The proposal delivers a range of substantial benefits in this regard. The Anglo European Studbook is a key organisation within the equestrian sector, supporting breeding standards, traceability, and performance recording across a wide geographic area. The provision of modern, fit-for-purpose facilities is essential to maintaining these functions and ensuring the continued success of the organisation.
- 6.18 The proposed development enables the business to operate more efficiently and effectively, providing improved working conditions for staff and a better experience for visiting clients. The inclusion of specialised facilities, such as the DNA testing laboratory, allows key services to be undertaken on site, reducing reliance on external locations and improving operational efficiency. This in turn reduces the need for travel and supports more sustainable patterns of working.
- 6.19 In addition, the proposal contributes to the wider rural economy by supporting employment and reinforcing the role of the site within the equestrian industry. The continued operation and growth of AES has positive implications not only for the business itself but also for the broader network of breeders, owners and associated services that rely on its functions. These economic and sectoral benefits are significant and carry considerable weight in the planning balance.

Overall Planning Balance

- 6.20 When considered in the round, the proposal represents a well-justified and policy-compliant form of development that delivers clear and demonstrable benefits. It supports the growth and sustainability of an established rural business, provides a high-quality replacement building, and significantly improves the functionality and appearance of the site. The increase in scale is fully justified by operational need and is proportionate to the requirements of the use.
- 6.21 There are no identified adverse impacts that would outweigh these benefits. The proposal does not harm the character of the countryside and instead results in a positive enhancement of the site. In planning terms, the development aligns fully with the objectives of both national and local policy and represents a sustainable and appropriate form of rural development. Accordingly, it should be supported and granted planning permission.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This planning application seeks full permission for the replacement of an existing office building associated with the Anglo European Studbook (AES), a well-established and specialist equestrian organisation operating within the rural economy. The proposal represents a carefully considered and policy-compliant

redevelopment that responds directly to the operational needs of the business while delivering clear and tangible improvements to the site.

- 7.2 The principle of development is firmly established. The site is already in lawful use for equestrian and associated administrative purposes, and the existing office building forms part of that established function. The proposal does not introduce a new or unrelated use but instead enables the continuation and evolution of an existing rural enterprise. In doing so, it aligns fully with the National Planning Policy Framework, which places significant weight on supporting the growth and expansion of rural businesses, as well as with relevant Horsham District Council policies that support development necessary for rural economic activity.
- 7.3 A key consideration is the clear and compelling operational need for the proposed development. The existing building is demonstrably inadequate in both scale and functionality, constraining the efficiency and effectiveness of the business. The proposed replacement building provides a purpose-built solution that accommodates modern operational requirements, including dedicated office space, client-facing facilities, and specialist areas such as DNA testing. The increase in scale is therefore both justified and proportionate, representing a necessary response to the evolution of the business rather than an overdevelopment of the site.
- 7.4 In design terms, the proposal delivers a significant improvement over the existing structure. The building adopts a form and appearance that are appropriate to its rural context, incorporating traditional elements such as a pitched roof and balanced proportions while maintaining a high standard of architectural quality. This results in a building that not only meets functional needs but also enhances the visual character of the site, replacing a utilitarian structure with one that makes a positive contribution to its surroundings.
- 7.5 The proposal also brings about a comprehensive rationalisation and betterment of the site. By consolidating operations within a single, well-designed building, it improves internal efficiency, spatial organisation, and overall usability. This

represents a clear upgrade from the existing fragmented and constrained arrangement, ensuring that the site can function effectively as a modern rural enterprise. Importantly, the development remains within the established footprint of the site and does not encroach into undeveloped countryside, thereby safeguarding the wider rural character.

- 7.6 There is no identified harm arising from the proposal that would outweigh its considerable benefits. The scale, form and design of the building are appropriate to its context, and the development integrates successfully within the existing site. Furthermore, the economic and sectoral benefits are significant. The proposal supports the continued operation and growth of a recognised organisation within the equestrian industry, contributing to the rural economy and ensuring the provision of important services at both a national and international level.
- 7.7 In the overall planning balance, the proposal delivers substantial and wide-ranging benefits, including the support of rural economic growth, the provision of high-quality and fit-for-purpose accommodation, and the enhancement of the site's visual and functional qualities. These benefits are afforded significant weight under the NPPF and local policy framework.
- 7.8 Accordingly, the proposed development represents a sustainable, justified and policy-compliant form of development. It is respectfully concluded that planning permission should be granted.