



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0041

Spring Acres, West End Lane, Henfield, West Sussex,

DESCRIPTION:

Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 9no. self-build dwellings.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/0062	Change of use of land from equestrian to a natural burial ground including parking area, single storey pavilion and landscaping including new tree planting, pond and wildflower meadow.	Pending appeal.
DC/17/1409	Proposed installation of two 'log cabins' for holiday let; (in connection with permission previously granted in DC/11/2631 for stables, hay store and tack room)	Refused on 17.08.2017 - Appeal Dismissed on 28.02.2018
DC/17/2722	Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural storage barn	Refused on 29.12.2017
DC/11/2631	Erection of two private family stables, hay store and tack room incorporating use of existing lawful highway access and change of use from agricultural to private equestrian use	Refused on 08.03.2012 - Allowed at Appeal

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The site relates to land within an open field on the northern side of West End Lane and west of Henfield. The site consists of the 0.49 hectares. There is an area of hardstanding on the western side of the field, that relates to permission granted for 'stables, hay store and tack room', but only the base for permitted buildings has been provided to date. The hardstanding is close to a boundary hedge to a footpath to the west of the field. The site perimeter is formed of post-rail fencing together with medium sized hedging to its northern, southern and western boundaries, with the eastern site boundary featuring a number of mature trees (of various species) on the neighbouring side of the boundary. However, the only access to the field is from West End Lane where there are double gates set back from the carriageway. The character of the area in this location is rural with large open fields to parts of the north of West End lane. The application site falls outside of any defined built-up area boundary, located ~530m west of the defined built-up area boundary for Henfield, and as such constitutes a countryside location in planning policy terms. The site itself does not contain any environmental, ecological, heritage or landscape designation, though, does fall within the 'red' impact risk zone for Great Crested Newt as categorised within the District-wide licencing scheme for Great Crested Newt.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The application would consist of permission in principle for up to 9 dwellings, 3 of each would be 4 bedrooms, 4 of the dwellings would be 3 bedrooms and 2 would be 2 bedrooms. An indicative layout has been submitted as part of the block plan.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 17 - Exceptions Housing Schemes
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021):

Policy 1 - A Spatial Plan for the Parish
Policy 2 - Housing Site Allocations
Policy 4 - Transport, Access and Car Parking
Policy 8 - Broadband Infrastructure
Policy 10 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 12 - Design Standards for New Development

Henfield Parish Design Statement

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

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

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

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

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 3: Settlement Expansion
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection

Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
Strategic Policy 16: Protected Landscapes
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 41: Rural Exception Homes

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Planning Advice Notes:

Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

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

Consultations:

Natural England: Standing Advice.

Environmental health: Objection. Given the proposed residential use of the site, a land use that is sensitive to the presence of contamination, to ensure the site is suitable for residential development the application should be supported by a preliminary contamination risk assessment (PCRA), undertaken by a suitably competent and experienced environmental consultant. Note however that no such assessment has been provided in support of the application.

During site clearance, preparation and construction there is the potential for local residents to experience adverse impacts from noise, dust and construction traffic movements. These should be minimised and controlled by the developer and a construction environmental management (CEMP) plan will be recommended as a condition, once the above matter has been addressed.

WSCC Highways: No technical information has been provided with the application, therefore these are comments are in relation to the principle of residential development in this location. Whilst, the site location is not sustainable in transport terms ie very limited public transport options and no footways, this is to be expected in a rural location such as this. Residents will be dependent on the private car, however given the likely low traffic volumes walking and cycling into Henfield could be an option for some residents.

No access arrangements have been proposed. It is not assumed that the existing hardstanding will become the access to the site. The access will need to be designed in accordance with WSCC standards and allow for visibility along West End Lane in accordance with existing 85%ile speeds. Turning in and out of the site will need to be fully considered given that West End Lane is relatively narrow. Vehicle tracking plots should show this on the design drawings and land within the site may be required to ensure safe egress/ingress.

Consideration for pedestrians and cyclist should be included within the design of the vehicular access along with possible connections to the local Public Right of Way network.

No highway objection on traffic generation or sustainability terms given the level of existing development in the area and proximity to Henfield.

No comments can be given at this point on highway safety elements of site access at this point.

Place Services Landscape officer: Objection.

The proposed development would affect the tranquil character of West End Lane and introduce urbanising features along this rural road. The site removes an open gap between residential groups along the lane, which contributes to the rural character of the minor road, and provides a break in the existing ribbon developed character. We therefore judge that introducing additional linear development along the entire site road edge consisting of 9 no. dwellings would have an adverse effect on the character of West End Lane.

There may be capacity for a reduced number of dwellings occupying a smaller section of the proposed field, while still remaining consistent with the ribbon development pattern to the south of West End Lane.

Southern Water: Comment that advice should be sought with regards to foul and surface water drainage.

Representations:

52 representations (from 29 individual addresses) were received, objecting to the proposal for the following reasons: -

- Conflict with Local Plan spatial strategy and countryside protection policies.
- Unsustainable location with poor accessibility to local services.
- Highway safety and access concerns.
- Parking
- Adverse impact on local character and appearance of the area.
- Over development of the site
- Amenity impacts (noise, privacy, light pollution).
- Ecological and drainage considerations.
- Cumulative impact of planning permissions in the area has eroded site character and character of area
- Increased pollution

Parish Comments:

Parish Council: Objection. This is an application to build a housing estate in a random field in the countryside. Henfield Parish Council feel that insufficient information has been provided to be able make a reasonable decision, notwithstanding , the application is contrary to the following Horsham District Planning Framework policies: -

- Policy 1 as it is not a strategic site in the Local Plan
- Policy 2 as it is not a nominated site in the Neighbourhood Plan
- Policy 3 as it is not within an existing built-up area
- Policy 4 as the site is not allocated in the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan and does not adjoin an existing settlement edge. This site is a countryside location
- Policy 10 as it does not maintain the quality and character of the area. This is in a rural area with widely distributed housing. The application creates a new housing estate which is out of keeping. The proposed street scene would conflict with the open space look and feel of the lane
- Policy 23 as the site cannot be served by safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access; or cannot be supplied with essential services. The lane is narrow, making passing difficult. West End Lane does not have mains drainage. The lane is well used by walkers, cyclist (accessing the Downslink) and Horse riders (livery stable further down the lane)
- Policy 25 as it does not protect, conserve or enhance the landscape, does not maintain or enhance biodiversity or contribute to the Weald to Waves nature recovery corridor in which it is situated
- Policy 26 as the site lies outside built-up area boundaries and does not support the needs of agriculture or forestry. The site is unsustainable; it is over 1.5 miles for the High Street , local school and medical centre

- Policy 27 - The application would have an urbanising effect on what is open farmland in a rural lane, it does not contribute to the conservation, enhancement and amenity of the countryside.
- Policy 33.2 as there is loss of amenity to the neighbouring properties. A countryside location will now be a housing estate with 24/7 disturbance, traffic and light pollution
- Policy 33.4 as it does not respect the character of the surrounding area and buildings
- Policy 40 as there is no sustainable transport to the site. The nearest bus route is in Henfield High Street

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

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

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

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The Permission in Principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for residential development. It separates the consideration of matters of "principle" for the proposed development, from the "technical details" of the development. As such, the Permission in Principle route has two stages: the first being the "Permission in Principle" stage (subject of this current application), which establishes whether the site is suitable in-principle; and the second being the "Technical Details consent" stage which is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

The scope of the Permission in Principle application (being the first stage) is limited to location, land use, and amount of development, as explained in Paragraph 012 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Permission in Principle):

'The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. In addition, local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission.'

The PPG 020 (Reference ID: 58-020-20180615) further states that:

'It is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle and its terms may only include the site location, the type of development and amount of development. Local planning authorities can inform applicants about what they expect to see at the technical details consent stage.'

Location:

Policy 2 of the HDPF sets out the overarching growth strategy, focusing development within the District's main settlements. The adopted settlement hierarchy represents the most sustainable approach to accommodating growth, directing the majority of new housing to Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst, with only limited development elsewhere, and only where it accords with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 3 of the HDPF seeks to retain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations possible. Policy 4 supports limited settlement expansion outside built-up area boundaries only where: the site is allocated in the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the scale of growth is appropriate to the settlement; the

proposal meets identified local needs; and the development is contained within defensible boundaries that respect landscape character.

In this countryside location, Policy 26 of the HDPF is also engaged. It seeks to protect the rural area against inappropriate development unless it is essential to a countryside location and meets one of the following criteria: supporting agriculture or forestry; enabling mineral extraction or waste disposal; providing for quiet informal recreation; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas.

Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) similarly advises that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless specific exceptions apply—such as for rural workers, heritage benefits, the reuse of redundant buildings that enhance their setting, subdivision of existing dwellings, or design of exceptional quality.

Policy 1 of the Henfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals located inside the built-up area boundary of Henfield will be supported provided that the accord with the other provisions of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan and the Horsham District Planning Framework.

The application site lies outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary, and therefore in planning policy terms lies within the countryside. The proposal seeks permission in principle for up to nine dwellings. Accordingly, the proposal conflicts with the spatial strategy of Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the HDPF, which direct new growth to the most sustainable settlements to minimise reliance on the private car and promote access to services.

The site is bound by an agricultural track to the west with a series of large, detached dwellings (Partwick, Tangle, Fursdon and Burnleigl) present behind. To the east the properties of Appletrees and Lidd Nurseries are present which collectively occupy a significant plot(s) of roughly equivalent size to the application site. Appletrees and Lidd Nurseries feature a large number of mature/established trees and Public Right of Way (PROW) No.2528 passes through the eastern extent of this neighbouring plot. A larger agricultural field bounds the site to the north and sits at a greater elevation relative to the site, which features a gradual rise away from West End Land moving northwards. West End Lane, in general, possesses a mainly rural character with verdant edges and occasional views over adjacent farmland. Some domesticating influences are, however, present, including pre-existing residential development, occasional street-lighting and vehicle movements.

The applicant advocates that the site constitutes previously developed land. However, previously developed land according to the glossary in the NPPF *“Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed).”* In this case, there is a modestly sized area of foundation/hardstanding such that the applicant has stated that they have an extant permission to enact DC/11/2631. However, no structure has been built to date and there is no evidence to suggest any intention to do so. The NPPF states that excluded from the definition is land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape. It was evident from the site visit and can be seen on recent google streetscene views that the area of concrete is not readily visible from West End Lane, it would not therefore be considered of such significance as to overcome any identified policy conflict.

The site is located in an unsustainable rural location, remote from day-to-day services and public transport connections. Given the above, officers consider that whilst the site may be relatively close to the Henfield BUAB, as the crow flies, when considering the nature of the proposed use, the suitability of West End Lane to accommodate the use, and the availability of alternative modes of transport, the site would fail to be “well related” to the settlement. Any residential development would be heavily dependent on the private car and would not represent a sustainable pattern of growth.

It is therefore concluded that the principle of development is unacceptable, as the proposal would constitute unsustainable residential development in the countryside, contrary to Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the overarching principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Land Use:

The application relates to the erection of up to 9 dwellings within the application site. The block plan suggests that the dwellings would be located in a linear pattern of development in close proximity to West End Lane. The development site currently appears from the road as an open field with a modestly sized area of footings from a stables that were never constructed.

The Henfield Neighbourhood plan states at paragraph 5.81 that “There is a need to preserve and respect views into and out of the Parish, particularly the Parish vista both to and from the South Downs National Park. Prominent views are: The view from West End Lane/Stone Pit Lane to the northwest with extensive views over the Adur floodplain contributes to the rural setting of Henfield as a Downland Village.”

The introduction of 9 dwellings would result in a significant increase of built form, domestic paraphernalia and activities on site would be prominently viewed within the immediate setting, including by walkers connecting into the PRow network. This matter would be exacerbated by the limited scale of the site and the gentle north/south slope of the site, providing clear views of the site in its entirety from West End Lane. The built form would disrupt the prominent views sought for preservation outlined within the Henfield Neighbourhood plan. The introduction of these features would create a highly suburban character to the site, eroding the existing rural character and giving rise to an urbanising / domesticating impacts relative to the existing, undeveloped, condition of land detrimental to the current rural qualities of the site, and its surroundings.

As outlined above, residential development within the countryside location, on a site not allocated for development within the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan, would be contrary to the overarching spatial strategy expressed through Policies 3 and 4 of the HDPF. The provision of 9 residential dwellings, or a potentially reduced number on the site would represent inappropriate development within an unsustainable location, with the proposed land use not considered appropriate for these reasons.

Amount of Development:

Policies 25 and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances landscape character and ensures that proposals reflect the locally distinctive character of settlements.

Policy 32 requires high quality design. Proposals should consider landscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

However, within the context of a Permission in Principle application, the consideration of “amount” is not confined solely to visual or layout impacts. It must also address whether the scale of development proposed is appropriate having regard to the site’s countryside location and its position outside the defined settlement hierarchy.

Policy 12 of the Henfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals will be supported where their design and detailing meet the relevant requirements of the Henfield Parish Design Statement. In addition, as appropriate to the site concerned, development proposal should be of a scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials that are of a high quality and reflect the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and street scene.

The surrounding built pattern along West End lane reflects incremental rural evolution rather than planned expansion. Introducing even a single new dwelling within the application site would extend residential encroachment into an area that presently reads as part of the countryside gap between built form, thereby altering that transitional character. It is noted that the description of the application is for ‘up to 9 dwellings’ which is considered a significant number in terms of the visual impact it would have on the green gap between the sporadic built form in the locality. The increase of 9 dwellings would contribute to growth outside the settlement boundary in a manner that conflicts with the Development

Plan's objective of directing new housing to defined sustainable locations. The amount of development is therefore not neutral in policy terms; it would establish a precedent for residential use that is unrelated to the settlement strategy and would cumulatively erode the distinction between settlement and countryside.

SuDS infrastructure and green infrastructure planting would need to be included as part of the proposals. Within the red line boundary (RLB), space for these features would need to be integrated. Whilst Landscape as a singular material planning consideration cannot be assessed as part of the current application given the nature of it as a 'Permission in principle', the Place services Landscape officer has been consulted during the course of the application and considers that to integrate an acceptable amount of green infrastructure at a technical details stage, the indicative number of dwellings would need to be reduced at the current 'PIP' stage.

It was noted during the appeal for APP/Z3825/W/17/3189147 in paragraph 6 that: 'There are no buildings within the appeal site at present and the permission that has been commenced relates to a modestly sized building.' The appeal for two log cabins was refused and dismissed at appeal under APP/Z3825/W/17/3189147, despite having a permission that was commenced relating to a modestly sized stables in part given that even this scale of development would be an inappropriate amount for the location. By comparison the 9 dwellinghouses proposed would have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the application site.

The proximity of the development with those nearby houses would result in a concentration of residential development on this part of west end lane and would end in development on either side of the road. Such a consolidation of the number of dwellings separate and detached from the settlement of Henfield would be detrimental to the undeveloped rural character of much of the road.

Other Considerations:

Water Neutrality:

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality.

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

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

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

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

Sustainable Transport

In terms of parking, the Inspector concluded within APP/Z3825/W/17/3189147 that “West End Lane is relatively narrow in the vicinity of the site and the combined effect of vehicles associated with the development reversing from the site close to parked cars would be to the detriment to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers using the highway.” Given that it is very likely that 9 dwellings would result in additional vehicular movements, the location of the site, in an isolated location to the west of the built up area of Henfield and accessed only by a rural vehicular track, the application site is not located in an area where the site would be reasonably accessible.

The site lies in a location where walking and cycling to key services would be impractical for most residents, and there are no realistic public transport options. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy 40 of the HDPF.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) require that development mitigates the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reduced flood risk, lower water consumption, enhanced biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect Chapter 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), which requires that local plans and decisions support the transition to a low carbon future and minimise vulnerability to climate impacts.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, limited technical detail has been provided at this stage. At the detailed design stage, it is anticipated that the following measures could be incorporated to ensure the development builds resilience to climate change and reduces carbon emissions:

- Water consumption limited to 110 litres per person per day, in line with Policy 37 and Building Regulations Part G;
- Integration of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable surfacing to manage surface water runoff;
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points for the dwelling;
- Refuse and recycling storage incorporated within the layout;
- Opportunities for biodiversity net gain, to be delivered through new landscaping and habitat creation; and
- Improved energy performance of the dwellings in accordance with, or exceeding, Building Regulations Part L requirements.

Full details of these measures would be expected at the Technical Details Consent stage, where conditions can be imposed to secure their implementation. Subject to these future provisions, the proposed development could suitably reduce its impact on climate change and would accord with Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must

not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

Given the outline nature of this Permission in Principle application, detailed ecological information has not been submitted at this stage. Should the principle of development be supported, ecological survey work and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures would be required at the Technical Details Consent stage to ensure compliance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the NPPF (2024), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The site also falls within the scope of the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime. A minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity value will be required to be demonstrated at the Technical Details Consent stage, through submission of a habitat baseline assessment and Biodiversity Metric calculation in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (General) Regulations 2024.

At this stage, insufficient information is submitted to demonstrate that the site would provide scope to deliver BNG through appropriate landscaping and habitat creation as part of any detailed design, and as such it is considered that BNG would have to be considered at technical matters stage.

Conclusions and Planning Balance:

In determining a Permission in Principle application, the Local Planning Authority is required to consider only the location, land use, and amount of development. Detailed matters—including layout, appearance, access, landscaping, drainage, and environmental mitigation—are reserved for any future Technical Details Consent stage and do not form part of this assessment. The site contains no buildings cannot be described as previously developed in physical terms, the introduction of nine new residential units would create a substantial new residential use on land situated outside any defined Built-Up Area Boundary.

The site is not allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) or a Made Neighbourhood Plan. The site does not form a logical extension to the existing settlement pattern and would instead represent an encroachment of residential development into the countryside, contrary to the spatial strategy which directs growth toward sustainable, well-connected settlements. Development of the application site would result in a significant urban intrusion into the wider countryside which would be prominent from the wider landscape such that it would represent contribute to an erosion of the distinction between settlement and countryside.

This report has acknowledged that the Council is unable to demonstrate a full 5-year housing land supply, and it is recognised that this forms a material consideration in decision making which triggers the application of the 'tilted balance' at Paragraph 11d of the NPPF. In accordance with Paragraph 11d, the Council is required to grant permission unless either (or both) of the following limbs apply:

- '(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination'*

NPPF Paragraph 14 outlines the continued relevance of Neighbourhood Plans in situations where the presumption of favour or 'tilted balance' applies. Paragraph 14 states:

'in situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:

- a) *the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
- b) *the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.'*

In this instance, the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021) was formally made on 23rd June 2021 and is therefore less than five years old. In addition, Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021) allocates for a total of 270 dwellings across 4 sites to meet identified local needs up to 2031 as identified in their Housing Needs Assessment undertaken in July 2017. It is therefore considered that both criteria (a) and (b) of NPPF Paragraph 14 have been met.

Policy 1 of the Henfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals located inside the built-up area boundary of Henfield will be supported provided that these accord with the other provisions of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan and the Horsham District Planning Framework. The proposal is therefore in conflict with the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021) and as per NPPF Paragraph 14 above, the adverse impact of this conflict is *'is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'* for the purposes of NPPF 11d (i).

The development of nine dwellings would make a modest contribution to housing supply, However, the site remains located within the open countryside, remote from day-to-day services and facilities and would result in permanent visual harm to the countryside location. Establishing a residential scheme of this scale in this location would create an unsustainable pattern of development, contrary to the spatial strategy of the Development Plan and the sustainability principles of the NPPF.

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

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

While the current housing shortfall is a material consideration of significant weight, the site does not adjoin a settlement edge and therefore would not benefit from the provisions of the 'Shaping development in Horsham District'.

Taking account of the identified harm to rural character, the unsustainable nature of the location, and the conflict with the Council's spatial strategy, the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. It is noted that the submission refers to appeals elsewhere in the District which were allowed at appeal, while these examples have been considered they do not overcome or justified the harm identified within this report.

Accordingly, the proposal would not represent sustainable development when assessed against the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and it is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The development would be sited within an unsustainable location in the countryside, outside of a defined built-up area boundary, and on a site not allocated for housing development within the Horsham District Planning Framework, or a made Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is not essential to its countryside location. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) at paragraph 11(d), it is not considered that there are any material considerations in this instance which would outweigh harm arising from conflict with Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
2. The development would result in unacceptable encroachment of the countryside to the detriment of the informal and undeveloped character of the wider surroundings. The proposed quantum of development would result in an increase in the built form, in a manner that would suburbanise the site and formalise its setting. The development would appear out of character with the sporadic and informal nature of the surrounding built form, would not protect, conserve or enhance the landscape character of the area, and would not reflect or maintain the settlement characteristics or build pattern of the surroundings. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policies 1 and 10 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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

Plans list for: DC/26/0041

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Site plan		NONE	09.01.2026
Supporting Statement	Planning, Design and Access	NONE	09.01.2026
Supporting Docs	Comparative Sustainability Assessment	NONE	09.01.2026
Location plan		NONE	12.01.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 2nd March 2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 02.03.2026