MME PLANNING SERVICES

Creation of an agricultural access track.

at

Land at Northlands Lane, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 3EZ

Planning Statement

Ref: P-106a

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Version 1

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Figure 1: Site Location

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1. Introduction

1.1 MME Planning Services is instructed to submit an application for the creation of an agricultural access track at Land at Northlands Lane, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 3EZ. The proposed access track would serve an agricultural storage barn which was recently granted prior approval under planning reference DC/26/1390, in September 2026.

1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard to the following aspects: the planning history of the site, the development proposals, the relevant planning policy, the planning merits of the scheme and how the proposals comply with the Council's policies.

2. Site, Surroundings and Background

2.1 The application site is located on the western side of Northlands Lane, at the junction between Northlands Lane and Greenhurst Lane, Storrington, outside any defined built-up area. The site is therefore located within a countryside location in policy terms.

2.2 The wider site consists of a large field, bounded by tree belt and mature foliage, measuring approximately 3.6ha in area. The site is served by an existing access located at the north-eastern corner of the site, with existing access gate. The applicant's holding also comprises 1.4ha at Hole Street Wiston and 5.9ha located at Dagbrook Lane (total holding size c.10.9ha).

2.3 As set out above, an agricultural storage barn has recently been granted prior approval on the site. The development which is the subject of this application would provide access to and from the barn, utilising the existing gated access onto the public highway located to the north-east of the site.

3. Planning History

- Prior Notification for the erection of an agricultural storage barn.

  Ref. No: DC/26/1390 | Status: Prior Approval Not Required, September 2026

4. Proposals

4.1 Planning permission is sought for the creation of an agricultural access track connecting the existing gated field access onto the public highway with the recently permitted agricultural storage barn.

4.2 The proposed access track would be modest in nature and scale, measuring approximately 40m in length and 4.4m in width. The access track would be constructed with scalpings / Type 1 MOT aggregate, to provide a suitable and durable surface for tractors and heavy machinery associated with the use of the site and storage within the permitted barn.



Figure 2: Proposed Block Plan (also showing previously approved barn and hardstanding area)

4.3 No alterations are proposed to the existing access point onto the public highway, with the existing gate retained, as per the current arrangement.

5. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026) and National Guidance

5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.

5.2 Running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is achieved through three main objectives: economic, social and environmental.

5.3 Policy S3 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development and development proposals that accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies in the NPPF should be approved without delay. Where development is proposed outside a settlement, Policy S5 of the NPPF identifies the categories of development which should be approved, subject to the same assessment of benefits and adverse effects.

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

5.4 The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to maintain an effective and up-to-date development plan. Policy PM2 sets out the framework for the preparation and review of local plans and spatial strategies and that preparation of a new local plan must be commenced no later than five years after adoption of the current plan.

5.5 The Horsham District Local Plan is currently at examination, where the Inspector's letter dated 30 October 2026 concludes that the plan is sound, subject to the proposed main modifications and the limited number of further changes discussed within the letter. The final report from the Inspector is anticipated to be received in January 2027, where changes to the draft Schedule of Main Modifications will need to be published for consultation. Given this letter and the status of the Local Plan, the policies contained within the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (HDLP) are considered to be of significant weight.

5.6 The main HDPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
- 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

Horsham District Local Plan (HDLP) 2023-2040

5.7 Although the HDLP has not yet been adopted, the following emerging policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
- Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection
- Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
- Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
- Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
- Policy 31 - Rural Economic Development

Storrington, Sullington & Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

5.8 The Neighbourhood Plan policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 1: A Spatial Plan for the Parishes
- Policy 8: Countryside Protection
- Policy 14: Design
- Policy 17: Traffic & Transport

Planning Advice Notes (PANs)

5.9 Relevant PANs to this application are as follows:

- Shaping Development in Horsham District
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

6. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 Policy S5(1)(a) of the new NPPF 2026 specifically identifies development proposals for agriculture, horticulture and forestry as a category of development that should be approved outside settlements, unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies.

6.2 This new policy expressly recognises agricultural development as an appropriate form of development outside settlements. The development therefore falls squarely within S5(1)(a), subject to the assessment of the specific effects of the development. This new policy is considered to be highly relevant and applicable to this development.

6.3 Policy 26 of the HDPF states that: “Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria: support the needs of agriculture or forestry; enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provide for quiet informal recreational use; or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the level of overall activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and /or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.”

6.4 The proposal consists of an agricultural access track which would serve the recently permitted agricultural storage building. The development is modest in scale and is considered reasonably necessary to facilitate the continued agricultural use and management of the holding. The provision of a suitable and durable access would enable tractors and other agricultural machinery to access the permitted barn throughout the year, including during colder and wetter periods when the existing field surface may become unsuitable for regular vehicular movements. The proposed track would also help to prevent unnecessary damage to the agricultural land arising from repeated machinery movements.

6.5 The proposed track would support the agricultural activities, with sufficient space retained on site for hay cropping. Overall, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy S5 of the NPPF and Policy 26 of the HDPF, and would be acceptable in principle.

Design, Appearance, and Impact on the Setting

6.6 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including the landform, development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats. Development will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation. In addition, development will be supported where it maintains and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network.

6.7 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built-surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.

6.8 As set out above, the proposed access track is modest in nature and relatively short in overall length and width, with an appropriate and functional surface proposed for the intended use. As such, given the extent of the works, the proposal would have minimal impact on the landscape character of the area. The site is well contained with existing soft boundary vegetation and foliage and the proposal would be screened from views from public vantage points, albeit that glimpses of the track would be visible from the existing gated entrance to the site. The proposals would not appear prominently or be out of keeping within this context.

6.9 Furthermore, the layout, form and proposed materials of the access track would be consistent with the functional requirements of an agricultural holding and would reflect the character and appearance of access arrangements commonly found within rural settings. The proposal would therefore represent an appropriate and proportionate form of development in the context of the existing agricultural use of the land.

6.10 The visual impact of the proposal is considered acceptable and overall, the proposals would represent appropriate development within this countryside setting, in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Neighbouring Amenity

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

6.12 The application site is located some distance from residential properties, and separated by fields and mature soft landscaping. Given this spatial context and the nature and extent of the proposals, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties, in accordance with the above policy.

Parking and Highways

6.13 Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF require that development provides safe and suitable access and adequate parking and facilities to meet the needs of anticipated users, with consideration given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking and electric/low emission vehicles.

6.14 No alterations are proposed to the existing gated entrance onto the public highway, which would be retained in its current position and configuration. The existing access has historically served the agricultural holding, and the proposed development would not introduce a materially different use of the site.

6.15 The proposed access track would provide a suitable internal route between the existing entrance and the recently permitted agricultural storage barn. Accordingly, the proposal is not anticipated to result in a material intensification of vehicular movements or give rise to any unacceptable highway safety implications.

6.16 Therefore, there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal and the application would be in accordance with the above policies.

Tree and Ecological Considerations

6.17 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that –

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

6.17 Given the nature, limited extent and positioning of the proposed works, no trees, ecological features or existing habitats within or surrounding the site would be directly affected by the development. The proposed access track would utilise an area of existing agricultural land / grassland and would not require the removal of established boundary vegetation or mature trees. Accordingly, the proposal is not considered likely to result in any significant adverse ecological impacts.

7. Summary and Conclusion

7.1 Overall, the proposal represents an appropriate form of development within the countryside setting which would be reasonably required in relation to the existing agricultural use of the site and the approved agricultural barn. The proposed access track would provide a practical and durable means of accessing the barn and site throughout the year, whilst ensuring that the majority of the field remains available for agricultural purposes. The proposals would be acceptable in terms of design and impact on the setting, and would not appear prominently within this context given the extent and functional nature of the works.

7.2 The proposed development would be proportionate to its countryside location and would represent an appropriate form of agricultural development, in accordance with Policy S5(1)(a) of the NPPF 2026 and Policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the HDPF. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to grant planning permission accordingly.