



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/1954

1 Hilltop Cottages, The Mount, Ifield, West Sussex, RH11 0LF

DESCRIPTION:

Removal of existing barn building and erection of 5no. detached single storey self-build/custom build dwellings with associated works.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/25/1963	Demolition of existing outbuilding. Erection of 1no. detached two storey self-build/custom-build dwelling with associated works.	Application Refused on 12.02.2026
DC/22/0347	Retrospective application for the change of use of barn to commercial storage (Use Class B8).	Application Refused on 12.08.2024
DC/16/2372	Use of barn as two residential dwellings and associated works (Certificate of Lawful Development - Existing)	Refusal on 25.08.2017
DC/18/2530	Conversion of existing barn into two dwellings with associated car parking facilities	Refusal on 26.06.2019
DC/19/1962	Continued use of former agricultural building for residential purposes ancillary to the authorised use of the main dwelling (Certificate of Lawful Development - Existing)	Refusal on 05.02.2020

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is a field with a barn on it, accessed via a private access to the north east of the barn. The application site is outside of a built up area boundary and is therefore within the countryside in policy terms. To the west of the application site is a grade II listed building known as The mount and listed as 'Hill House'.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The external materials would include brick, timber and stone with clay tile roof. The windows and doors would be in either timber or aluminium which would need to be confirmed later by condition. Each of the dwellings would have two car parking spaces provided for a total of ten spaces. Plots 1 and 3 would have 2 bedrooms and plots 2, 4 and 5 would have three bedrooms. The dwellings would be single storey in nature and would incorporate integral car ports and bike/ bin storage. There are some proposed landscaping works.

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 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs
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 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 – Parking

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 1.7years. 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 15: Settlement Coalescence
Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking

Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 39: Affordable Housing
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District **Supplementary Planning Guidance:**
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Rusper Neighbourhood plan 2018-2031

Policy RUS1: Spatial Plan
Policy RUS3: Design
Policy RUS4: Local Heritage Assets
Policy RUS6: Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes

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

It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

HDC Ecology Consultant (Place services):

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech, March 2025) has been reviewed. Buildings B1 and B2 have negligible bat-roost potential, and no tree removal is proposed, so no further bat surveys are required at this stage. If plans change and trees are affected, a Ground Level Tree Assessment for bats will be needed.

Because bramble scrub is present, the non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse must be secured by condition and fully implemented. The same applies to the Precautionary Method Statement for reptiles and other mobile protected or Priority species, including Hedgehog.

There is sufficient ecological information to determine the application. Comments on Great Crested Newt fall under the remit of the NatureSpace Partnership.

All mitigation measures in the appraisal should be secured by condition to protect bats, Hazel Dormouse, reptiles, and other Priority species.

A Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy should also be conditioned, with technical specifications submitted before occupation.

WSCC Highways: No objection

The site lies south of The Mount near Ifield and currently contains a barn, which is proposed to be demolished and replaced with five single-storey self/custom-build homes (3×3-bed and 2×2-bed), with associated parking and landscaping.

The development will use the existing access from The Mount, upgraded with permeable surfacing. There are no visibility issues at the access, and collision data from the past five years shows no injury accidents nearby, indicating no existing safety concerns.

The scheme provides 10 parking spaces (2 per dwelling), which is appropriate for the location. Cycle parking can be accommodated within each plot. The layout allows vehicles to turn on-site and exit in forward gear.

The rural location lacks footways, lighting, and nearby services, meaning residents are likely to rely on private cars for most journeys. Although no trip generation data was submitted, the Highway Authority considers that the small scale of development will not materially affect the local highway network.

Overall, the proposal is not expected to create an unacceptable highway safety impact or severe cumulative effects, and therefore complies with NPPF paragraphs 114–117.

HDC Conservation Officer: No objection

The existing building is a utilitarian structure reflective of modern farming practice. It is placed within the setting of The Mount Farm, a grade II listed farmhouse and its associated historic agricultural buildings. It does not reflect these traditional farm buildings that characterise the historic landscape of this part of Sussex. The removal of this building is welcomed.

The proposed creation of a courtyard development of five detached single storey dwellings will have an impact within the setting of the listed building. However, I am satisfied this is at the lower end of the scale of harm. The physical change that has occurred through the twentieth century has diluted the ability to fully understand and appreciate the historic context of the former farmstead. Although the proposed development will reinforce the residential character of the location, the dwellings will not look out of place in the countryside. If you are minded to permit the application I have suggested conditions below.

Southern water: General comment

The development site is not within Southern Water's wastewater service area, and Thames Water is the correct statutory undertaker.

Southern Water advises that insufficient information has been provided regarding surface-water drainage. No construction should begin until full details of the proposed surface-water disposal method are submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.

The applicant must demonstrate compliance with the surface-water drainage hierarchy (Part H3 of the Building Regulations), prioritising:

1. Reuse
2. Infiltration
3. Watercourse discharge
4. Storm sewer
5. Combined sewer

Southern Water encourages early engagement with engineers and landscape designers to ensure an appropriate drainage strategy and potentially avoid the need for network reinforcement.

They request a planning condition requiring approval of surface-water runoff disposal details—including discharge points, rates, and volumes—before development begins.

Because the proposal involves demolition, Southern Water also seeks measures to protect existing water-supply infrastructure.

HDC Environmental Health Officer: Objection for initial comment [Summary]

The noise report does not consider the impacts of the increased aircraft activity and aviation noise following the approval of the Development Consent Order for the Northern Runway Project at Gatwick Airport.

The development site is projected to fall within the outer noise insulation zone from 2032 and therefore further information is required on the insulation of the dwelling against aircraft noise and the mitigation of overheating risks.

Environmental Health Officer: Objection for secondary comment [Summary]

The applicant has submitted further information as part of the application process however this has not been sufficient to overcome concerns arising from the noise impacts of the proposal for future occupants.

Naturespace comment: Applicant is in the process of acquiring a NatureSpace License such that it represents sufficient mitigation of the impacts of the development.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

9 letters of Objection have been received from 8 addresses, objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Highways safety concern
- Private lane and traffic, damage to soft verges
- Overdevelopment
- Contrary to neighbourhood plan
- No details of drainage
- No details of flooding
- Design concerns as the development does not reflect the locality
- Given that there is another development proposed for 5 dwellings to the immediate rear of the site, the cumulative impact would be a loss of character.
- Amenity concerns
- Extensive enforcement issues within the applicant's ownership
- Noise impact assessment is not reflective of the site situation
- Harm to wildlife

Parish Comments:

Parish Council: Objection

- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise

Committee considers that the scale and density of the proposed development are excessive for the site and would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area, local amenity, and the surrounding countryside. Concerns are also raised regarding access to the site, the impact of construction traffic, and potential effects on grazing animals. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to the Rusper Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, particularly the policies relating to appropriate scale and density of development, landscape character, and the protection of the rural setting. The Council also notes that there is a dog kennel business opposite the site and that the area is both equestrian and frequently used by walkers, with no footpaths, meaning horses and pedestrians regularly share the road. The Parish Council further notes that application EN/24/0333 on the same site is still outstanding.

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

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

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

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 2 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) sets out the main growth strategy, focusing development in the main settlements. The application site is situated outside of any of the defined settlements as categorised under Policy 3 of the HDPF, and therefore is considered to be in a countryside location in policy terms.

Policy 4 of the HDPF outlines that the expansion of settlements outside the built-up area are supported where the site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge; the level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type; the development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs; the impact of development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long term development; and the development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced. The HDPF outlines that the proposed settlement hierarchy is the most sustainable approach to delivering housing; with new development focused in the larger settlements of Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst; with limited new development elsewhere, only where it accords with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 3 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to retain the existing settlement pattern and ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations as possible.

Policy 26 of the HDPF only permits development in the countryside where such a location is essential, and the proposal meets one of four criteria. These are that it either supports the needs of agriculture or forestry; enables the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provides for quiet informal recreational use; or enables the sustainable development of rural areas.

Emerging Strategic Policy 2 of the draft Horsham District Local Plan (HDLP) promotes a similar development hierarchy within the defined BUAB as in Policy 3 of the HDPF. Therefore, as the proposal is located outside the defined BUAB this proposal does not accord with Emerging Strategic Policy 2. Emerging Strategic Policy 3 of the HDLP supports the expansion of existing settlements to meet identified local housing needs where all the criteria detailed within the policy is met. This includes the site being either allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoining the existing settlement edge.

Policy RUS1: Spatial plan in the Rusper Parish neighbourhood plan defines the built up area boundary of Rusper, which supports policy 4 of the HPDF.

In this countryside location, the proposal is also considered against Policy 26 which seeks to protect the countryside against inappropriate development unless it is considered essential and appropriate in scale; whilst also meeting one of four criteria. These criteria include: supporting the needs of agriculture or forestry; enabling the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; providing for quiet informal recreational use; or enabling the sustainable development of rural areas.

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (1.7 years at the time of writing). In response, the Council published the 'Shaping Development in Horsham District' Planning

Advisory Note (SDPAN) document. This guidance acknowledges that applications on unallocated sites outside BUABs may come forward in the absence of a five-year supply. It states that proposals will be considered positively where they meet all of the following criteria:

- The site adjoins the existing settlement edge;
- The scale of expansion is appropriate to the settlement;
- The proposal meets local housing needs or supports community facilities;
- The development does not prejudice long-term comprehensive development; and
- The site is contained within a defensible boundary and maintains/enhances landscape character.

The above approach is intended to facilitate housing development in the most sustainable locations, with those being sites with a direct relationship to the edges of settlements. The site does not have any such relationship with a settlement boundary, being instead located amongst a loose cluster of development. The proposal would not therefore benefit from the provision of the SDPAN as the development is not contained within an existing defensible boundary to the west. The spread of residential paraphernalia would extend beyond the built form on site and alter the landscape character of the site.

The proposal is therefore contrary to policies 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the HDPF, in addition to Policy RUS1 of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan, and there principle of the development is therefore resisted. The appropriate degree of weight to be assigned to conflict with these policies is detailed further below.

Design, Character and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposals should take into account townscape 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.

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality of the emerging local plan holds limited weight. The policy aims to achieve high-quality and inclusive design for all development in the District will be required based on a clear understanding of the local, physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context.

Policy RUS3 of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan states that proposals for new development must be of the highest design standards and will be required to reflect the character and scale of surrounding buildings. Proposals should satisfactorily take into account, among other things, the significance of any heritage assets and their settings and how the proposal will sustain and enhance that significance, and the retention of key views out to the countryside.

The character of the area is rural and verdant, with limited buildings to the rear of the residential development along the street – with much of the buildings in the locality consisting of agricultural buildings, equestrian use, and small rural enterprise which would not be unexpected in this location. The site's wider setting is predominantly rural and agricultural in character on account of the surrounding, undeveloped fields and agricultural features, including the presence of farm buildings, which are reflective of the locality and contribute to its rural qualities. There is a predominance of undeveloped, agricultural fields of irregular pattern, defined by hedgerow and shaws.

The dwellings would sit to the rear of the Hilltop cottages. The dwellings would be single storey in nature and would incorporate integral car ports and bike / bin storage. There is some landscaping indicated on the block plan, there is nothing to suggest this would represent an enhancement of the landscape.

The Design and Access statement states that the dwellings would be arranged in a courtyard to reflect a farm courtyard, however given the configuration, appearance and proximity of the dwellings, the

development would be unmistakably residential. The site is visually linked with the surrounding countryside to the west and to the south where the equestrian paddock is located and would be anticipated within this countryside location. Given the visual link between the site and the surrounding countryside, there would be some localised visual harm arising from the built form extending into a countryside location.

It is considered that a barn with an open field in agricultural appearance would be anticipated within the application site, given the character of the wider area which is verdant with open fields and a loose pattern of residential dwellings along The Mount, it is considered that the current site situation in terms of having a barn with an agricultural appearance is a preferable form of development than the proposed, as the proposed would represent a loss of rural character due to the urbanising impacts of the development.

Heritage Impact

Policy 34 of the HDPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Applications for such development will be required to reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form, and design; make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, ensuring that development in Conservation Areas is consistent with the special character of the area.

The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted in respect of the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the listed building known as The Mount Farm, a grade II listed farmhouse. The Conservation Officer notes that the existing agricultural building would not reflect traditional farm buildings such that its removal would not result in harm. The proposed five dwellings would result in harm to the setting of the listed building; however, this would be at the lower end of the scale of harm. The proposal would need to demonstrate a sufficient public benefit to justify the harm. This will be discussed within the planning balance section of the report.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'* As above, the Council is not currently able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, thus the public benefit that would arise from the development (that being the delivery of 5x market dwellings) is considered to be a significant benefit, albeit somewhat diminished given the overall housing need. Nonetheless, this benefit alone would be considered sufficient enough to outweigh the harm identified by the Council's Conservation Officer, notwithstanding the wider impact of the development on the character of the area as a whole.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed development would erode the rural character of the application site, be incongruous with the loose pattern of development running west to east along The Mount and result in landscape harm, with the proposed development unmistakably residential and extending out into the open countryside. The proposed development would result in harm to the setting of the listed building, although it is acknowledged that this harm would be at the lower end of the scale. The proposed development is contrary to policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF, and policy RUS3 of the Ruspur Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

The dwellings would be single storey in nature such that it would be unlikely that the development would give rise to concern over overlooking or loss of privacy. Furthermore, the dwellings would have a

very modest but acceptable amenity space and the internal floorspace would be acceptable for each of the dwellings given their proposed number of bedrooms.

It is acknowledged that the future occupiers would be in close proximity to commercial premises and venues which would be at risk of causing potential noise disturbance. Environmental Health have been consulted as part of the application and have made an objection. The Environmental Health team consider that the noise report does not consider the impacts of the increased aircraft activity and aviation noise following the approval of the Development Consent Order for the Northern Runway Project at Gatwick Airport.

This would warrant further information being submitted to support the application, with the site falling into the outer noise insulation zone from 2032. Further information has been submitted by the applicant by way of an updated Noise impact assessment. Environmental Health has been reconsulted on the submission and consider that the initial concerns of the application have not been overcome, they acknowledge the future occupiers would be at risk of unacceptable noise impacts due to the kennels in close proximity to the site.

Highways Impacts:

Policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF promote development that provides safe and adequate access, suitable for all users.

The application includes associated parking and landscaping, with the existing access used from The Mount. Two parking spaces per dwelling have been included, with a total of ten spaces. Each plot would have cycle parking provision and on-site turning and exit is possible in forward gear. It is noted by WSCC Highways that given the rural location, there is a lack of footways, lighting, and nearby services, meaning residents are likely to rely on private cars for most journeys. The proposal would not materially affect the local highway network given the small scale of development.

There are no objections to the proposal in light of policies 40 and 41 of the HDPF.

Ecology:

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

Place services Ecology have been consulted to consider the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech, March 2025). From an assessment of the information, Buildings B1 and B2 as indicated within the PEA have negligible bat-roost potential such that no further bat surveys are required at this stage. There are recommended conditions in regards to non-licensed Precautionary Method Statement for Hazel Dormouse, reptiles and other mobile protected species. It is acknowledged that Naturespace have been corresponding with the applicant to attain a NatureSpace license.

It is considered therefore that sufficient information has been submitted to conclude that no further information is required in respect of protected species and there are no objections in light of policy 31 of the HDPF.

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.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

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

The Applicant has not submitted a biodiversity net gain matrix given that the application form outlines that the 5 dwellings would be self-build. As such, the application would be exempt from mandatory net gain requirements.

Conclusion and Planning Balance:

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of land and erection of five dwellings. The site is not allocated for development with the HDPF or a made neighbourhood plan, owing to the site's location outside of the built-up area boundary, the principle of the development is resisted under Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, paragraphs 2, 11, 12 and 47 of the NPPF, and Policy RUS1 of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan. Furthermore, the development would result in adverse harm to the character of the surrounding area, and it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the future occupant's development would not be adversely impacted from air traffic and commercial noise. The proposal also therefore conflicts with Policies 25, 32, 33 of the HDPF

The Council published its Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) in December 2025. Chapter 3 of the AMR revealed that the Council currently benefits from a deliverable supply of housing sites of 1.7-years. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged in this instance, meaning the 'tilted balance' applies to the assessment.

NPPF paragraph 11(d)(ii) states that where the policies most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless 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.

NPPF paragraph 14 also states that *'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...'*

As the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan is now over 5 years old, and the plan does not allocate sites for development, the plan is not afforded the 'protection' bestowed under paragraph 14 of the NPPF. Therefore, a diminished level of weight can only be attributed to the policies contained within the plan when assessing planning applications. However, the Neighbourhood Plan remains a component of the statutory Framework and part of the adopted Development Plan under Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. While its housing supply policies are out-of-date, its conflict with the overarching settlement strategy and its purpose to protect the rural character of the parish still carry measurable weight in the planning balance

As above, the Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (SDPAN) was endorsed at Cabinet on 17 September 2025. The SDPAN recognises at 5.12 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.

The site is located in a countryside location, though not isolated in the truest sense, it is a relatively remote location that does not adjoin the settlement edge. Therefore, the proposal fails on the first criterion and therefore the development does not benefit from the provisions of the SDPAN.

In the context of the Council's current five-year housing land supply position, the provision of housing as a general principle is a matter of significant weight. However, because this proposal would provide for five dwellings, it makes no meaningful contribution toward recovering this shortfall. As such, the weight attributable to this specific scheme's housing delivery is tempered to *moderate weight*.

Officers acknowledge that the development has been proposed as self- / custom-build dwellings. The Council recognises that there is a need to facilitate self-build projects within the District. However, there is a key difference between 'self-build' housing in terms of CIL and BNG exemption, and 'Self-build and Custom Housebuilding' as defined within the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and the subsequent Housing and Planning Act 2016. The two, though similarly named, represent different housing products.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The site is not included on the Council's self-build register, and the applicant has not detailed how the proposal would meet an unmet need of self-/custom-building within the local area or indeed the District. Therefore, the proposal would not be considered to meet the definition of Self-/Custom-build housing as per the relevant acts and PPG as above. In the absence of this information, the Council does not consider that this claim has any meaningful benefit in favour of granting permission.

It is acknowledged that any development would bestow socio-economic benefits, such as the creation of temporary jobs during the construction phase in the short-term, and local expenditure and contribution to the local economy in the medium to long-term arising from increase occupancy. However, this is not a particularly unique benefit that would result from this development. Nonetheless, this benefit is afforded *limited weight* in the overall planning balance.

The proposal's ability to demonstrate an absence of adverse ecological harm and acceptable highways impact (among others) are neutral considerations that demonstrate general policy compliance rather than positive benefits weighing in favour of the scheme. No other discernible benefits would arise from the granting of this permission.

As per the preceding sections of this report, the granting of this permission would conflict with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF. This conflict with the development plan is afforded *significant weight*, as

it would undermine the strategic process of allocating housing sites for development in appropriate locations, and the democratic process of selecting sites within Neighbourhood Plans. Furthermore, the resultant character harm and absence of demonstrating that the proposal would not give rise to amenity impacts on future occupants are also attributed *significant weight*.

While the Council’s housing land supply shortfall (1.7 years) triggers the presumption in favour of sustainable development under NPPF Paragraph 11(d), the tilted balance is not a green light for unsustainable development. In this case the site’s failure to meet the location criteria of the SDPAN, and the adverse character harm results in clear harm to the settlement strategy and character of the local area, in addition to potential amenity harm. These impacts combined significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of delivering 5x market dwellings when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole. As such, the presumption is displaced, and the proposal is therefore recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reasons for Refusal:

- 1. The development would enable a residential use within a countryside location outside of the built-up area boundary of any settlement, on a site which has not been allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework or an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The development would be contrary to the overarching strategy and hierarchical approach of concentrating development within the main settlements and is not essential to its countryside location. There are no material considerations which outweigh this harm, and the proposal represents unsustainable development contrary to Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Policy RUS1 of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan (2021) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
- 2. The spread of built form within a countryside location would result in an unsympathetic form of development that is not characteristic of the rural locality with its loose pattern of development. In terms of quantum of development, the proposal would be visually incongruous with the dwellings within the locality. Given the harm arising from the proposal, the development would be contrary to Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), and Policy RUS3 of the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan (2021).
- 3. It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the occupiers of the proposed development would not be adversely affected by aircraft and commercial noise. Due to the siting of the proposed development, there is therefore the potential to result in a poor-quality living environment, contrary to Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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

Plans list for: DC/25/1954

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

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan		2503HI_R0_000	27.11.2025

Block plan	Existing And Topographical Survey	2503HI_R0_001	27.11.2025
Block plan	Proposed	2503HI_R0_002	27.11.2025
Block plan	Proposed	2503HI_R0_400	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Proposed Plot 1	2503HI_R0_200	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plot 1	2503HI_R0_201	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Proposed Plot 2	2503HI_R0_202	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plot 2	2503HI_R0_203	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Proposed Plot 3	2503HI_R0_204	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plot 3	2503HI_R0_205	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Proposed Plot 4	2503HI_R0_206	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plot 4	2503HI_R0_207	27.11.2025
Floor plan	Proposed Plot 5	2503HI_R0_208	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plot 5	2503HI_R0_209	27.11.2025
Supporting Statement	PEA	NONE REV 2	27.11.2025
Supporting Statement	Noise Impact Assessment	794/MME/1Hilltop Cottages/NIA	27.11.2025
Supporting Statement	Great Crested Newt eDNA Sampling	NONE REV 2	27.11.2025
Elevation plan	Existing Left and Right	J002501/ PL 04	18.12.2025
Elevation plan	Existing Front and Rear	J002501/ PL 03	18.12.2025
Floor plan	Existing	J002501/PL 02	18.12.2025
Supporting Statement	Planning	P-017a	18.12.2025
Design & Access Statement		NONE	18.12.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 24.06.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 03.07.2026