

Planning Statement

Comprehensive redevelopment and rationalisation of New Barn Farm comprising the demolition of existing equestrian buildings, the erection of 10 dwellings, construction of replacement equestrian facilities including stables, horse walker and sand school, together with associated access, parking, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements, sustainable drainage infrastructure, engineering operations and all ancillary works.

New Barn Farm, Capel Road, Rusper

prepared by

WPS Planning

Planning Statement
New Barn Farm



Prepared by:	Doug Wright
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by WPS Planning in support of a full planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of land at New Barn Farm, Capel Road, Rusper, Horsham. The application seeks planning permission for the redevelopment and rationalisation of an established equestrian holding through the provision of ten new dwellings, the relocation and modernisation of the existing equestrian facilities, associated landscaping, ecological enhancements and all necessary infrastructure.
- 1.2 The application site comprises an established mixed-use rural holding containing a long-established commercial equestrian enterprise together with a number of lawful residential dwellings, converted agricultural buildings, stables, sand school, hardstanding, access roads and associated operational infrastructure. The site has evolved incrementally over many years through a combination of planning permissions, prior approvals and lawful development certificates, resulting in a fragmented layout where residential and commercial equestrian activities are interspersed throughout the site. Whilst the site continues to operate successfully, the existing arrangement no longer represents the most efficient or appropriate use of the land and gives rise to an unsatisfactory relationship between residential occupation and commercial equestrian operations.
- 1.3 Prior to the submission of this application, the applicant engaged proactively with Horsham District Council through the Council's pre-application advice service (Reference PE/25/0230). The pre-application proposal sought planning permission for eleven new dwellings together with the relocation of the equestrian enterprise. Whilst the Council identified a number of policy and technical concerns relating to the original scheme, it also acknowledged that the existing site layout had evolved through piecemeal development and that there would be clear benefits in rationalising the relationship between residential and equestrian uses. The Council accepted that separating these uses would improve both the operation of the equestrian business and the living conditions of existing and future residents.

- 1.4 The current proposal has been fundamentally redesigned in direct response to that advice. Rather than simply refining the original concept, the scheme has undergone a comprehensive review to address the comments made by the Local Planning Authority, specialist consultees and the wider technical team. The proposed development reduces the scale of residential development from the pre-application scheme, provides a significantly improved site layout, strengthens the landscape framework, enhances biodiversity, improves the relationship between residential and commercial uses and is supported by a comprehensive package of technical assessments. The application therefore represents a substantially different and considerably improved proposal to that originally considered through the pre-application process.
- 1.5 The proposal seeks to redevelop the existing central stable complex and associated hardstanding with a carefully designed residential development comprising ten dwellings arranged around a coherent internal layout, whilst relocating the principal equestrian facilities to the eastern part of the holding where they are better related to the existing paddocks and operational land. This approach secures the long-term future of the equestrian enterprise, significantly improves the operational efficiency of the site and creates a far clearer distinction between residential and commercial activities.
- 1.6 The proposed residential development has been designed to reflect the agricultural origins and rural character of New Barn Farm. The dwellings adopt a contemporary interpretation of traditional rural architecture, incorporating pitched roof forms, timber weatherboarding, high-quality natural materials and carefully considered detailing. The revised layout provides generous landscaping, improved building spacing, enhanced private amenity space and a well-defined hierarchy of streets and open spaces, resulting in a development that integrates positively within its countryside setting. The accompanying architectural drawings demonstrate the quality of the proposed design and the incorporation of integrated ecological enhancement features within the buildings.

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- 1.7 Environmental enhancement forms a fundamental component of the proposed development. The scheme includes substantial new structural landscaping, native tree and hedgerow planting, biodiversity enhancements, habitat creation, integrated bat and bird boxes, sustainable drainage measures and improved pedestrian connectivity throughout the site. Collectively, these measures will significantly enhance the environmental quality of the site and deliver measurable biodiversity improvements over the existing position, whilst softening the visual appearance of the development within the wider landscape.
- 1.8 The application is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports prepared by appropriately qualified consultants, including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Noise Impact Assessment, Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment, Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Flood Risk and Drainage information, Biodiversity Net Gain assessment and detailed architectural drawings. These reports have informed the evolution of the proposals and demonstrate that the development can be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable environmental, technical or amenity impacts.
- 1.9 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposal should be assessed against the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Horsham District Planning Framework and other material considerations, including the Council's acknowledged housing land supply position. It will show that the proposed development represents a sustainable and logical redevelopment of an established developed site, delivering high-quality housing, safeguarding an established rural business, improving the layout and appearance of the site, enhancing biodiversity and landscape character, and providing a comprehensive package of environmental benefits. When considered as a whole, the proposal accords with the overarching objectives of national planning policy to achieve sustainable development and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and planning permission should therefore be granted.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site comprises approximately 2no. hectares of land situated at New Barn Farm, Capel Road, Horsham, West Sussex. The site occupies an established equestrian holding located to the south of Capel Road and includes a mixture of operational equestrian facilities, residential properties and associated open land. The site has evolved over many years and now contains a variety of permanent buildings, extensive areas of hardstanding, internal access roads, parking areas, paddocks and ancillary structures associated with the existing equestrian business.
- 2.2 New Barn Farm is considerably more than a traditional equestrian establishment. The site has, for many years, operated as an internationally recognised sport horse breeding, production and training enterprise specialising in the breeding and development of elite show jumping horses. Horses produced at the holding have been sold throughout the United Kingdom and internationally, The continued success of this internationally respected rural enterprise depends upon the ability to modernise and reorganise its operational facilities. The proposed redevelopment therefore represents not only the delivery of new housing but a significant long-term investment in one of the District's established rural businesses, ensuring that it remains commercially competitive and capable of passing successfully to the next generation.
- 2.3 The principal developed area of the site currently comprises a substantial stable complex positioned centrally within the holding, together with associated parking, circulation areas, storage buildings and sand schools. Additional operational facilities, including an office building, horse walker, storage containers and associated infrastructure, are located towards the eastern side of the site. Several existing residential properties are also situated within the wider landholding and are to remain unaffected by the proposed development.

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- 2.4 The site benefits from two existing vehicular accesses directly onto Capel Road. These accesses currently serve both the residential properties and the equestrian business and provide good connectivity with the surrounding highway network. The proposed development retains the established access arrangements whilst reorganising the internal circulation routes to provide improved separation between residential and equestrian activities. Existing levels of accessibility are therefore maintained whilst operational efficiency is enhanced.
- 2.5 The surrounding area is predominantly rural in character and comprises a mixture of agricultural land, woodland, paddocks and dispersed residential development. Mature woodland, including Rome Wood, lies immediately to the north beyond Capel Road, whilst grazing land and paddocks extend to the south and west. The eastern side of the site continues in equestrian and agricultural use. Although rural in appearance, the immediate locality contains a varied mix of established residential, agricultural and commercial land uses which contribute to its existing character.
- 2.6 The application site itself is not an undeveloped greenfield field but an established, intensively developed equestrian holding characterised by permanent buildings, extensive areas of hardstanding, engineered access roads, parking areas and operational infrastructure. As such, the proposals represent the redevelopment and rationalisation of an existing developed site rather than the extension of built development into previously undeveloped countryside. This distinction is an important material consideration in assessing the principle of development.
- 2.7 Topographically, the site exhibits a gentle change in levels across the holding, generally falling from north to south and west to east. The submitted site sections demonstrate that the proposed development has been carefully designed to respond to these changes in level, ensuring that the scale and massing of the proposed buildings integrate successfully with the surrounding landscape whilst limiting visual impact when viewed from surrounding land and neighbouring properties. The proposed layout follows the natural landform, reducing the need

for excessive engineering works and enabling a well-balanced relationship between the proposed dwellings, retained buildings and landscape framework.

- 2.8 The ecological value of the developed part of the site has been assessed through a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The assessment concludes that the site is dominated by buildings and hardstanding and is generally of negligible ecological value, although habitats surrounding the site, including mature trees and hedgerows, contribute positively to the wider landscape. Importantly, the report identifies significant opportunities for ecological enhancement through native planting, habitat creation and the incorporation of integrated bat and bird boxes within the proposed development.
- 2.9 Environmental assessments undertaken in support of the application confirm that the site is suitable for redevelopment. The Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment concludes that there is no significant contamination associated with the site's historic or existing use and that the overall environmental risk is low, with no intrusive site investigation considered necessary.
- 2.10 Similarly, the accompanying Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the existing acoustic environment is influenced principally by passing traffic on Capel Road, aircraft associated with Gatwick Airport and existing equestrian activity. The report concludes that the proposed residential development can be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable living conditions, subject to standard design measures where necessary.
- 2.11 Overall, the application site represents a well-established and previously developed equestrian holding within a rural setting. Its existing built form, operational character and established access arrangements provide an appropriate context for the proposed redevelopment, which will significantly improve the appearance, organisation and environmental quality of the site whilst retaining its long-established equestrian function and delivering high-quality new housing.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 New Barn Farm has been the subject of a number of planning applications over the past decade, reflecting the gradual evolution of the site from its historic agricultural and commercial equestrian use towards the established mixed-use development that exists today. The planning history demonstrates that Horsham District Council has consistently accepted the principle of adapting and redeveloping the site through a combination of engineering works, changes of use, residential conversions and the continued operation of the commercial equestrian enterprise.
- 3.2 Planning permission was granted under reference DC/16/1587 for engineering works to infill an existing lake using inert materials in order to improve land drainage and grazing. A subsequent retrospective application (DC/19/0745) regularised those engineering works and was also granted planning permission, confirming the acceptability of the land regrading and associated improvements.
- 3.3 In 2017, the site became the subject of proposals to convert former storage and warehouse buildings to residential use under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order. Whilst the initial prior approval application (DC/17/2016) was refused, a revised submission (DC/17/2714) was subsequently approved, securing prior approval for the conversion of three storage buildings to five dwellings. That permission was later implemented through external alteration applications (DC/20/1077 and DC/20/1078), which authorised the necessary alterations to facilitate the residential conversions.
- 3.4 The lawful residential use of other buildings on the site was further established through applications for Certificates of Lawful Existing Use. Application DC/17/2161 resulted in a split decision, whilst the subsequent application DC/17/2821 confirmed that four buildings had been occupied as four independent self-contained dwellings for a period exceeding the statutory time limit. Together with the prior approval conversions, these permissions established a significant lawful residential presence within New Barn Farm.

- 3.5 Further planning permission was granted under DC/20/2581 for the creation of residential curtilages, internal access roads, parking areas and associated landscaping to serve the seven dwellings approved under references DC/17/2714 and DC/17/2821. More recently, planning permission was granted under DC/23/1080 for the extension of the residential curtilage associated with Plot 9, together with additional parking and private amenity space, further reinforcing the established residential character of part of the site.
- 3.6 The planning history also demonstrates continued support for the commercial equestrian operation. Planning permission was granted under DC/22/1561 for the mixed use of the site as a commercial stud farm, veterinary facilities associated with horse breeding, veterinary inspection and grading of horses, ancillary administrative functions and the siting of a static caravan for an employed groom. More recently, application DC/25/0756 confirmed, through the grant of a Lawful Development Certificate, the lawful siting of a static caravan and its use as a dwellinghouse together with its associated residential curtilage.
- 3.7 Whilst several redevelopment proposals have previously been refused, including applications DC/17/2835, DC/20/1315 and DC/23/0244, those decisions related to materially different schemes, prepared under different policy circumstances and without the benefit of the comprehensive site-wide masterplanning and supporting technical evidence that accompanies the current application. Consequently, those decisions should be afforded limited weight when assessing the merits of the present proposal.
- 3.8 Importantly, the present relationship between residential dwellings and the commercial equestrian enterprise has not arisen through unauthorised development but through a succession of planning permissions, prior approvals and lawful development certificates granted by the Local Planning Authority over many years. In granting Prior Approval under reference DC/17/2714, the Council acknowledged the proximity between residential and commercial activities but nevertheless concluded that there was no planning basis upon which to resist the conversion. Consequently, the existing juxtaposition of residential

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accommodation and operational equestrian facilities is the lawful outcome of successive planning decisions. The current proposal should therefore be viewed as an opportunity to resolve these historic land use conflicts through a comprehensive masterplan that delivers clear and lasting improvements to both residential amenity and the operation of the equestrian enterprise.

- 3.9 Overall, the planning history demonstrates that New Barn Farm has evolved over many years into a well-established mixed-use site comprising lawful residential development, commercial equestrian activities and associated operational infrastructure. The current application represents the next logical stage in that evolution, seeking to comprehensively rationalise the site through a coherent masterplan that improves the relationship between residential and commercial uses, modernises the equestrian facilities and delivers high-quality housing alongside significant environmental enhancements.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the comprehensive redevelopment and reorganisation of part of the existing New Barn Farm site. The proposals have been developed to provide a high-quality residential development whilst retaining and improving the operation of the established equestrian enterprise.
- 4.2 The development comprises the demolition of the existing central stable complex and associated equestrian buildings, together with the redevelopment of this area to provide ten new dwellings with associated private gardens, parking, internal access roads, landscaping and supporting infrastructure. Existing residential properties within the wider site are retained.

4.3 The proposed residential development comprises:

- Three detached five-bedroom dwellings;
- Two detached four-bedroom dwellings;
- Three detached two-bedroom chalet dwellings; and
- Two semi-detached two-bedroom dwellings.

The dwellings have been arranged around a new internal access road to create a coherent and attractive layout that provides appropriate parking, private amenity space and landscaping.

4.4 As part of the redevelopment, the existing equestrian facilities are relocated to the eastern part of the site. The proposal includes a replacement stable block, horse walker and sand school positioned adjacent to existing grazing land, allowing the equestrian enterprise to continue operating within a more efficient and better organised layout.

4.5 Vehicular access to the site will continue to be taken from the existing accesses onto Capel Road. The proposal introduces a new internal road network serving the proposed dwellings together with visitor parking, turning facilities and pedestrian connections throughout the development. Parking has been designed in accordance with West Sussex County Council parking standards.

4.6 The proposed dwellings have been designed to reflect the rural character of the surrounding area through the use of simple building forms, pitched roofs, timber weatherboarding and high-quality external materials. The development provides a varied range of house types whilst maintaining a consistent architectural approach across the site. The submitted elevations illustrate the proposed architectural design.

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- 4.7 Landscape proposals form an integral part of the development and include new structural tree planting, native hedgerows, areas of soft landscaping and ecological enhancement. Existing landscape features are retained where practicable and supplemented with additional planting to strengthen the site's rural setting and improve biodiversity.
- 4.8 The development also incorporates biodiversity enhancement measures including integrated bat boxes, bird boxes and habitat creation, together with sustainable drainage features where appropriate. These measures have been informed by the accompanying ecological and environmental assessments.
- 4.9 An important component of the proposed development is the delivery of highly sustainable, energy-efficient homes that will significantly exceed current minimum Building Regulation standards. The proposed dwellings have been carefully designed to achieve exceptionally high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency, and these principles are fully reflected within the submitted architectural drawings. This will be achieved through exceptionally high levels of insulation, advanced construction detailing, excellent air-tightness and the incorporation of high-performance building materials, ensuring that energy consumption is substantially reduced before renewable technologies are applied.
- 4.10 The proposed dwellings will utilise high-performance air source heat pumps, installed by MCS accredited contractors using products listed on the Product Characteristics Database (PCDB), to provide space heating and domestic hot water. These systems will be complemented by roof-mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and battery storage, enabling renewable energy generated on-site to be stored and utilised efficiently, further reducing reliance on the national grid. The homes will also incorporate mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), low-energy LED lighting throughout, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and will be entirely free from gas infrastructure, resulting in a development with effectively net-zero regulated operational carbon emissions.

- 4.11 In addition to reducing operational energy demand, the development has been designed to promote long-term sustainability and future adaptability. Each dwelling will include appropriately designed storage facilities for refuse and recyclable materials, provision for high-speed broadband connectivity to support modern home working and digital infrastructure, together with the ability to accommodate emerging low-carbon technologies as they become available. The incorporation of these measures will ensure that the development remains resilient, adaptable and capable of responding to future technological advancements throughout its lifetime.
- 4.12 Collectively, these sustainability measures demonstrate the applicant's commitment to delivering a genuinely low-carbon development that not only responds positively to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework in addressing climate change but also contributes towards Horsham District Council's wider aspirations to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and promote sustainable patterns of development. The proposed homes will provide future occupiers with exceptionally energy-efficient accommodation, significantly reduced running costs and a substantially lower environmental footprint than conventional residential development, representing a further significant public benefit arising from the proposal.
- 4.13 The application is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports, detailed architectural drawings and engineering information addressing ecology, landscape, contamination, drainage, highways, heritage, noise and other environmental considerations. These assessments have directly informed the final design of the scheme and demonstrate that the proposed development can be delivered without unacceptable environmental, technical or amenity impacts
- 4.14 Overall, the proposal will deliver ten new dwellings alongside modern replacement equestrian facilities, creating a more efficient and coherent arrangement of land uses within the site whilst enhancing its appearance through high-quality architecture, landscaping and ecological improvements.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

Introduction

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The statutory Development Plan for the site comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the Ruspur Neighbourhood Plan and the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the Horsham District Council Shaping Development Planning Advice Note and the Council's current housing land supply position.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires planning decisions to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development through economic, social and environmental objectives.

The following sections and paragraphs are of particular relevance to the proposed development:

Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

- Paragraph 11 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Paragraphs 20–23 – Strategic policies to meet development needs.

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

- Paragraph 39 – Positive and proactive engagement.

- Paragraphs 47–48 – Determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

- Requirement to significantly boost the supply of homes.
- Requirement to maintain a deliverable housing supply.
- Weight to be afforded where local planning authorities cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

- Encourages developments that provide safe and suitable access for all users.
- Promotes opportunities for walking, cycling and sustainable transport.

Chapter 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

- Encourages efficient use of previously developed and under-utilised land.
- Supports development that optimises the use of land whilst respecting local character.

Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

- Paragraph 129 – Creation of beautiful, sustainable and inclusive places.
- Paragraphs 131–135 – High-quality design, local character and landscaping.

Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

- Directs development towards sustainable locations.
- Promotes sustainable drainage systems and climate resilience.

Chapter 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain.
- Protection of landscape character.
- Recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The NPPF therefore promotes sustainable development which delivers high-quality housing whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment. The Framework also places significant weight on increasing housing delivery, particularly where authorities are unable to demonstrate an adequate housing land supply.

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 5.4 The adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) forms the principal element of the Development Plan.

The following policies are considered most relevant to this application:

Strategic Policies

Policy 1 – Sustainable Development

- Supports sustainable development balancing social, economic and environmental objectives.

Policy 2 – Strategic Development

- Directs development to sustainable locations whilst supporting appropriate development outside settlement boundaries where justified.

Policy 3 – Development Hierarchy

- Defines the settlement hierarchy across the District.

Policy 7 – Economic Growth

- Supports sustainable economic growth and established businesses.

Policy 10 – Rural Economic Development

- Supports rural enterprises and the diversification of rural businesses.

Policy 15 – Housing Provision

- Supports the delivery of new housing to meet identified needs.

Environmental Policies

Policy 24 – Environmental Protection

- Requires development to protect residential amenity and environmental quality.

Policy 25 – The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

- Requires development to conserve and enhance landscape character and important natural features.

Policy 26 – Countryside Protection

- Protects the countryside whilst allowing appropriate forms of development where justified.

Policy 29 – Equestrian Development

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- Supports equestrian development where it is appropriately located, proportionate and compatible with the surrounding countryside.

Policy 31 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- Requires development to protect and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Design Policies

Policy 32 – Quality of New Development

- Requires high-quality architecture that responds positively to local character.

Policy 33 – Development Principles

Requires development to provide:

- high quality design;
- appropriate scale and layout;
- safe access;
- adequate parking;
- protection of neighbouring amenity;
- appropriate landscaping; and
- sustainable design.

Infrastructure Policies

Policy 35 – Climate Change

- Supports development that mitigates and adapts to climate change.

Policy 38 – Flooding

- Requires development to manage flood risk and surface water appropriately.

Policy 39 – Infrastructure Provision

- Requires appropriate infrastructure to support development.

Policy 40 – Sustainable Transport

- Promotes safe access and sustainable transport choices.

Policy 41 – Parking

- Requires development to provide appropriate parking in accordance with adopted standards.

Rusper Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.5 The Rusper Neighbourhood Plan also forms part of the statutory Development Plan.

The following policies are considered relevant:

- Policy RUS1 – Spatial Strategy
- Policy RUS2 – Rural Diversification
- Policy RUS3 – Design
- Policy RUS5 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy RUS6 – Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes
- Policy RUS10 – Dark Skies
- Policy RUS11 – Sustainable Transport

Other Material Considerations

5.6 The following material considerations are also relevant to the determination of the application:

- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- Horsham District Council Shaping Development in Horsham District Planning Advice Note (2025).
- Horsham District Council's acknowledged lack of a five-year housing land supply, which engages the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and makes clear that planning decisions should proactively support sustainable economic growth, significantly boost the supply of housing and create well-designed places. Paragraph 11 confirms that decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and, where the development plan is out of date, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.
- 6.2 The Framework also recognises that planning decisions should make effective use of land, support rural businesses, protect and enhance the natural environment and deliver high quality places that are attractive, resilient and sustainable. These objectives should not be considered in isolation but balanced collectively to achieve sustainable development.
- 6.3 The Council has confirmed that it is presently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land. Consequently, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is engaged and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is a significant material consideration in the determination of this application. This position is expressly acknowledged within the Council's pre-application advice.
- 6.4 The Council's pre-application advice identifies Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) as those principally relating to the location of the site outside the defined Built-Up Area Boundary. The advice concludes that additional residential development would ordinarily conflict with these policies because the site is located within the countryside and is not allocated for housing.

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- 6.5 However, the Council also acknowledges two important matters.
- 6.6 Firstly, the site already comprises an established mixed-use development containing lawful residential dwellings together with a long-established commercial equestrian enterprise. Secondly, the Council expressly recognises that the current arrangement has evolved through piecemeal development and now results in an unsatisfactory relationship between residential and equestrian uses. The pre-application response therefore accepts that there are clear planning benefits in rationalising the site layout and separating these uses.
- 6.7 These acknowledgements are significant and provide the starting point for assessing the current proposal.
- 6.8 Although situated outside the Built-Up Area Boundary, the application site cannot reasonably be described as an undeveloped greenfield site.

Instead, the site comprises:

- an established commercial equestrian enterprise;
- lawful residential development;
- extensive areas of hardstanding;
- internal roads;
- stable buildings;
- offices;
- storage buildings;
- sand schools;
- operational infrastructure.

- 6.9 The site therefore possesses a distinctly developed character that has evolved over many years through a series of planning permissions, prior approvals and lawful development certificates. This distinguishes the proposal from conventional housing development within open countryside.
- 6.10 Rather than extending built development into an undeveloped landscape, the proposal seeks the comprehensive redevelopment of an existing developed site, replacing ageing equestrian infrastructure with a significantly improved masterplan whilst retaining the long-term viability of the equestrian enterprise.
- 6.11 The pre-application advice concluded that the original proposal was unacceptable in principle because it introduced eleven additional dwellings whilst simultaneously extending the operational equestrian area eastwards primarily to facilitate further housing development.
- 6.12 The current proposal has evolved considerably. Following receipt of the Council's advice, the applicant undertook a comprehensive review of the scheme. Rather than pursuing the original layout, the proposals have been fundamentally redesigned.

The revised application:

- reduces residential development;
 - reorganises the masterplan;
 - improves the relationship between residential and commercial uses;
 - strengthens the landscape framework;
 - responds to topography;
 - introduces substantial biodiversity enhancements;
 - provides extensive supporting technical evidence.
- 6.13 This is therefore not the proposal that was considered through the pre-application

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process. Instead, it represents a comprehensive response to the issues identified by the Local Planning Authority.

- 6.14 The Council's acknowledges that proposals outside settlement boundaries should be considered positively where they achieve sustainable development and where the tilted balance applies. The Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply is therefore a highly significant material consideration.
- 6.15 Furthermore, this proposal delivers a number of planning benefits beyond the provision of housing.

These include:

- securing the future of an established rural business;
- significantly improving site organisation;
- removing the existing conflict between residential and equestrian activities;
- delivering environmental enhancements;
- improving biodiversity;
- strengthening landscape planting;
- replacing ageing equestrian infrastructure with modern facilities;
- creating a coherent masterplan.

- 6.16 Collectively these benefits carry substantial weight.

- 6.17 The principle of development should not be assessed solely as the introduction of housing within the countryside. Rather, it should be considered as the comprehensive redevelopment of an established mixed-use rural site that delivers environmental, operational and social benefits whilst contributing towards the Council's significant housing shortfall.

- 6.18 When considered against the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the acknowledged housing land supply position and the substantial improvements delivered by the proposal, the principle of redevelopment is considered acceptable and consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Response to the Pre-Application Advice and Evolution of the Proposal

- 6.19 Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework encourages applicants to engage proactively with local planning authorities before submitting planning applications. Effective pre-application engagement allows proposals to evolve through constructive dialogue, enabling potential issues to be identified and addressed at an early stage. The Framework recognises that this collaborative approach can improve the quality of development proposals and lead to more efficient decision making.
- 6.20 In accordance with this approach, the applicant entered into pre-application discussions with Horsham District Council under reference PE/25/0230. The purpose of those discussions was to obtain professional feedback on the emerging redevelopment proposals before preparing a full planning application.
- 6.21 The Council's response identified a number of matters requiring further consideration, whilst also acknowledging several positive aspects of the proposal. Rather than proceeding with the original concept, the applicant undertook a comprehensive review of the development, supported by a multidisciplinary team of architects, planners and technical consultants. The submitted application is therefore the product of a detailed design evolution which directly responds to the comments raised by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.22 This application should not therefore be viewed as a resubmission of the pre-application scheme. It represents a significantly revised proposal that has evolved through positive engagement with the Council and has been informed by detailed technical assessment.

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- 6.23 The pre-application response raised concerns regarding the principle of introducing additional residential development outside the Built-Up Area Boundary and the extent to which the original proposal relied upon relocating equestrian facilities in order to facilitate housing development.
- 6.24 Whilst those concerns are acknowledged, the current application has been fundamentally revised to provide a more balanced redevelopment of the site. The proposal is no longer simply a housing-led scheme but instead represents the comprehensive reorganisation of an established mixed-use rural holding.
- 6.25 The application retains the commercial equestrian enterprise as an integral component of the site, whilst relocating the principal operational facilities into a more logical position adjacent to the existing paddocks and grazing land. This creates a far more efficient operational arrangement and removes the long-standing conflict between commercial equestrian activities and residential occupation.
- 6.26 The redevelopment therefore achieves two complementary objectives. Firstly, it secures the continued operation of an established rural business. Secondly, it enables the comprehensive redevelopment of the existing central stable complex with a high-quality residential environment.
- 6.27 The principle of development should therefore be considered in the context of the wider benefits achieved through the rationalisation of the site rather than simply the provision of additional housing.
- 6.28 One of the principal outcomes of the pre-application process has been a reduction in the intensity of development proposed. The original concept submitted to the Council sought the construction of eleven dwellings. Following detailed consideration of the pre-application advice, the scale of residential development has been reduced to ten dwellings.
- 6.29 Whilst numerically this represents a modest reduction, the implications for the overall design are significant. The reduction has allowed greater spacing between

dwellings, increased areas of structural landscaping, improved private amenity areas, reduced built form across the site and a more spacious overall layout. The revised masterplan therefore responds directly to concerns regarding the intensity of development identified during the pre-application process.

- 6.30 The Council recognised during the pre-application process that the existing arrangement of development has evolved incrementally over many years and no longer provides an efficient relationship between residential and commercial uses.
- 6.31 The current site is characterised by residential dwellings interspersed amongst stable buildings, operational yards, vehicle movements and commercial equestrian activities. Whilst lawful, this arrangement inevitably gives rise to conflicts between residential amenity and the day-to-day operation of the business.
- 6.32 The submitted proposals fundamentally reorganise the site. Residential development is concentrated within a coherent area occupying the existing stable complex, whilst the operational equestrian facilities are relocated adjacent to the grazing land where they can function more efficiently and independently.
- 6.33 This creates a far clearer distinction between residential and commercial uses, improves operational safety, reduces potential conflicts and establishes a logical long-term masterplan for the site. This reorganisation represents one of the principal planning benefits arising from the proposal.
- 6.34 The pre-application response identified landscape impact as one of the principal issues requiring further assessment and recommended that the application be supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal.
- 6.35 The submitted application now includes a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Appraisal together with an enhanced landscape strategy. The revised proposals incorporate substantial native tree planting, reinforcement of existing hedgerows, structural landscape buffers, additional green infrastructure and ecological

habitat creation throughout the site.

- 6.36 The revised layout has also been designed to sit more comfortably within the existing landform, reducing visual prominence and ensuring that built form is softened through extensive landscaping. Consequently, the application now responds directly to the concerns identified through the pre-application process and demonstrates that landscape impacts can be appropriately mitigated.
- 6.37 The Council previously expressed concerns that the original development appeared suburban in character and did not sufficiently respond to its rural context. The architectural approach has therefore been comprehensively reviewed.
- 6.38 The proposed dwellings adopt a restrained rural character through the use of simple building forms, pitched roofs, timber weatherboarding, brick plinths and high-quality external materials. The revised design avoids unnecessary suburban features and instead reflects the agricultural origins of New Barn Farm and the wider rural character of the surrounding area.
- 6.39 The revised layout also creates a stronger sense of place through generous landscaping, varied building orientation and improved spacing between dwellings. Collectively these revisions deliver a significantly higher quality development than the original pre-application scheme.
- 6.40 The pre-application advice identified a number of technical assessments that would be required before a planning application could be fully considered.
- 6.41 The current submission addresses these requirements through the preparation of a comprehensive suite of supporting documents, including ecological, contamination, landscape, drainage and noise assessments, together with detailed architectural drawings and other supporting technical information.
- 6.42 These reports have not simply been prepared to accompany the application. They have actively informed the evolution of the development, influencing the final layout, landscaping strategy, ecological enhancements and mitigation

measures. The proposal has therefore been developed through an evidence-led design process.

- 6.43 The current planning application has evolved significantly since the pre-application submission. The changes extend well beyond a simple reduction in dwelling numbers and instead represent a comprehensive reconsideration of the overall development strategy for New Barn Farm.
- 6.44 The revised proposal delivers a more coherent masterplan, provides a clearer separation between residential and equestrian uses, reduces the overall intensity of development, strengthens the landscape framework, adopts a more appropriate architectural approach and is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical assessments. The application also responds positively to the Council's request for further environmental information and demonstrates how the proposal can be delivered without unacceptable impacts on the surrounding area.
- 6.45 Whilst the principle of residential development outside the Built-Up Area Boundary remains a matter requiring careful consideration, the Council's pre-application advice acknowledged the existing shortcomings of the site and the potential benefits arising from its comprehensive reorganisation. The submitted application builds upon those acknowledged benefits and addresses the concerns identified through the pre-application process, resulting in a significantly improved proposal that should now be assessed on its own merits. It is therefore considered that the application embodies the positive and collaborative approach to plan-making and decision-taking promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework and provides a robust basis upon which planning permission can be granted.

Housing Delivery and the Planning Balance

- 6.46 The National Planning Policy Framework places considerable emphasis on significantly boosting the supply of homes and ensuring that sufficient land is available to meet identified housing needs. Paragraph 11 establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that where the policies most important for determining an application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 6.47 The importance of this contribution is heightened by the Council's current housing land supply position. The Horsham District Authority Monitoring Report (December 2025) confirms that the Council is presently able to demonstrate only approximately 1.7 years of deliverable housing land against its identified requirement. Furthermore, the Housing Delivery Test results published by the Government recorded housing delivery of only 62%, substantially below the 75% threshold. As a consequence, the Council accepts that the policies most important for determining housing applications are out-of-date and that paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework is engaged. Accordingly, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when assessed against the Framework as a whole. This represents a highly significant material consideration in favour of the development.
- 6.48 The Council's pre-application advice confirms that Horsham District Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and that this is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged and substantial weight should be afforded to the contribution that the proposal will make towards meeting the District's housing needs.
- 6.49 The Framework also encourages planning decisions that make effective use of land, promote sustainable patterns of development and deliver high-quality

homes that contribute positively towards the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development.

- 6.50 The Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to direct development towards sustainable locations through Policies 2, 3 and 4. However, these policies must be considered alongside the Council's current housing land supply position and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.51 Policy 15 seeks to increase housing provision across the District, whilst Policy 33 requires new development to deliver high-quality places that respond positively to their surroundings and provide an appropriate living environment for future occupiers.
- 6.52 The proposal has therefore been prepared having regard to both the strategic housing objectives of the Development Plan and the wider objectives of national planning policy.
- 6.53 The proposal will deliver ten additional dwellings within Horsham District at a time when there is an acknowledged shortage of deliverable housing land. Whilst the numerical contribution may appear modest in isolation, the National Planning Policy Framework recognises that every sustainable housing development contributes towards addressing housing need. Collectively, developments of this scale form an important component of maintaining housing delivery and increasing the supply of homes.
- 6.54 Importantly, the proposed dwellings are delivered as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of an existing developed site rather than through the expansion of built development into undeveloped countryside. The proposals make efficient use of land that is already occupied by buildings and hardstanding, replacing ageing equestrian infrastructure with a carefully planned residential development that integrates with the retained rural enterprise.
- 6.55 The proposal should not be viewed solely as a housing development. Rather, it represents a comprehensive redevelopment project that delivers multiple

planning benefits.

These include:

- the delivery of ten high-quality family dwellings;
- the retention and long-term safeguarding of an established rural business;
- improved organisation of the site;
- significant landscape enhancement;
- biodiversity improvements;
- replacement of outdated equestrian infrastructure;
- improved residential amenity;
- enhanced environmental quality.

6.56 The proposal therefore contributes to each of the three dimensions of sustainable development identified within the National Planning Policy Framework. Economically, it supports an established rural enterprise, provides employment during construction and generates investment within the local economy. Socially, it contributes towards meeting housing needs and creates a high-quality residential environment. Environmentally, it secures significant ecological enhancements, landscape improvements and a more efficient use of an existing developed site.

6.57 The Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply is a significant material consideration. Whilst the site lies outside the Built-Up Area Boundary, the application must be determined having regard to paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework. The question is therefore whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

- 6.58 As demonstrated throughout this Planning Statement and the accompanying technical assessments, the revised proposal has been designed to avoid unacceptable impacts upon the landscape, neighbouring amenity, ecology, highways or environmental quality. Appropriate mitigation has been incorporated throughout the design process, and the application is supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports which demonstrate that the development is capable of being delivered without giving rise to unacceptable planning harm.
- 6.59 Against this, the proposal delivers a wide range of public benefits including new housing, the long-term retention of a rural enterprise, significant environmental enhancements and the comprehensive reorganisation of an existing developed site.
- 6.60 These benefits are substantial and, when considered alongside the Council's housing land supply position, attract significant weight in favour of granting planning permission.
- 6.61 The Council's housing land supply position significantly alters the planning balance. Whilst the proposal inevitably requires careful consideration against countryside policies within the Development Plan, those policies cannot be applied in isolation. The National Planning Policy Framework requires decision makers to undertake a balanced assessment, recognising the considerable weight that should be afforded to proposals capable of delivering sustainable housing in circumstances where the Council has a substantial shortfall in housing delivery. The proposal therefore makes a meaningful contribution towards addressing one of the District's most pressing planning issues.
- 6.62 The proposal makes a positive contribution towards meeting the District's housing needs whilst simultaneously delivering wider environmental and economic benefits. Having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the acknowledged housing land supply position and the comprehensive package of planning benefits arising from the redevelopment, it is considered that the proposal accords with the objectives of the National

Planning Policy Framework and that the planning balance weighs firmly in favour of granting planning permission.

Rural Enterprise and Equestrian Development

- 6.63 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the important role that rural businesses play in supporting the rural economy and encourages planning decisions that enable existing businesses to expand, adapt and remain competitive.
- 6.64 Paragraph 89 of the Framework seeks to support sustainable economic growth within rural areas, whilst paragraph 93 recognises the social and economic importance of recreational facilities and activities, including those associated with equestrian uses. The Framework also encourages the sustainable diversification and improvement of rural enterprises where this can be achieved without causing unacceptable environmental harm.
- 6.65 These objectives are particularly relevant to New Barn Farm, which has operated as an established equestrian enterprise for many years and forms an important component of the local rural economy.
- 6.66 Policy 7 supports sustainable economic growth across the District, whilst Policy 10 seeks to sustain and diversify rural businesses.
- 6.67 Policy 29 specifically supports equestrian development where proposals are appropriately designed, respect the rural character of the countryside and do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring land uses or the wider environment.
- 6.68 Collectively, these policies recognise that equestrian enterprises form an established and valuable component of the rural economy and should be supported where development improves their long-term sustainability.
- 6.69 The existing arrangement of New Barn Farm has evolved over many years through incremental development. As acknowledged by the Council within its pre-

application advice, the relationship between residential dwellings and the operational equestrian facilities has become increasingly fragmented. Residential properties are dispersed amongst stable buildings, operational yards, horse movements and servicing areas, resulting in an inefficient site layout that is unsatisfactory for both residential occupiers and the equestrian business.

- 6.70 The Council recognised during the pre-application process that there would be clear planning benefits in achieving a more logical separation between these uses. This acknowledgement is an important material consideration in assessing the current proposal.
- 6.71 The proposed development retains the equestrian business as a fundamental component of New Barn Farm. Rather than displacing the enterprise, the proposal invests in its long-term future through the provision of modern replacement facilities located adjacent to the existing paddocks and grazing land.
- 6.72 The redevelopment should also be viewed in the context of succession planning. The long-term future of the business depends upon the creation of modern facilities capable of supporting future generations involved in elite horse breeding and production. Without investment, the existing fragmented layout places increasing operational constraints upon the business and limits opportunities for future growth. The proposed redevelopment therefore secures not only the continued operation of the enterprise but also its ability to remain internationally competitive, safeguarding employment, investment and specialist equestrian expertise within the District for many years to come.
- 6.73 The relocation of the stable complex, horse walker and associated operational areas creates a significantly more efficient working environment, reducing unnecessary vehicle movements through residential areas and improving day-to-day management of horses and associated activities.
- 6.74 The revised arrangement also provides greater operational flexibility, enhanced welfare for horses and a more coherent relationship between buildings, paddocks and exercise facilities. Consequently, the proposal should be viewed as an

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investment in the future viability of the equestrian enterprise rather than a reduction in its importance.

- 6.75 One of the principal planning benefits of the proposal is the clear separation between residential and commercial activities. The redevelopment removes the existing situation whereby residential occupiers live in close proximity to operational equestrian activities, including vehicle movements, deliveries, horse handling and associated day-to-day business operations.
- 6.76 By relocating the principal operational facilities to the eastern part of the site, the proposal establishes two complementary but distinct areas of activity. This significantly improves living conditions for future residents whilst simultaneously allowing the equestrian business to operate more effectively without creating unnecessary conflicts with neighbouring residential uses.
- 6.77 The accompanying Noise Impact Assessment confirms that the revised arrangement provides an acceptable residential environment whilst allowing the continued operation of the equestrian enterprise.
- 6.78 The proposed redevelopment does not represent the loss of a rural business. On the contrary, it secures its long-term future through investment in modern facilities, a more efficient operational layout and a clearer distinction between commercial and residential activities.
- 6.79 The proposal therefore accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 7, 10 and 29 of the Horsham District Planning Framework by supporting an established rural enterprise whilst delivering wider public benefits through housing provision, environmental enhancement and improved site organisation.
- 6.80 Accordingly, the proposal should be afforded significant positive weight in the overall planning balance.

Design, Layout and Quality of Development

- 6.81 Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework places great importance on achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 131 confirms that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is identified as a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 6.82 Paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure developments function well over their lifetime, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site and create safe, inclusive and accessible environments.
- 6.83 The Framework does not seek architectural uniformity but instead encourages innovative design that responds appropriately to the site and its surroundings.
- 6.84 Policy 32 of the Horsham District Planning Framework requires new development to achieve a high standard of design that respects local distinctiveness whilst reinforcing the character of the surrounding area.
- 6.85 Policy 33 requires development proposals to demonstrate high-quality design through appropriate siting, scale, layout, appearance, landscaping, access, parking and the protection of residential amenity. Development should integrate successfully into its surroundings and contribute positively to the character of the locality.
- 6.86 These policies seek to ensure that new development delivers attractive, functional and sustainable places which enhance rather than detract from the existing environment.
- 6.87 One of the principal concerns identified by the Council during the pre-application process related to the overall appearance and layout of the original scheme. The Council considered that elements of the development appeared suburban in character and that the layout required refinement to respond more successfully

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to its countryside setting. The officer also expressed concerns regarding the relationship between buildings, the extent of hardstanding and the overall quality of the proposed place.

- 6.88 The submitted application has been substantially redesigned to address these comments. Rather than making incremental amendments to the original layout, the proposal has been fundamentally reconsidered through a comprehensive masterplanning exercise informed by landscape, ecological and architectural assessments.
- 6.89 The revised development places significantly greater emphasis upon landscape structure, generous spacing between dwellings and the creation of a coherent residential environment that reflects the agricultural origins of New Barn Farm.
- 6.90 The revised masterplan establishes a logical hierarchy of development across the site. The proposed dwellings are arranged around a clearly defined internal access road which provides safe and convenient access whilst creating an attractive residential setting. Buildings are orientated to provide active frontages, maximise natural surveillance and create an attractive streetscene whilst respecting the site's existing topography and landscape features.
- 6.91 Private gardens, parking areas and visitor spaces have been carefully integrated within the overall layout to avoid the dominance of hardstanding. Existing mature landscape features are retained where practicable and supplemented by extensive new planting, helping to soften the development and reinforce its rural character.
- 6.92 Importantly, the revised layout creates a clear distinction between the residential development and the retained equestrian enterprise. This separation significantly improves the functionality of both uses and addresses one of the principal shortcomings of the existing site arrangement identified by the Council.
- 6.93 The architectural approach has evolved considerably since the pre-application submission. The revised dwellings adopt a contemporary interpretation of

traditional rural architecture through the use of simple building forms, pitched roofs, timber weatherboarding, high-quality brickwork and carefully selected external materials. The design draws inspiration from traditional agricultural buildings whilst incorporating modern detailing appropriate for contemporary residential development.

- 6.94 The varied mix of detached, semi-detached and chalet-style dwellings creates visual interest whilst maintaining a consistent architectural language throughout the development. This approach responds directly to the Council's concerns regarding the suburban appearance of the original proposal and ensures that the completed development reflects the established rural character of the surrounding area.
- 6.95 The revised layout has been designed to provide an attractive and functional living environment for future occupiers. Each dwelling benefits from appropriately sized private gardens, dedicated parking provision and convenient access to the internal road network. The generous spacing between buildings reduces overlooking, maintains privacy and creates a spacious pattern of development that is entirely consistent with its rural setting.
- 6.96 The relocation of the equestrian facilities also removes potential conflicts between commercial activities and residential occupation, creating a significantly higher quality residential environment than currently exists on the site.
- 6.97 The revised proposal represents a significant evolution of the scheme considered through the pre-application process. The development now provides a coherent masterplan, high-quality architecture and a layout that responds positively to the site's rural context. Through careful design, generous landscaping and the clear separation of residential and equestrian uses, the proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. It is therefore considered to represent a high-quality form of development that will enhance the appearance and functionality of New Barn Farm.

Heritage Impact

- 6.98 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Local Planning Authority, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development affecting a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and those features which contribute to its special architectural or historic interest. Similarly, Section 72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas where development proposals may affect their significance. These statutory duties have been fully considered in the evolution of the proposed development and form an important part of the planning balance.
- 6.99 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they may be enjoyed by present and future generations. Paragraphs 212 to 226 require Local Planning Authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal and to ensure that great weight is given to their conservation. The Framework also recognises that conservation and sustainable development are not mutually exclusive objectives and that carefully considered development can make a positive contribution to the historic environment whilst delivering wider public benefits. Where development preserves the significance of heritage assets and their setting, there is a strong presumption in favour of permitting sustainable development that accords with the wider objectives of the Framework.
- 6.100 At the local level, Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to ensure that development proposals conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the District's designated and non-designated heritage assets together with their settings. The policy recognises that new development should respond positively to local distinctiveness and historic character whilst allowing appropriate change that secures the long-term vitality and viability of rural areas. The proposal has been prepared having full regard to these policy objectives and

demonstrates that high-quality contemporary development can coexist successfully within a rural historic landscape without causing harm to its significance.

- 6.101 The application site itself is not a designated heritage asset, nor does it comprise a planned historic farmstead of particular architectural significance. Instead, New Barn Farm has evolved incrementally over many decades in response to changing agricultural, residential and equestrian requirements. The existing collection of buildings reflects this gradual evolution, comprising structures of varying ages, forms and construction methods that have been introduced through successive planning permissions, prior approvals and lawful development certificates. Whilst these buildings fulfil important operational functions, they do not represent a cohesive historic group and make only a limited contribution to the architectural or historic significance of the surrounding landscape. Indeed, the current arrangement of buildings has resulted in a fragmented and visually cluttered appearance that detracts from the wider rural character of the site.
- 6.102 The proposal provides an opportunity to replace this piecemeal arrangement with a carefully considered and comprehensive masterplan that responds positively to the historic evolution of the holding whilst creating a more coherent and legible form of development. The submitted layout has been carefully designed to respect the established grain of the surrounding countryside by retaining generous areas of open space, reinforcing existing landscape features and introducing substantial new structural planting that will integrate the development into its rural setting. The relocation and rationalisation of the equestrian enterprise further reduces the existing conflict between residential and commercial activities, creating a clearer and more logical arrangement that reflects the traditional organisation of working rural holdings.
- 6.103 The proposed dwellings have been carefully designed to draw inspiration from the simple forms, proportions and material palette traditionally associated with agricultural buildings within the Horsham countryside. The submitted architectural drawings demonstrate a restrained rural design approach incorporating pitched

roofs, natural and muted external materials, timber weatherboarding, high-quality brickwork and carefully considered architectural detailing. Collectively, these design principles ensure that the completed development will respond positively to local distinctiveness whilst avoiding an overly suburban form of development. The proposal therefore respects the prevailing rural vernacular without resorting to pastiche and positively reinforces the established character of New Barn Farm and its wider landscape setting.

- 6.104 The proposal has also been informed by the wider landscape context within which the site sits. Existing mature trees, hedgerows and landscape features will be retained wherever possible and supplemented by extensive native planting, biodiversity enhancements and ecological improvements that will strengthen the rural character of the site over time. These measures will soften the visual appearance of the development, reinforce existing landscape structure and ensure that the transition between the built form and the surrounding countryside remains appropriate and sensitive. The comprehensive landscape strategy will therefore not only assist in assimilating the development into its setting but will also enhance the quality and appearance of the site compared to the existing fragmented arrangement.
- 6.105 The redevelopment also provides an opportunity to secure wider environmental and heritage benefits by replacing a collection of modern functional buildings with a development that has been planned as a single coherent scheme. Rather than eroding local character, the proposal reinforces the established pattern of development within the locality by creating a well-designed rural residential environment that sits comfortably alongside the retained equestrian enterprise. The overall effect is one of enhancement, both in visual terms and in respect of the long-term management and stewardship of the site.
- 6.106 Even if any very limited change to the wider rural setting of nearby heritage assets were to be identified, which is not accepted, any such change would be substantially outweighed by the significant public benefits arising from the proposal. These include the delivery of up to ten much-needed dwellings at a time

when Horsham District Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the long-term safeguarding and enhancement of an internationally recognised equestrian enterprise, the rationalisation of an existing developed site, significant biodiversity net gain, extensive structural landscaping, low-carbon and energy-efficient homes, improved public accessibility through the proposed pedestrian link and the creation of a more sustainable pattern of development. Collectively, these public benefits attract considerable weight in the overall planning balance.

- 6.107 Having regard to the statutory duties contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the provisions of Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, it is concluded that the proposal preserves the significance and setting of nearby heritage assets and responds positively to the established historic character of the surrounding rural landscape. The development replaces a fragmented and visually incoherent collection of modern agricultural and equestrian buildings with a comprehensively planned, landscape-led development that respects the historic evolution of New Barn Farm whilst delivering substantial environmental, economic and social benefits. Accordingly, there are no heritage considerations that weigh against the grant of planning permission and the proposal fully accords with both national and local planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment.

Active Travel and Healthy Communities

- 6.108 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages developments that promote walking, cycling and healthier lifestyles whilst reducing reliance upon the private motor car. The Framework recognises that developments should maximise opportunities for active travel and improve connectivity wherever practicable.
- 6.109 The proposal delivers a significant public benefit through the provision of a new pedestrian connection linking the development directly to the existing Public Rights of Way network. This connection will reduce the walking distance between

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New Barn Farm and local facilities from approximately 1.75 miles to around 0.5 miles, transforming the accessibility of the site for both existing and future residents.

- 6.110 The proposed footpath will encourage walking in place of shorter vehicle journeys, thereby reducing vehicle emissions whilst promoting healthier lifestyles. It will also improve access to the surrounding ancient woodland and wider countryside, providing opportunities for recreation, exercise and improved mental wellbeing.
- 6.111 Importantly, the applicant has confirmed a willingness to secure the delivery of this pedestrian link through an appropriate Section 106 Agreement, thereby ensuring that the public benefit is delivered alongside the proposed development.
- 6.112 The importance of enhanced pedestrian connectivity has been recognised in recent appeal decisions, including Appeal Ref. APP/R3650/W/24/3345689, where improved public accessibility formed an important component of the Inspector's overall planning balance. The proposed pedestrian connection therefore attracts significant positive weight in favour of the development.

Landscape Character and Visual Impact

- 6.113 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 187 requires planning decisions to protect and enhance valued landscapes, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and minimise impacts on the natural environment.
- 6.114 The Framework does not seek to prevent development within rural areas but instead requires proposals to respond appropriately to their landscape context through sensitive design, appropriate siting and effective mitigation.
- 6.115 Landscape considerations must therefore be balanced alongside the social and economic benefits arising from sustainable development.

- 6.116 Policy 25 of the Horsham District Planning Framework requires development proposals to conserve and enhance landscape character and protect the distinctive qualities of the District's countryside.
- 6.117 Policy 26 seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development whilst recognising that proposals may be acceptable where they conserve landscape character and deliver wider planning benefits.
- 6.118 Policy 33 further requires development to incorporate high-quality landscaping that integrates proposals successfully into their surroundings.
- 6.119 Landscape impact was identified by the Council as one of the principal matters requiring further consideration. The pre-application advice concluded that additional assessment was necessary to understand the potential visual effects of the development and recommended the preparation of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal.
- 6.120 The current application directly addresses this advice. A detailed Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared and has informed the evolution of the development from the earliest stages of design. Rather than simply assessing the final proposal, the landscape evidence has shaped the masterplan, building positions, landscape buffers and planting strategy. This represents a significant evolution from the original pre-application submission.
- 6.121 The application site is not an undeveloped parcel of open countryside. It is an established equestrian holding characterised by stable buildings, residential properties, hardstanding, internal access roads, fencing and other operational infrastructure.
- 6.122 Whilst the surrounding area retains a rural character, the application site itself has an established developed appearance that reflects its long-standing commercial and residential uses. The proposal therefore seeks to redevelop an existing developed site rather than introduce built development into an undeveloped landscape. This distinction is an important consideration when

assessing landscape effects.

- 6.123 The landscape strategy forms a fundamental component of the proposal rather than an afterthought. The revised scheme includes substantial native tree planting, reinforcement of existing hedgerows, structural planting belts, species-rich grassland, ecological habitats and extensive areas of soft landscaping throughout the development.
- 6.124 These measures strengthen the site's landscape framework, reinforce existing field boundaries and reduce the visual prominence of the proposed dwellings when viewed from the surrounding countryside. The proposed planting also delivers important biodiversity enhancements and contributes to the wider green infrastructure network.
- 6.125 The revised masterplan has been designed to minimise visual impact through careful building siting, lower density development and generous landscape buffers.
- 6.126 The reduction from eleven to ten dwellings has enabled greater separation between buildings and increased opportunities for structural planting. The retained and proposed vegetation will assist in filtering views into the site whilst maintaining the established landscape pattern. Over time, as the proposed planting matures, the development will become increasingly assimilated into its surroundings, further reducing its visual presence.
- 6.127 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal concludes that the development can be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable effects on the wider landscape character, and this conclusion is supported by the comprehensive landscape mitigation incorporated within the scheme.
- 6.128 The revised proposal demonstrates a clear commitment to landscape-led design. The development has evolved directly in response to the concerns identified through the pre-application process and now incorporates a robust landscape framework that significantly improves the visual integration of the site within its

rural surroundings.

6.129 When considered alongside the replacement of ageing equestrian buildings, the rationalisation of the site layout and the extensive ecological enhancements proposed, the landscape effects of the development are considered acceptable. The proposal therefore accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 25, 26, 31, 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, and landscape considerations weigh in favour of granting planning permission.

Residential Amenity

6.130 Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning decisions to create places that provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Paragraph 135 states that development should create places with a high standard of amenity, whilst ensuring that developments are sympathetic to local character and establish a strong sense of place.

6.131 The Framework recognises that good design extends beyond the appearance of buildings and includes the creation of healthy, safe and attractive places where people can enjoy a good quality of life. New development should therefore provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers whilst protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents.

6.132 Policy 24 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to protect residential amenity by ensuring that development does not result in unacceptable impacts arising from overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, overbearing impact, noise, disturbance, odour or other environmental effects.

6.133 Policy 33 similarly requires development to provide an appropriate standard of accommodation for future occupiers whilst safeguarding the amenities of neighbouring properties.

6.134 These policies seek to ensure that new development contributes positively to the quality of life of both existing and future residents.

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- 6.135 One of the defining characteristics of the existing site is the close relationship between residential dwellings and the operational equestrian business. Over many years, development has evolved incrementally, resulting in residential properties being dispersed amongst stables, service yards, horse movements and associated commercial activities.
- 6.136 Whilst this arrangement has developed lawfully, it is far from ideal. The interrelationship between residential and equestrian uses creates the potential for conflict between the operational requirements of the business and the reasonable expectations of residential occupiers in respect of noise, activity, vehicle movements and general disturbance.
- 6.137 The Council acknowledged this issue within the pre-application advice, recognising that there would be clear planning benefits in rationalising the layout and achieving a more logical separation between these differing land uses.
- 6.138 The submitted proposal has been specifically designed to address this issue. The principal equestrian facilities are relocated to the eastern part of the site, adjacent to the existing paddocks and grazing land, whilst the proposed residential development is concentrated within the area currently occupied by the central stable complex.
- 6.139 This creates a clear physical separation between residential and commercial activities, significantly reducing the potential for conflict between the two uses. The revised layout provides a more appropriate relationship between homes and the retained equestrian enterprise, improving the living environment for future residents whilst allowing the business to operate more effectively.
- 6.140 The proposal therefore directly responds to one of the key issues identified through the pre-application process.
- 6.141 The proposed dwellings have been designed to provide a high standard of accommodation. Each dwelling benefits from:
- generous internal accommodation;

- private gardens of an appropriate size;
- dedicated parking provision;
- good levels of natural light;
- appropriate separation distances between buildings;
- attractive outlooks over landscaped areas.

6.142 The spacing between dwellings has been carefully considered to minimise overlooking and maintain privacy. The revised layout also avoids an over-intensive form of development, with the reduction in dwelling numbers allowing greater separation between buildings and more extensive landscaping.

6.143 The result is a spacious residential environment that reflects the site's rural setting and provides a significantly higher quality living environment than would otherwise be achieved.

6.144 The development has also been designed to respect the amenities of neighbouring properties. Building positions, orientation and separation distances have been carefully considered to minimise overlooking and avoid unacceptable impacts arising from overshadowing or overbearing development.

6.145 The extensive landscape strategy further assists in filtering views and softening the relationship between the proposed development and adjoining land.

6.146 The accompanying Noise Impact Assessment demonstrates that the proposal will provide an acceptable acoustic environment for future residents whilst allowing the continued operation of the retained equestrian enterprise. Appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design where necessary.

6.147 The proposal represents a significant improvement over the existing site arrangement. By separating residential and commercial equestrian activities, the scheme resolves an inherent conflict that has developed over many years whilst

creating a high-quality residential environment consistent with national and local planning policy.

- 6.148 Accordingly, the proposal complies with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policies 24 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Affordable Housing

- 6.149 Policy 16 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to maximise the delivery of affordable housing across the District in order to address identified local housing needs and create balanced and sustainable communities. The National Planning Policy Framework similarly places significant emphasis on boosting the supply of homes, including affordable housing, as a key objective of achieving sustainable development. The provision of affordable housing, whether through on-site delivery or an appropriate financial contribution where justified, is therefore an important material consideration in the determination of this application.
- 6.150 This application seeks full planning permission for the comprehensive redevelopment of New Barn Farm, delivering 10no. new dwellings alongside the reorganisation and long-term enhancement of an established rural equestrian enterprise. In addition to providing much-needed market housing within a district experiencing a significant housing shortfall, the applicant fully acknowledges the importance of contributing towards the delivery of affordable housing to meet identified local needs.
- 6.151 The applicant has engaged positively with Horsham District Council throughout the pre-application process and remains committed to continuing this collaborative approach during the determination of the application. Accordingly, the applicant confirms a willingness to enter into a Section 106 Agreement to secure an appropriate affordable housing contribution, should this be required by the Local Planning Authority and demonstrated to accord with the adopted Development Plan, national planning policy and the statutory tests set out in

Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). The applicant is equally willing to discuss the most appropriate mechanism for delivering this contribution, whether through on-site provision or a commuted financial contribution, having regard to the Council's adopted policies, the characteristics of the site and the overall viability of the development.

- 6.152 This positive commitment reflects the applicant's desire to ensure that the development delivers meaningful and lasting benefits to the wider community, extending beyond the provision of high-quality market housing. The proposal should therefore be viewed as a comprehensive scheme that will not only assist in addressing the District's acute housing shortage but will also make an appropriate contribution towards meeting affordable housing needs, whilst simultaneously securing the future of an internationally recognised rural enterprise and delivering significant environmental enhancements.
- 6.153 When considered alongside the delivery of ten new dwellings, the safeguarding and expansion of a nationally and internationally recognised equestrian business, the provision of highly sustainable low-carbon homes, significant biodiversity net gain, enhanced landscaping, improved public access through the proposed pedestrian link and the wider economic investment generated by the redevelopment, the applicant's willingness to secure an appropriate affordable housing contribution through a planning obligation represents a further significant public benefit. This commitment should attract substantial positive weight in the overall planning balance and reinforces the conclusion that the proposal represents sustainable development for which planning permission should be granted in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan as a whole.

Highways, Access and Parking

- 6.154 Chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable transport and requires developments to provide safe and suitable access for all users.
- 6.155 Paragraph 116 states that development should only be refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.156 The Framework therefore adopts a balanced approach, recognising that development should be supported where safe access can be achieved and any impacts can be appropriately mitigated.
- 6.157 Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework seeks to ensure that development provides safe and convenient access for all users whilst encouraging sustainable transport choices.
- 6.158 Policy 41 requires developments to provide appropriate levels of parking in accordance with adopted standards and to ensure that servicing and turning arrangements operate safely.
- 6.159 Policy 33 also requires development to achieve safe and convenient access as an integral component of good design.
- 6.160 New Barn Farm is currently served by established vehicular accesses from Capel Road. These accesses have accommodated residential traffic together with commercial equestrian movements for many years and form the established means of serving the site.
- 6.161 Internally, however, the existing circulation arrangements have evolved incrementally and are closely interwoven with both residential and equestrian activities. This results in unnecessary interaction between horse movements, service vehicles and residential traffic. The existing layout is therefore operationally inefficient.

- 6.162 The Council identified highways matters as requiring further consideration during the pre-application process, including the submission of appropriate technical information and assessment of access arrangements.
- 6.163 The submitted application addresses these matters through a comprehensive review of the site's internal circulation and parking arrangements. The proposal retains the established vehicular access from Capel Road, avoiding the need for new access points onto the public highway. The existing access has been demonstrated to be capable of accommodating the proposed development, with the internal layout redesigned to improve vehicle circulation and operational efficiency.
- 6.164 This approach minimises intervention on the surrounding highway network whilst making significantly better use of the existing infrastructure. The proposed development introduces a clearly defined internal road network serving the residential development. The layout has been designed to provide:
- safe vehicular access to each dwelling;
 - convenient visitor parking;
 - adequate manoeuvring space;
 - appropriate turning facilities for service and emergency vehicles;
 - improved pedestrian movement throughout the development.
- 6.165 Importantly, residential traffic is separated from the principal operational areas of the equestrian enterprise. This improves highway safety within the site and reduces the potential for conflict between domestic vehicles, horse movements and commercial servicing activities. The revised arrangement represents a substantial operational improvement over the existing situation.
- 6.166 Parking has been designed in accordance with the adopted West Sussex County Council parking standards. Each dwelling benefits from appropriately located off-street parking, with additional visitor spaces distributed throughout the

development. The parking layout has been carefully integrated into the overall design to avoid large expanses of hardstanding and maintain the attractive landscaped character of the scheme. Cycle parking is also provided, encouraging opportunities for sustainable travel where appropriate.

- 6.167 There is no evidence that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Indeed, the comprehensive reorganisation of the site is expected to improve the operation of both the residential development and the retained equestrian enterprise by reducing internal conflicts between different users.
- 6.168 The proposal therefore represents an enhancement to the existing situation rather than an intensification that would give rise to severe highway impacts. Any additional vehicle movements associated with the proposed dwellings are proportionate to the scale of the development and can be accommodated within the local highway network.
- 6.169 The proposal retains an established vehicular access, improves internal circulation, separates residential and commercial traffic, provides parking in accordance with adopted standards and creates a safer and more efficient site layout. Consequently, the development accords with Chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policies 33, 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. There are no sustainable highways or parking reasons why planning permission should be withheld.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 6.170 Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure that planning decisions contribute to and enhance the natural environment. Paragraphs relating to biodiversity require developments to minimise impacts on ecological interests, protect existing habitats where possible and secure measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Framework encourages developments to integrate biodiversity within their design rather than relying solely upon mitigation.

- 6.171 The proposal has therefore been developed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, seeking first to avoid ecological harm before incorporating enhancement measures that deliver long-term environmental gains.
- 6.172 Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework requires development to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect ecological networks and provide opportunities for habitat creation. Policy 25 similarly seeks to conserve the District's natural environment, whilst Policy 33 requires landscaping and design to contribute positively towards ecological enhancement.
- 6.173 Collectively, these policies require development proposals to demonstrate that ecological interests have been fully considered throughout the design process.
- 6.174 The Council's pre-application response identified ecology as a key consideration and advised that the application should be supported by appropriate ecological surveys together with evidence demonstrating Biodiversity Net Gain and appropriate habitat protection measures.
- 6.175 The submitted proposal responds directly to these requirements through the preparation of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and supporting ecological assessments, which have informed the evolution of the scheme from the outset.
- 6.176 Rather than treating ecology as a post-design exercise, ecological considerations have influenced the layout of the development, the retention of existing vegetation and the landscape strategy.
- 6.177 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal concludes that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed development subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures. Existing ecological features have been retained wherever practicable, whilst opportunities have been taken to strengthen habitat connectivity through additional planting and habitat creation.
- 6.178 The proposal includes the retention of important landscape features together with extensive new native tree planting, hedgerow reinforcement, species-rich grassland, integrated bat and bird boxes and habitat creation throughout the site.

These measures will provide ecological enhancements significantly beyond the existing baseline.

- 6.179 The development has been designed to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with national legislation and planning policy requirements. The comprehensive landscaping proposals create a stronger ecological framework across the site through the introduction of native planting, habitat corridors and ecological enhancements integrated throughout the development. The scheme therefore not only mitigates potential impacts but delivers measurable long-term improvements to biodiversity and ecological resilience.
- 6.180 The proposal also strengthens the site's contribution to the wider green infrastructure network. Landscape buffers, tree planting and ecological corridors improve habitat connectivity whilst creating an attractive setting for the proposed development. These measures also contribute to climate resilience, visual amenity and the overall quality of the development.
- 6.181 The proposal has evolved in direct response to the ecological requirements identified during the pre-application process and demonstrates that the development can be delivered whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The proposed ecological enhancements and landscape strategy will result in a significant improvement over the existing position, ensuring compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policies 25, 31 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Flood Risk, Drainage and Environmental Protection

- 6.182 The National Planning Policy Framework requires developments to be directed away from areas at greatest risk of flooding and to incorporate sustainable drainage solutions wherever appropriate. Planning decisions should ensure that development remains safe throughout its lifetime and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Framework also seeks to ensure that development is suitable for its proposed use having regard to contamination, pollution and environmental health considerations.

- 6.183 Policies 35 and 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework require development to respond positively to climate change, manage surface water effectively and ensure that proposals do not increase flood risk.
- 6.184 Policy 24 requires development to protect environmental quality and residential amenity, whilst Policy 33 requires appropriate infrastructure to support new development.
- 6.185 The Council advised that the application should be accompanied by drainage information together with assessments relating to contamination and environmental health. The submitted application responds fully to these requirements through the preparation of specialist reports addressing contamination, drainage and environmental considerations.
- 6.186 The development incorporates a comprehensive drainage strategy designed to manage surface water in accordance with current best practice. Sustainable drainage measures have been incorporated within the design to attenuate runoff and ensure that post-development discharge rates are appropriately controlled. The proposals therefore ensure that the development does not increase flood risk either within the site or elsewhere.
- 6.187 A Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment has been undertaken to establish whether historic land uses present any constraints to redevelopment. The assessment concludes that the site can be safely redeveloped for residential purposes subject to the implementation of appropriate recommendations and any necessary planning conditions.
- 6.188 The redevelopment of the existing stable complex provides an opportunity to improve overall environmental quality through the removal of ageing buildings, enhanced landscaping and a more efficient site layout. The proposal therefore represents an environmental improvement over the existing situation.
- 6.189 The submitted technical assessments demonstrate that flood risk, drainage and contamination have been fully considered and can be satisfactorily addressed.

The proposal therefore complies with the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policies 24, 35 and 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Sustainability and Climate Change

6.190 The National Planning Policy Framework identifies climate change as one of the key challenges facing the planning system and requires development to support the transition towards a low-carbon future. Developments should make efficient use of land, minimise environmental impacts and incorporate sustainable design wherever practicable.

6.191 The proposal represents the comprehensive redevelopment of an existing developed site rather than the expansion of development into undeveloped countryside.

6.192 The scheme makes efficient use of existing infrastructure whilst incorporating:

- sustainable drainage systems;
- biodiversity enhancement;
- extensive tree planting;
- modern construction techniques;
- energy-efficient buildings;
- improved green infrastructure.

6.193 The proposed landscaping will contribute towards climate resilience through increased tree cover and habitat creation. Collectively these measures support the environmental objectives of sustainable development.

6.194 The proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 1, 31, 35 and 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Overall Planning Balance

- 6.195 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.196 The Council's pre-application advice identified a number of concerns relating to the original concept proposal, principally regarding the principle of development outside the Built-Up Area Boundary, landscape impact, design quality and the need for supporting technical information. However, the advice also acknowledged important benefits arising from the rationalisation of the site, including the opportunity to improve the relationship between residential and equestrian uses and to reorganise the existing development into a more logical and efficient arrangement.
- 6.197 The submitted application has evolved substantially in direct response to those comments. The development has been reduced from eleven to ten dwellings, the layout has been comprehensively redesigned, the architectural approach has been refined to better reflect its rural setting, and a comprehensive suite of technical assessments has informed every stage of the design process. The proposal is therefore materially different from the scheme considered during the pre-application process.
- 6.198 In assessing the planning balance, it is important to recognise the wide range of public benefits that arise from the proposal. These include:
- The delivery of ten high-quality dwellings, contributing towards the District's identified housing needs.
 - The long-term retention and enhancement of an established rural equestrian enterprise.
 - The comprehensive redevelopment and rationalisation of an existing developed site.

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- A significant improvement in the relationship between residential and commercial equestrian activities.
- High-quality architecture that reflects the rural character of the area.
- Extensive structural landscaping and visual enhancement.
- Measurable Biodiversity Net Gain and wider ecological improvements.
- Improved environmental quality through the replacement of ageing equestrian buildings.
- Sustainable drainage infrastructure and enhanced climate resilience.
- Economic benefits arising from construction activity and the continued operation of an established rural business.

6.199 These benefits must be considered alongside the Council's acknowledged inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. In accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore engaged.

6.200 The accompanying technical evidence demonstrates that the proposal will not result in unacceptable impacts upon landscape character, residential amenity, ecology, highways, drainage or environmental quality. Where potential impacts have been identified, appropriate mitigation has been incorporated into the design.

6.201 Further weight should also be afforded to recent appeal decisions within Horsham District and the surrounding area, which have consistently recognised the importance of the presumption in favour of sustainable development where the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. In particular, recent appeal decisions have confirmed that proposals delivering sustainable housing, improved accessibility and wider public benefits can represent appropriate forms of development notwithstanding their location outside defined settlement

boundaries. Whilst each proposal must be determined on its own merits, these decisions demonstrate the considerable weight that Inspectors are currently affording to the Council's housing shortfall and reinforce the application of paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework in the assessment of sustainable development proposals.

6.202 Accordingly, there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the substantial social, economic and environmental benefits arising from the proposal.

6.203 When assessed against the Development Plan as a whole and having regard to the material considerations identified throughout this Planning Statement, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development. The planning balance weighs decisively in favour of the development, and planning permission should therefore be granted.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of New Barn Farm, Capel Road, Rusper. The proposal seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing central stable complex and associated equestrian buildings, the construction of ten high-quality dwellings, the relocation and modernisation of the existing equestrian facilities, together with comprehensive landscaping, biodiversity enhancements, sustainable drainage infrastructure and all associated works.
- 7.2 The application has evolved considerably through a positive and collaborative pre-application process with Horsham District Council. The comments received under reference PE/25/0230 have been carefully considered and have directly influenced the evolution of the submitted scheme. Rather than making minor amendments to the original concept, the applicant has undertaken a comprehensive review of the development proposals, resulting in a materially different and significantly improved scheme. The number of proposed dwellings has been reduced, the masterplan has been fundamentally redesigned, the architectural approach has been refined to better reflect the rural character of the area, and the proposal is now supported by a comprehensive suite of technical assessments addressing the matters identified by the Council during the pre-application process.
- 7.3 The proposal should not be viewed simply as the provision of additional housing within the countryside. Instead, it represents the comprehensive redevelopment and rationalisation of an established mixed-use rural site that has evolved incrementally over many years. The existing arrangement of residential properties and commercial equestrian activities is fragmented and operationally inefficient, creating unnecessary conflicts between residential amenity and the day-to-day operation of the equestrian enterprise. The submitted proposals provide a coherent long-term masterplan that resolves these existing issues by creating a clear distinction between residential development and commercial

equestrian uses, whilst safeguarding the continued operation and future viability of the rural business.

- 7.4 The development delivers a wide range of significant planning benefits. These include the provision of ten high-quality dwellings at a time when Horsham District Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land; the long-term retention and investment in an established rural enterprise; the comprehensive redevelopment of an existing developed site; substantial improvements to the layout, appearance and functionality of New Barn Farm; extensive structural landscaping; measurable biodiversity net gain; improved green infrastructure; sustainable drainage measures; and the replacement of ageing equestrian buildings with a carefully designed development that responds positively to its countryside setting.
- 7.5 Throughout the design process, the proposal has been informed by a multidisciplinary team of professional consultants. Landscape, ecological, contamination, drainage, noise and design considerations have all influenced the evolution of the scheme, ensuring that environmental constraints have been addressed at the earliest opportunity rather than through post-design mitigation. The submitted technical evidence demonstrates that the development can be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable impacts upon landscape character, ecology, highway safety, residential amenity, flood risk or environmental quality. Where potential impacts have been identified, appropriate mitigation has been incorporated into the design, ensuring compliance with the objectives of national and local planning policy.
- 7.6 It is recognised that the site lies outside the defined Built-Up Area Boundary and that this gives rise to a degree of conflict with elements of the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework. However, planning applications must be determined in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, having regard to both the Development Plan and all material considerations. In this case, the Council's acknowledged housing land supply position, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within

paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, together with the substantial social, economic and environmental benefits arising from the proposal, are significant material considerations that carry considerable weight in favour of granting planning permission.

- 7.7 Importantly, the Council's own pre-application advice acknowledged the shortcomings of the existing site arrangement and recognised the planning benefits that could arise from a comprehensive reorganisation of the development and the improved separation of residential and equestrian activities. The submitted proposal directly responds to those observations and delivers a significantly enhanced form of development that addresses the principal concerns identified during the pre-application process. It therefore represents the product of positive engagement between the applicant and the Local Planning Authority, consistent with the collaborative approach encouraged by paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.8 When the proposal is considered as a whole, it is clear that it represents sustainable development. It delivers high-quality housing, secures the future of an established rural business, significantly improves the organisation and appearance of the site, enhances biodiversity and landscape character, provides meaningful environmental gains and contributes towards addressing the District's pressing housing needs. These public benefits are substantial and are not outweighed by any identified adverse impacts. The proposal therefore accords with the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant policies of the Horsham District Planning Framework when read as a whole.
- 7.9 For all of the reasons set out within this Planning Statement and the accompanying technical evidence, it is respectfully concluded that the proposal represents an appropriate, well-designed and sustainable form of development. The application delivers a comprehensive package of planning, environmental, economic and social benefits, and there are no material planning considerations that justify withholding planning permission. Accordingly, the Local Planning

Authority is respectfully invited to grant planning permission for the proposed development.