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# Planning Committee (North)

Tuesday, 7th May, 2024 at 5.30 pm  
Conference Room, Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham

Councillors:

Peter van der Borgh (Chairman)	Liz Kitchen
Tony Bevis (Vice-Chairman)	Richard Landeryou
Colette Blackburn	Dennis Livingstone
Martin Boffey	Jay Mercer
James Brookes	John Milne
Len Ellis-Brown	Colin Minto
Nigel Emery	Jon Olson
Ruth Fletcher	Sam Raby
Chris Franke	David Skipp
Anthony Frankland	Clive Trott
Nick Grant	Tricia Youtan
Kasia Greenwood	Claire Vickers
Warwick Hellawell	
Tony Hogben	
Alex Jeffery	

You are summoned to the meeting to transact the following business

Jane Eaton  
Chief Executive

## Agenda

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	Page No.
<b>GUIDANCE ON PLANNING COMMITTEE PROCEDURE</b>	
1. <b>Apologies for absence</b>	
2. <b>Minutes</b>	9 - 14
<i>To approve as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2024 (Note: If any Member wishes to propose an amendment to the minutes they should submit this in writing to <a href="mailto:committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk">committeeservices@horsham.gov.uk</a> at least 24 hours before the meeting. Where applicable, the audio recording of the meeting will be checked to ensure the accuracy of the proposed amendment.)</i>	
3. <b>Declarations of Members' Interests</b>	
To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Committee	

4. **Announcements**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Committee or the Chief Executive

**To consider the following report of the Head of Development & Building Control and to take such action thereon as may be necessary:**

5. **DC/23/1178 Horsham Golf Park, Denne Park, Horsham**

15 - 84

Ward: Southwater North  
Applicant: C/O Carter Jonas

6. **Urgent Business**

Items not on the agenda which the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as urgent because of the special circumstances

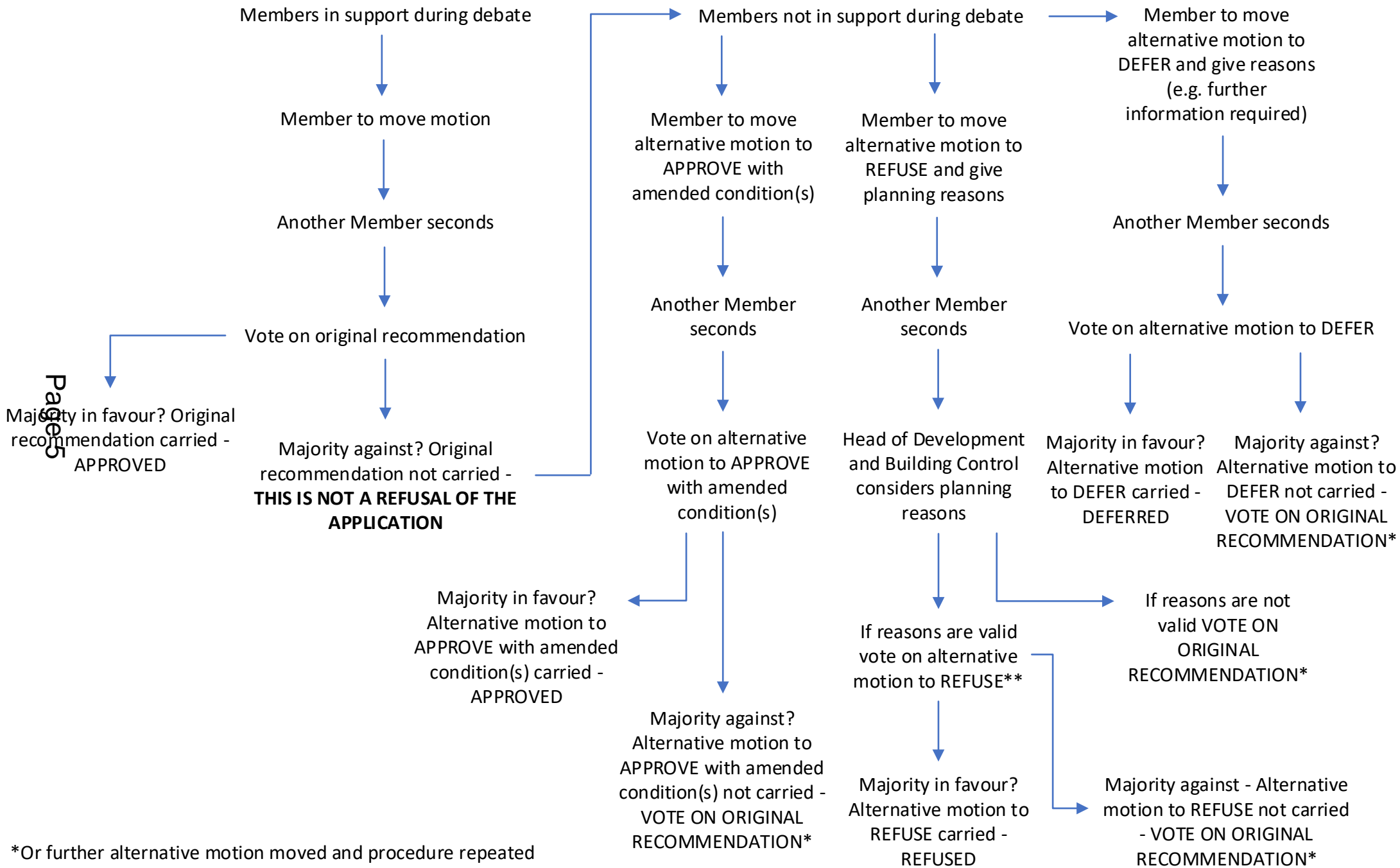
## GUIDANCE ON PLANNING COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

(Full details in Part 4a of the Council's Constitution)

<b>Addressing the Committee</b>	Members must address the meeting through the Chair. When the Chairman wishes to speak during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must stop.
<b>Minutes</b>	Any comments or questions should be limited to the accuracy of the minutes only.
<b>Quorum</b>	Quorum is one quarter of the total number of Committee Members. If there is not a quorum present, the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If a date is not fixed, the remaining business will be considered at the next committee meeting.
<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	Members should state clearly in which item they have an interest and the nature of the interest (i.e. personal; personal & prejudicial; or pecuniary). If in doubt, seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.
<b>Announcements</b>	These should be brief and to the point and are for information only – <b>no debate/decisions</b> .
<b>Appeals</b>	The Chairman will draw the Committee's attention to the appeals listed in the agenda.
<b>Agenda Items</b>	The Planning Officer will give a presentation of the application, referring to any addendum/amended report as appropriate outlining what is proposed and finishing with the recommendation.
<b>Public Speaking on Agenda Items</b> (Speakers must give notice by not later than noon two working days before the date of the meeting)	Parish and neighbourhood councils in the District are allowed <b>5</b> minutes each to make representations; members of the public who object to the planning application are allowed <b>2</b> minutes each, subject to an overall limit of <b>6</b> minutes; applicants and members of the public who support the planning application are allowed <b>2</b> minutes each, subject to an overall limit of <b>6</b> minutes. Any time limits may be changed at the discretion of the Chairman.
<b>Rules of Debate</b>	<p><b>The Chairman controls the debate and normally follows these rules but the Chairman's interpretation, application or waiver is final.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No speeches until a proposal has been moved (mover may explain purpose) and seconded</li> <li>- Chairman may require motion to be written down and handed to him/her before it is discussed</li> <li>- Seconder may speak immediately after mover or later in the debate</li> <li>- Speeches must relate to the planning application under discussion or a personal explanation or a point of order (max <b>5</b> minutes or longer at the discretion of the Chairman)</li> <li>- A Member <b>may not speak again except:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o On an amendment to a motion</li> <li>o To move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she last spoke</li> <li>o If the first speech was on an amendment, to speak on the main issue (whether or not the amendment was carried)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In exercise of a right of reply. Mover of original motion has a right to reply at end of debate on original motion and any amendments (but may not otherwise speak on amendment). Mover of amendment has no right of reply.</li> <li>○ On a point of order – must relate to an alleged breach of Council Procedure Rules or law. Chairman must hear the point of order immediately. The ruling of the Chairman on the matter will be final.</li> <li>○ Personal explanation – relating to part of an earlier speech by the Member which may appear to have been misunderstood. The Chairman’s ruling on the admissibility of the personal explanation will be final.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amendments to motions must be to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Refer the matter to an appropriate body/individual for (re)consideration</li> <li>○ Leave out and/or insert words or add others (as long as this does not negate the motion)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- One amendment at a time to be moved, discussed and decided upon.</li> <li>- Any amended motion becomes the substantive motion to which further amendments may be moved.</li> <li>- A Member may alter a motion that he/she has moved with the consent of the meeting and seconder (such consent to be signified without discussion).</li> <li>- A Member may withdraw a motion that he/she has moved with the consent of the meeting and seconder (such consent to be signified without discussion).</li> <li>- The mover of a motion has the right of reply at the end of the debate on the motion (unamended or amended).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative Motion to Approve</b></p>	<p>If a Member moves an alternative motion to approve the application contrary to the Planning Officer’s recommendation (to refuse), and it is seconded, Members will vote on the alternative motion after debate. If a majority vote against the alternative motion, it is not carried and Members will then vote on the original recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Alternative Motion to Refuse</b></p>	<p>If a Member moves an alternative motion to refuse the application contrary to the Planning Officer’s recommendation (to approve), the Mover and the Secunder must give their reasons for the alternative motion. The Head of Development and Building Control will consider the proposed reasons for refusal and advise Members on the reasons proposed. Members will then vote on the alternative motion and if not carried will then vote on the original recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Voting</b></p>	<p>Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those voting, by show of hands or if no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two Members request a recorded vote</li> <li>- A recorded vote is required by law.</li> </ul> <p>Any Member may request their vote for, against or abstaining to be recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>In the case of equality of votes, the Chairman will have a second or casting vote (whether or not he or she has already voted on the issue).</p>
<p><b>Vice-Chairman</b></p>	<p>In the Chairman’s absence (including in the event the Chairman is required to leave the Chamber for the debate and vote), the Vice-Chairman controls the debate and follows the rules of debate as above.</p>

**Original recommendation to APPROVE application**

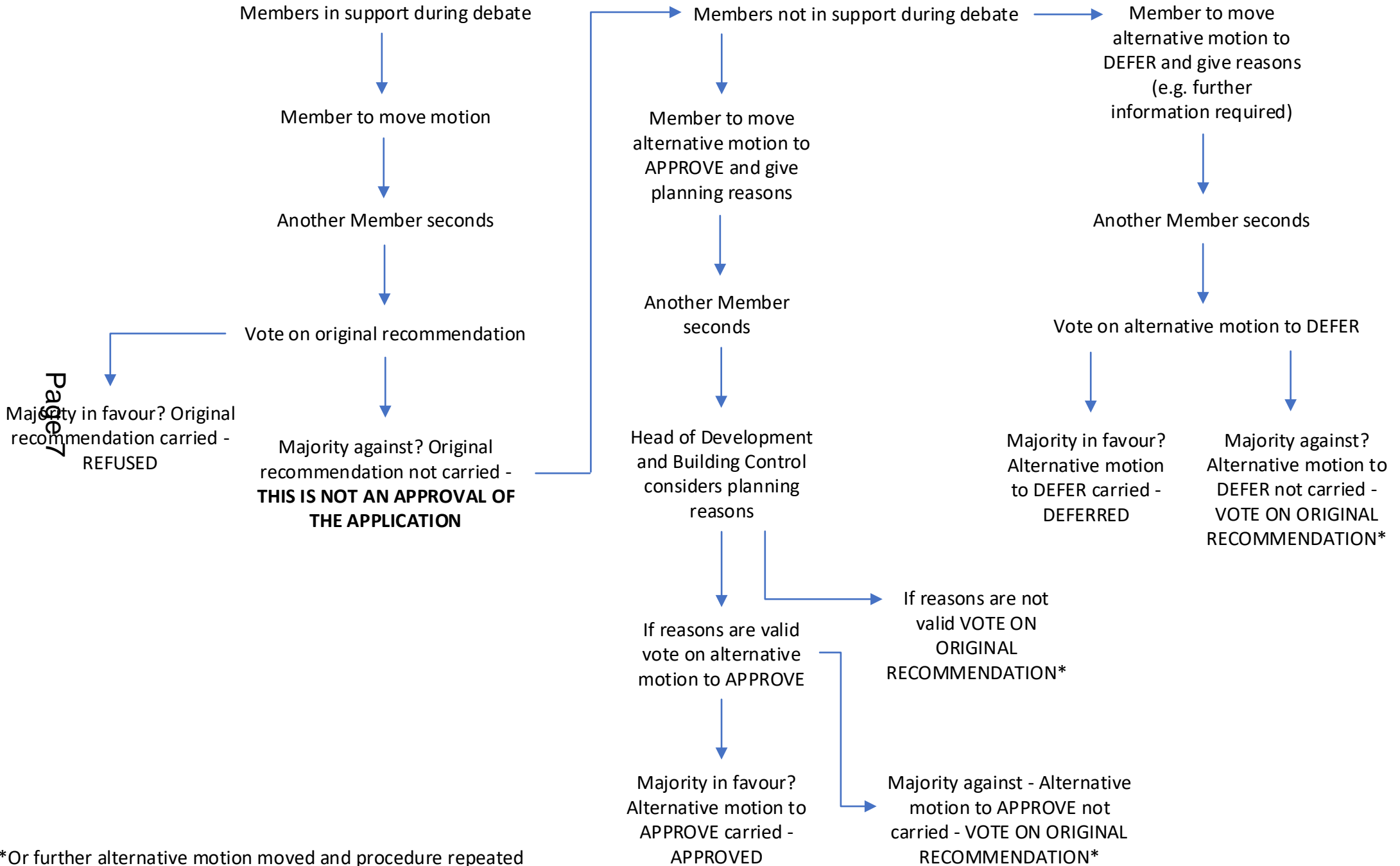


\*Or further alternative motion moved and procedure repeated

\*\*Subject to Director's power to refer application to Full Council if significant cost implications are likely

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# Original recommendation to REFUSE application



\*Or further alternative motion moved and procedure repeated

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**Planning Committee (North)**  
**9 APRIL 2024**

Present: Councillors: Tony Bevis (Vice-Chairman), James Brookes, Len Ellis-Brown, Nigel Emery, Chris Franke, Anthony Frankland, Warwick Hellowell, Alex Jeffery, Liz Kitchen, Richard Landeryou, Dennis Livingstone, Jay Mercer, John Milne, Colin Minto, David Skipp, Clive Trott, Tricia Youtan and Claire Vickers

Apologies: Councillors: Peter van der Borgh, Colette Blackburn, Martin Boffey, Ruth Fletcher, Nick Grant, Kasia Greenwood, Jon Olson, Sam Raby and Jonathan Taylor

PCN/66 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PCN/67 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

DC/23/2074 Councillor James Brookes declared an interest in the item as he knew the applicant and the agent. He spoke as a member of the public and then left the room and did not participate in the debate or the vote.

DC/23/2142 Councillor Richard Landeryou declared an interest in the item as he is a member of Rudgwick Preservation Society who intended to lodge an objection to the application. He did not sit on the committee lodging the objection so contributed to the debate and took part in the vote.

PCN/68 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

PCN/69 **APPEALS**

The list of appeals lodged, appeals in progress and appeal decisions as circulated were noted.

PCN/70 **DC/23/2278 FORMER ARUN FEEDMILLS, SINCOX LANE, SHIPLEY**

The Head of Development and Building Control reported that this application sought planning consent for the erection of eight dwellings, with associated parking, drainage, and hard and soft landscaping.

The application site is positioned to the south-east of Sincox Lane, outside of any defined built-up area boundary. The site comprised a former commercial site, with the area currently unused and comprising hardstanding. The site is located approximately 4.5km north-east of West Chilton and approximately 5.8km north-west of Ashington. The wider area primarily consists of open countryside with a scattering of farm enterprises and sporadic residential development within the wider locality.

Seven letters of objection were received, 6 letters supported the proposal and Shipley Parish Council objected to the application.

The agent for the application spoke in support.

Members had concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on the landscape and they felt that the applicant had not successfully demonstrated water neutrality.

It was proposed and seconded to vote on a motion to refuse the application on the grounds of impact to the landscape and lack of demonstrated water neutrality. This motion was lost.

Members then voted to approve the application as recommended in the report.

#### RESOLVED

That DC/23/2278 be delegated approval to the Head of Development in accordance with the officers amended recommendation to finalise conditions, given discussion is taking place regarding drainage.

#### PCN/71 **DC/23/2142 BOREHAM HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, RUDGWICK**

The Head of Development and Building Control reported that this application sought variation of conditions 1, 8, 9, 10 and 13 of the previously approved application DC/22/2048. The conditions related to plans, details of the air source heat pump, foul/surface water drainage, finished floor levels and arboriculture details. The nature of the variations sought were detailed in Section 6.

The application site comprises a large, detached dwelling known as Boreham House that is located within the built-up area boundary of Rudgwick. The site is located adjacent to the Rudgwick Conservation Area and lies close to a new residential/commercial development site at Windacres. There are several Grade II Listed Buildings close to the site.

Twenty-two letters of representation were received objecting to the proposal following the publication of the committee report a further letter of objection has also been received. Rudgwick Parish Council objected to the application.

Rudgwick Parish Council spoke in objection to the application as well as two members of the public. One speaker also spoke in objection, on behalf of Rudgwick Preservation Society. The agent spoke in support of the proposal.

Members discussed the detrimental impact of the development on the neighbouring trees due to the proximity, potential loss and site being within the root protection area. The proposal was also contrary to section 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy 33 of the Horsham District Council Planning Framework.

#### RESOLVED

That DC/23/2142 be refused in contrary to the officer recommendation for the following reason:

The proposed amendment, by virtue of its proximity to nearby trees would result in harm to the health and potential loss of the tree/s. The development is within the root protection area of a retained tree where development is undesirable, and in this case avoidable. This is contrary to Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and Paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

#### PCN/72 **DC/22/2045 HOLME FARM ORCHARD, WINTERPIT LANE, MANNINGS HEATH, HORSHAM**

The Head of Development and Building Control reported that this application sought consent for the demolition of existing amenity building, removal of two yurts and associated infrastructure. Change of use of land to residential and erection of one single storey dwellinghouse incorporated into the landscape.

Holme Farm Orchard lies within a rural area on the southern side of Winterpit Lane, approximately 500m southeast of the built-up area boundary of Mannings Heath. The land to the north of Winterpit Lane lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Thirty-two letters of representation were received objecting to the proposal, including two from outside of the district. Thirteen letters of representation were received in support of the application, including one from outside the district.

Following the publication of the committee report Nuthurst Parish Council objected to the application and details were published in an addendum.

One member of the public spoke in objection to the application. The applicant and one member of the public spoke in support.

Members discussed the objections to the application noted in the report and raised concerns regarding the conversion of the yurts to a residential dwelling in the future. Additionally, some Members felt that they were not best placed to

make judgement on whether the application merited approval on the basis that the design was of exceptional quality as per Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

RESOLVED

That DC/22/2045 be refused in line with officers' recommendation.

PCN/73 **DC/23/2074 HIGH WOOD HILLS SPORTS GROUND, WICKHURST LANE, BROADBRIDGE HEATH**

The Head of Development and Building Control reported that this application sought consent for stadium upgrades including additional capacity for 50 seated spectators, 50 standing spectators and spectator toilets. Construction of additional changing room. Installation of perimeter pitch fencing and alterations to existing stadium perimeter fencing. Additional turnstile adjacent to the existing one.

High Wood Hill Sports Ground is situated to the south of the Bridge Heath Leisure Centre and Indoor Bowls Club, within the Built-up Area boundary of Broadbridge Heath. It is bounded to the east by the slip road from the A24, to the south by the A281 link road, and to the west by residential development. There is a line of trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order along the northern site boundary. Beyond the leisure centre and bowls club to the north lies the Broadbridge Heath Tesco and car park.

Two neighbour letters of objection were received. Broadbridge Heath Parish Council raised no objection to the application.

Councillor James Brookes spoke as a member of the public on this item, then left the room for the duration of the discussion and did not vote.

Members discussed the positives of the infrastructure detailed in the application on the football club and were supportive of the recommendation.

RESOLVED

That DC/23/2074 be approved in accordance with officer recommendation.

*The meeting closed at 8.00 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN

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**Horsham  
District  
Council**

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**TO:** Planning Committee North  
**BY:** Head of Development and Building Control  
**DATE:** 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**DEVELOPMENT:** Outline planning application with all matters reserved save for access for the development of a Sports and Leisure Hub including the provision of communal facilities, nursery, Golf College, sports club house (containing Health & Fitness spa, changing facilities and food & beverage) and an educational facility for Warren Clark Golfing Dreams (Use Classes E, F1 & F2); a local centre containing a convenience store and co-working space (Use Classes E & F2); the provision of supporting landscaping, open space and related infrastructure; outdoor sports and leisure provision comprising Driving Range, re-provision of golf (including supporting golf facilities) and hockey (including pitches and training area) (Use Class F2) and up to 800 dwellings (Use Class C3).

**SITE:** Horsham Golf Park, Denne Park, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0AX

**WARD:** Southwater North

**APPLICATION:** DC/23/1178

**APPLICANT:** **Name:** C/O Carter Jonas **Address:** Townfield House 27-29 Townfield Street Chelmsford CM1 1QL

**REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA:** More than eight persons in different households have made written representations within the consultation period raising material planning considerations that are inconsistent with the recommendation of the Head of Development and Building Control.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To refuse outline planning permission

### **1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

1.1 To consider the planning application.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

1.2 Outline planning permission is sought for the development of the site for up to 800 dwellings and a new sports and leisure complex. The proposal includes the provision of a local centre with a retail use, community facility, nursery and a co-working space. The scheme includes allotments, a neighbourhood equipped area of play (NEAP), a local equipped area of play, open space and landscaping throughout. The scheme also proposes improved cycle routes between Horsham and Southwater, including off site improvements. Under this proposal all matters are reserved with the exception of access. The application constitutes EIA development and is supported by a full Environmental Statement.

- 1.3 The 800 dwellings are mainly proposed to the southern section of the site. This is to the south of existing access road to the golf club and three dwellings at Harwood Farm House, Home Farm Cottage and Highwood Cottage. These three dwellings are not part of the proposal and are to be retained on site. A parcel of dwellings is also proposed to the north of Harwood Farm House, between the retained dwelling and the Horsham Football Club site.
- 1.4 The proposal includes 35% affordable housing. This equates to up to 520 market dwellings and up to 280 affordable dwellings. This is proposed to be split into 70% social / affordable rent and 30% intermediate / shared ownership. This equates to up to 196 social / affordable rental properties and 84 intermediate / shared ownership properties. The proposal also includes the provision of 5% self and custom build dwellings. The indicative dwelling mix is as follows:

	<b>Social/ Affordable Rented</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Intermediate/ Shared Ownership</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Affordable (Total)</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>%</b>
1-bed	43	22	18	22	62	26	5
2-beds	65	33	28	33	92	156	30
3-beds	59	30	25	30	84	208	40
4-beds	29	15	13	15	42	130	25
Total	196	100	84	100	280	520	

- 1.5 The proposal includes a new sports and leisure facility, which is located to the northern section of the site. The facilities will replace the existing golf club and driving range which would be demolished and re-provided. The new facility would be located directly adjacent to Horsham Football Club which would remain in situ immediately to the west of the site. The Horsham Football Club site does not form part of this application.
- 1.6 The proposals would retain the existing short format golf course to the north of the site. The short format golf course would continue to separate the new facility from the collection of dwellings at Denne Park to the north and the separate access road to these dwellings from Worthing Road. The proposal also retains part of the existing 18-hole golf course to the east of the site which is sited within the existing woodland. A new car park for the golf club, a mini adventure golf course, and a putting green is proposed adjacent to the new facilities. The facility also includes a spectator area, a restaurant, driving range and nets, gym, co-working space and a new clubhouse.
- 1.7 The new sports and leisure facilities would be located north/east of the Horsham Football Club site where the current Golf Club and driving range are located. The new facilities would comprise the following:
- A home for Horsham Hockey Club. This would include two hockey pitches, practice area, changing rooms and classroom facilities, with the multi-use pitches suitable for a range of other uses when not in use for hockey.
  - A new Clubhouse comprising a bar, cafe, terrace bar/restaurant, golf shop, co-working spaces, a gym, nursery, parcel collection, and a new driving range.
  - The clubhouse would also include a Golf College, an educational facility for sixth form age students who aspire to a career in golf, and a permanent home for Warren Clark Golfing Dreams. This is a charity that works with disabled and disadvantaged groups through sport.



- The facilities will also enable collaboration with Horsham Football Club and the formation of the Hop Oast Sport Committee to maximise the potential resulting from the proposed the colocation of sport and leisure facilities.
- 1.8 The proposal includes a mixed use local centre which would be located to the north west of the residential area at the site entrance off Worthing Road. The centre is proposed to include a community facility and local shop. Allotments are proposed to the east of the residential area adjacent to retained woodland, with a proposed NEAP and LEAP set immediately to its north. The scheme also includes seven local areas of play (LAPs) throughout the residential parcels. The proposal retains the existing public by-way that cuts through the site east-west (aka Green Lane) and the public right of way footpath (PROW 1666) that runs north-south through the site.
- 1.9 To address water neutrality impacts, the proposal includes 4 boreholes to provide water for the whole of the development. This includes retaining an existing borehole and supplementing this with 3 new boreholes. In terms of biodiversity net gain, at least 10% BNG is proposed. This includes enhancement of existing grassland, woodland and habitat creation.
- 1.10 The proposal includes detailed design approval for the means of vehicular access to the site. The access would be from Worthing Road. The access is proposed directly opposite the existing Worthing Road access to the Hop Oast Amenity Tip and Park and Ride site to the west. This access would serve the proposed dwellings and local centre. The proposal would require the reconfiguration of this junction, providing a signalised crossroads arrangement. The crossing is proposed to link to 5m wide shared footway / cycleway would run along the western boundary of the site connecting to the Green Lane by-way to the south.
- 1.11 The existing access to the north, which currently serves the football club, golf club and dwellings, is to be retained as part of the proposal and will mainly serve the proposed new sport and leisure uses. Off-site improvements for cycle links and pedestrian links are also included for this proposal. This includes:
- Widening the footway of Worthing Road,
  - Upgrading the bridleway to the east of site (Lovers Lane and Pedlars Way),
  - Providing a footway connection along Coldstaple Lane and
  - Improvements to pathway 1668 and Kings Lane.
- 1.12 As amended, the proposal has removed the proposed segregated left turn lane on the A24 roundabout. This land is now safeguarded for a segregated left turn lane in the event it is needed in the future for the development of the roundabout.
- 1.13 Proposed parameter plans for this development have been submitted. The parameter plans are as follows:
- Land Use Parameter Plan.
  - Density Parameter Plan.
  - Building Heights Parameter Plan.
  - Access & Movement Parameter Plan.
  - Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan.
- 1.14 The parameter plans indicate proposed densities which range from 67.5 dwellings per hectare ('dph') within the most western zones/around the central village core reducing to 45.6 dph in the central zones and 35 dph along the eastern zones as you transition towards the countryside/sensitive areas. Building heights are proposed with a maximum height up to three storeys, which will predominantly be located adjacent to Worthing Road and the A24. The remainder of the site will generally feature two and a half storey buildings or two storey buildings across the remainder of the development. Sports and community buildings are shown up to two storeys high.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.15 Horsham Golf and Fitness is located to the south of Horsham and north east of Southwater. It is within a countryside location outside of any defined built area boundary. The golf club is sited to the east of Worthing Road, the Worthing Road roundabout and the A24. The site extends to some 55.57 hectares. The site is divided by an existing access road from east to west which serves the club house, driving range and a small number of dwellings. The club house is an 'L' shaped two storey building with a car park, gym and cafe. The driving range is integral to the club house and includes high level fencing. The driving range is surrounded by large conifers which separate the club house and the driving range from the Horsham Football Club site.
- 1.16 The golf club includes an 18 hole course, a 9 hole short format course, putting greens and a short game area. The golf courses are located to the south and northern sections of the site. The topography of the site falls from north east to the south west, with levels ranging from 74.8 metres above ordnance datum to 63.8 metres. The site has been artificially modified to accommodate the golf course with undulating areas and pockets of landscaping and ponds. Of note is the established pond and landscaped area experienced when entering the site from Worthing Road. The southern section of the site includes an ancillary building for the golf club with its own separate access from Worthing Road. The site includes extensive woodland to the east side of the site which enclose part of the golf course.
- 1.17 The golf clubhouse sits adjacent to Horsham Football Club, known as the Camping World Stadium. This stadium is a relatively new addition, having been granted permission in 2017. The football club is now well established on site and this facility includes a main football pitch, a training pitch, a club house and a parking area. The football club and golf club both utilise the existing vehicular access, which also serves three dwellings, Homewood Farm House, Home Farm Cottage and Harwood Cottage. The football club is bounded by ancient woodland to its southern and western boundaries.
- 1.18 Two public right of ways cut across the site. From north to south, public right of way no.1666 runs through the site, around the golf club and cutting across the north and south golf courses. To the south of the site, a by-way (no.1668) known as Green Lane cuts across the site from east to west. Further public right of ways are located to the east of the site running north to south (nos. 1670 and 1663). The public rights of way running north to south connect to Horsham Town. A high pressure gas pipeline also runs through the site. The gas pipeline enters the site just south of the existing vehicular access and then cuts across the site from north west to south east. There are also several trees covered by tree preservation orders within the site. These are located to the east side of the site within and near to the existing woodland and golf courses.
- 1.19 To the north west of the site, there is a detached dwelling which fronts Worthing Road. This dwelling, called Gate Cottage, is a Grade II Listed Building. The dwelling is the former gate house leading up to Denne Park. The access road to leading up to Denne Park includes an impressive line of trees (protected by a tree preservation order). Denne Park is divided up into separate dwellings and some of the buildings are also Grade II listed.
- 1.20 The area to the east of the site is mainly open countryside and woodland. To the south of the golf course are a collection of dwellings on Kings Lane. To the west of the site, on the western side of Worthing Road, is the Hop Oast Park and Ride facility, a Council-run amenity tip and the Hop Oast Depot. The depot is used by the Council's Refuse Collection Department and this is where the Council's refuse collection team are based. The Hop Oast site also includes a petrol station with an ancillary convenience store.

- 1.21 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, with a band of low (0.1-1% annual) and medium (1-3.3% annual) surface water flood risk located to the northern part of the site north of the Horsham Football Club site, which extends down the eastern part of the golf course.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **2.2 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

### **2.3 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)**

### **2.4 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015)**

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development  
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development  
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy  
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion  
Policy 15 - Strategic Policy: Housing Provision  
Policy 16 - Strategic Policy: Meeting Local Housing Needs  
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection  
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character  
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection  
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity  
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development  
Policy 33 - Development Principles  
Policy 34 – Cultural and Heritage Assets  
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change  
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use  
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction  
Policy 38 - Strategic Policy: Flooding  
Policy 39 – Strategic Policy: Infrastructure Provision  
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport  
Policy 41 - Parking  
Policy 43 – Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

### **2.4 Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)**

Policy 1: Sustainable Development  
Policy 2: Development Hierarchy  
Policy 3: Settlement Expansion  
Policy 6: Climate Change  
Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use  
Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction  
Policy 9: Water Neutrality  
Policy 10: Flooding  
Policy 11: Environmental Protection  
Policy 12: Air Quality  
Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character  
Policy 14: Countryside Protection  
Policy 15: Settlement Coalescence  
Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity  
Policy 19: Development Quality  
Policy 20: Development Principles  
Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment  
Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision

Policy 24: Sustainable Transport  
Policy 25: Parking  
Policy 27: Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing  
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation  
Policy 29: New Employment  
Policy 37: Housing Provision  
Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs  
Policy 39: Affordable Housing  
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District  
Policy 42: Retirement Housing and Specialist Care

**2.6 West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018)**

Policy M9 - Safeguarding Minerals

**2.7 West Sussex Waste Local Plan (2014)**

**2.8 Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2019):**

SNP1 – Core Principles  
SNP2 – Proposals for Residential Development  
SNP4 – Keeping our Roads Moving  
SNP7 – Formal / Informal Sports Areas  
SNP9 – Home Standards  
SNP10 – Residential Space Standards  
SNP12 – Outdoor Play Space  
SNP13 – Enhancing Our Non-Motorised Transport Network  
SNP14 – Adequate Provision of Car Parking  
SNP15 – Driving in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
SNP16 – Design  
SNP17 - Site Levels  
SNP18 – A Treed Landscape  
SNP19 – Parish Heritage Assets  
SNP21 – A Growing Economy  
SNP23 – Use of Community Infrastructure Levy Funds

**2.9 Other Relevant Guidance and Policies:**

- HDC Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- HDC Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)
- WSCC Supplementary Planning Guidance (September 2020) - revised county parking standards and transport contributions methodology
- Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex (2020)
- HDC Planning Advice Note: Biodiversity and Green infrastructure (2022)
- HDC Planning Advice Note: Facilitating Appropriate Development (2022)
- HDC Sports, Open Space and Recreation Assessment (2014)
- HDC Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review (2021)
- HDC Play Strategy 2017-2027
- HDC Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Document (2007)
- HDC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

## 2.10 PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

DC/09/0746	Change of use of stud farm to golf course, re-configuration of existing golf course (including importation of inert material) to form a 18 hole golf course plus junior/beginners short course; bunds, mounding, landscaping and 3 new ponds. Demolition of existing farmhouse, farm buildings, green keepers compound and bothy. Refurbishment and extension of existing clubhouse to include hospitality/function facilities, new fitness suite building and extension to existing car park	Application Permitted on 11.12.2009
DC/16/2856	Proposed 3G Football Ground (including main pitch and training pitch), clubhouse, stands, access, parking and landscaping (to serve as the home ground for Horsham Football Club). 20m high netting and posts to adjacent golf driving range.	Application Permitted on 23.08.2017

## 3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at [www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk)

### INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.2 **HDC Arboriculture:** Comment (summarised).

The submitted Arboricultural impact Assessment is a fair assessment of the species, size, and condition of trees on and immediately adjacent to the site. However, should planning permission be given tree related conditions and modifications to the site layout are recommended.

- 3.3 **HDC Archaeology:** No Objection (summarised).  
No objection subject to conditions.

- 3.4 **HDC Drainage Officer:** Comment (summarised).  
The Drainage Strategy submitted is acceptable.

- 3.5 **HDC Ecology (Consultant):** No Objection (summarised).  
Recommended conditions are as follows:

- All mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted reports.
- Prior to any works affecting Great Crested Newts, a licence issued by Natural England or GCN District Licence shall be provided.
- Submission of a Biodiversity Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Submission of a Woodland Management Plan.
- Submission of a Biodiversity Compensation and Enhancement Strategy with any Reserved Matters application.
- Submission of Landscape and Ecological Management Plan with any Reserved Matters application.
- Submission of Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Scheme with any Reserved Matters application.

- 3.6 **HDC Ecology (Officer):** Comment (summarised).

- Further details required regarding the BNG calculations and submission.

3.7 **HDC Economic Development:** No Objection.

The development of additional sports facilities could have a positive impact on the local economy, create additional local employment opportunities and support the growth of local businesses within and related to the sports sector.

3.8 **HDC Environmental Health:** Objection (summarised).

Three main sets of comments have been received from the Environmental Health team as follows:

April 2024: Comment (relating to land contamination only)

[key extract] Waste types classed as inert include construction and demolition wastes and for this waste type the inclusion of a low percentage of for non-inert waste is allowed and indeed were reported to be present to the Environment Agency by council officers. Given this we [Environmental Health officers] remain of the view that the material imported onto the site has the potential to be contaminated and therefore needs to be included as a potential source of contamination within the conceptual site model (CSM) and preliminary risk assessment (PRA).

Given the lack of information, in particular that the Phase 1 does not acknowledge that the importation activity was undertaken, and the fact that the report does not identify the more sensitive end use as residential gardens, the preliminary risk assessment submitted in support the applicant is not, in our [Environmental Health officers] view, compliant with current British Standards and current technical guidance – a much more detailed and robust Phase 1 Assessment is therefore required. We are of the view however that the risks from contamination to future site users are capable of being mitigated through conditions.

December 2024: Objection.

The Environmental Health Team remain of the view that the application is insufficiently detailed to be determined. Areas of concern are as follows:

- Contaminated Land: The Environmental Health are still concerned that imported material should be considered a potential source of contamination in the assessment.
- Noise: Having reviewed the submitted response from the applicant, the Environmental Health Team still require further details. As requested in previous comments, a 3D noise model showing what noise levels across the site with the indicative layout overlain should be provided. In the absence of an acoustic design statement, it is not clear however what the noise 'mitigation' proposed will entail. Given the close proximity of the A24, Environmental Health's position is that an acoustic design statement should be provided in support of the application.
- Water Neutrality: There is still concern over aquifer recharge system and the impact this would have water quality. Concern also over data on water samples.

July 2023: Objection.

The Environmental Health Team are of the view that the certain elements of the application are currently insufficiently detailed to enable the application to be properly determined. The areas of concerns are as follows:

Commercial Uses:

- Potential impact from noise from hockey pitches. Mitigation required – this could include hours of use and careful design of perimeter fencing.
- Condition recommended requiring details of plant for any commercial building.
- Must be suitable provision for odour control for any commercial kitchen extract ventilation system.
- Facilities for commercial waste areas to be located well away from neighbouring residential premises.
- Restrictions on hours of use and deliveries recommended.

Air Quality:

- Recommend a monitoring plan to be included – to be secured by condition.
- Concerns over the model results for Albion Way. These do not seem correct.
- Recommend an additional verification site to be included in the assessment.
- Damage costs and associated mitigation measures should be in line with the Sussex Air (2021) Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex.
- Emission mitigation statement to include itemised costing for each proposed mitigation. Note that some of the embedded mitigation are required through other schemes.

Contaminated Land:

- Insufficient information.

Road Traffic Noise:

- Insufficient information.
- Based on the current information, the proposed dwellings to the south western part of the site would be subject to the highest noise levels. Require a 3D noise model to fully assess this impact. Likely that plots will need to be relocated.

Water Neutrality:

- Concern over aquifer recharge system and the impact this would have water quality.
- Concern over data on water samples. Require accurate and up to date info.

3.9 **HDC Heritage:** No Objection (summarised).

3.10 **HDC Housing:** No Objection (summarised).

3.11 **HDC Hydrology Consultant:** Comment (summarised).

- Based on the original submissions and subsequent additional information, there are still significant issues with the Water Neutrality Solution proposed. The scheme is for a large development of up to 800 homes and other uses, which will require 3 new boreholes (in addition to the existing borehole) to provide water supply.
- Whilst some of the original comments from the HDC hydrologist have been addressed, there are still significant concerns. As such, the HDC hydrologist has commented that there is insufficient information to accept that this proposal will be water neutral.
- This specifically relates to the lack of evidence to be certain that the yield of the boreholes will be sufficient to sufficiently provide water for the life of the development. There has also been insufficient testing at this time in order to be certain of the yield and the quality of the water in the long term. There is also uncertainty regarding potential contamination of the water supply.

3.12 **HDC Landscape Architect:** Objection (summarised).

The proposal cannot be supported on landscape grounds.

- Notwithstanding some of the original landscape characteristics being lost due to the current use of the site as a golf course, concern is raised with the spatial strategy/location of the proposal and the principle of development within the site. Insufficient information provided with regards the access aspects of the proposal.
- A number of residual effects as identified by the submitted LVIA are disagreed with and overall, the proposals are considered to result in adverse impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area, contrary to policies 25, 26, 27 and 31 of the HDPF.

3.13 **HDC Leisure Services:** Comment.

From a strategic perspective there are a number of aspects of sporting and recreation provision within the application that have merit. In particular providing a new home base with pitches and training area for Horsham Hockey Club is a strategic priority as set out in HDC Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 – 2031. Similarly the provision of an education facility for Warren Clarke Golfing Dreams would be very valuable.

3.14 **HDC Strategic Policy:** Objection (summarised).

- The principle of development for the proposal for 800 homes and associated leisure and community facilities is located to the south east of Horsham town is considered to be contrary to the Horsham Development Plan. The proposal would result in the loss of existing golfing facilities which will require justification through the submission of a golfing needs assessment (Strategic Policy 43). Any assessment must clearly show the loss of golf amenity is surplus to requirements. However, the applicant has indicated their intention to be policy compliant with affordable housing requirements in the adopted Horsham District Local Plan (HDPF) (35%), provide a small neighbourhood centre, leisure and sporting hub and provide more than 10% net bio-diversity gain. The applicant must demonstrate the proposal is also water neutral in order to conform with the Habitat Regulations.
- The proposal lies outside the existing settlement boundary and has not been identified in either the HDPF (Strategic Policy 2) or in the made Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and nor it is a logical extension of the existing settlement pattern of Horsham town or Southwater village. Strategic Policy 4 sets out the criteria by which settlement expansion outside the Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) would be supported. The proposal would not meet the requirements as stipulated in Strategic Policy 4.
- The relatively poor connections between the site and Southwater village and Horsham Town for a development on this scale would require the development to demonstrate sufficient direct investment in improving walking and cycling facilities to Horsham town (along Worthing Road) supporting Active Travel. There are proposals to improve local connections but it is considered the proposal does not provide adequate support for providing walking and cycling infrastructure to key services located in Horsham town or within Southwater (for example to access local primary schools given none is proposed on-site). It is also not sufficiently demonstrated that bus services would be within reasonable walking distance of some parts of the development. The proposals would be contrary to Policy 40 Sustainable Transport.
- Development of this scale must also demonstrate appropriate infrastructure requirements have been addressed. Any development will also need to be able to demonstrate compliance with Policy 39 (Infrastructure Provision). This will in particular require the views of WSCC as the education authority to ascertain whether educational needs can be adequately met as development proposed of this scale would normally be expected to provide primary school provision onsite, which this proposal does not.
- Currently, the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land. As of December 2023, Horsham District had a 2.9 year supply of housing land. Notwithstanding the lack of a 5-year housing supply the made Southwater Neighbourhood Plan is less than five years old and has policies and allocations to meet its identified housing need up to 2031. This application for the development of a leisure hub accompanied by 800 dwellings is in clear conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan's Core Principles (Policy SNP1) therefore when considered against NPPF paragraph 14 it would have an adverse impact which would likely significantly and demonstratively outweigh the benefits proposed by the application. The emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 has recently concluded its Regulation 19 statutory consultation period on the 1 March 2024 and is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in June 2024. Limited weight can be applied to the emerging Local Plan at the time of writing this report, but the strategy and vision for the district extends the plan period to 2040. This proposal would be contrary to the



emerging vision and development strategy for Horsham. The application is not supported.

## OUTSIDE AGENCIES

### 3.15 **Active Travel England:** Objection (summarised).

- ATE has concerns about the location of the site given the poor quality of the surrounding active travel infrastructure, including Worthing Road, the footpath network to the north-east of the site, Coltstaple Lane/Southwater Street, and the barrier to non-motorised movements caused by the A24 and the Hop Oast roundabout.
- Without significant improvements to this infrastructure, it is considered that the proposed development does not adhere to the sustainable transport policy criteria set out in the NPPF as well as design guidance in LTN 1/20 and Inclusive Mobility. Consequently, ATE considers the proposed development will fail to sufficiently embed sustainable travel habits to and from the surrounding area in line with these policies and standards. Given this, we are recommending refusal of this application as submitted.

### 3.16 **Council for British Archaeology:** Comment (summarised).

The CBA do not wish to comment in detail on the proposed new development at this stage of the proposal. However, the archaeological significance of the location and its surrounding area should inform the proposals, and this development offers the potential to better reveal and enhance this significance through an inclusive mitigation strategy.

### 3.17 **Environment Agency:** No Objection (summarised).

No objection subject to the following conditions:

- Land contamination details to be submitted prior to commencement of development.
- Land contamination verification reports to be submitted prior to occupation.
- Monitoring and maintenance plan in respect of contamination to be submitted prior to occupation.
- Remediation strategy to be submitted for approval in the event that contamination not previously identified is found on site.
- No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted other than with the written consent of the local planning authority.
- The EA state that an abstraction licence does not guarantee the quality or quantity of the abstracted water. The abstraction licencing process assesses the abstractions impact on the environment, and does not consider the long-term sustainability of the abstraction.

### 3.18 **Forestry Commission:** Comment (summarised).

Advice given and guidance referred to in relation to ancient woodland, existing trees and biodiversity net gain.

### 3.19 **Gatwick Airport:** No Objection.

### 3.20 **Historic England:** No Comments to Make.

### 3.21 **National Highways:** No Objection (summarised).

No objection subject to a condition relating to the submission of a Construction Management Plan.

### 3.22 **Natural England:** Comment (summarised).

Natural England concur with the conclusion of the local authority's HRA appropriate assessment, insofar that further information is required in order to determine the significance of impacts on designated sites and the scope for mitigation, chiefly: evidence to be certain

that the yield of the boreholes will be sufficient to sufficiently provide water for the life of the development, sustainably and in perpetuity.

- 3.23 **NatureSpace:** No Objection (summarised).  
The applicant has stated that they wish to use the traditional licencing route for newts with Natural England and have supplied a statement to support their intention and expectation of obtaining this.
- 3.24 **NHS Sussex:** Objection (summarised).  
Without associated infrastructure, NHS Sussex would be unable to sustain sufficient and safe services provided in the area and would therefore have to object to the development proposal. A contribution (£1,213,445) towards health facilities in the area is required, to be secured by an obligation in a legal agreement.
- 3.25 **Southern Gas Network:** SGN refer to their website for advice.
- 3.26 **Southern Water:** Comment (summarised).
- The applicant is advised of the approximate positions of Southern Water's existing public foul sewers and foul rising mains within the development site. The exact position of the public assets must be determined on site by the applicant in consultation with Southern Water before the layout of the proposed development is finalised.
  - Investigations indicate that Southern Water can facilitate foul sewerage disposal to service the proposed development. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.
  - Under certain circumstances SuDS will be adopted by Southern Water should this be requested by the developer. Where SuDS rely upon facilities which are not adoptable by sewerage undertakers the applicant will need to ensure that arrangements exist for the long-term maintenance of the SuDS facilities.
  - If the applicant proposes to offer a new on-site drainage and pumping station for adoption as part of the foul/surface water public sewerage system, this would have to be designed and constructed to the specification of Southern Water Services Ltd.
  - Investigations indicate that Southern Water can facilitate water supply to service the proposed development. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the water supply to be made by the applicant or developer.
- 3.27 **South Downs National Park Authority:** No Objection.
- 3.28 **Sport England:** Support (summarised).  
Sport England support this application subject to the new / amended sports facilities being secured in an appropriate timescale to mitigate the loss of part of the existing golf course and the use of the proposed artificial grass pitches to be secured for the community with Horsham Hockey Club as the principal community club through a formal community use agreement.
- 3.29 **Sussex Police:** Comment (summarised).  
No detailed comments to make at this stage. The applicant is directed to the website at [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com).
- 3.30 **WSCC Education:** Objection (summarised).
- Secondary provision in Horsham District is unable to expand, considering existing anticipated growth, and the lack of an allocated or secured site for a new secondary school. As this development is coming outside the adopted Plan and the Local Plan review there is not any capacity. Consequently, the County Council as the Local Education Authority, objects to the planning application for significant housing coming forward at this stage.

- West Sussex County Council would also like to raise concerns about the safe access to primary education provision. It is questionable if there are suitably safe walking and cycling routes to primary schools in the South of Horsham or in Southwater.

3.31 **WSCC Fire Service:** Comment (summarised).

Conditions recommended requiring details to be submitted for approval showing the locations of fire hydrants.

3.32 **WSCC Local Lead Flood Authority:** Objection (summarised).

- The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy is not in accordance with the NPPF, PPG Flood risk and coastal change or WSCC LLFA SuDS Policies or Local Policy 35 and 38 Horsham District Planning Framework and must adequately assess surface water flood risk.
- Insufficient information for this Outline Application infers that flood risk may increase elsewhere, upstream, or downstream from the site.

3.33 **WSCC Highways:** Comment (summarised).

No highway objections are raised. Four main sets of comments have been received from WSCC Highways, which are summarised as follows:

April 2024: No objections subject to conditions and legal obligations.

- The amendment to remove the segregated left turn lane is supported. The overall operational benefits to the roundabout from the left turn lane are very limited. There is merit for land to be safeguarded in the event it is needed in the future for the comprehensive redevelopment of the roundabout.

January 2024: More information required.

- The previous comments from WSCC have not been adequately addressed. This relates to the safety of those trying to cross the A24 at the proposed segregated left turn lane. Further information is also required regarding the signalised access junction.

November & December 2023: More information required.

To address the July 2023 comments from WSCC Highways a Transport Addendum was submitted.

- Whilst a number of the matters have been resolved to the satisfaction of WSCC Highways, further information is still required to support the design of the segregated left turn lane and associated highway changes. Once the design of this feature is resolved, WSCC can complete the review of the Stage One Road Safety Audit.
- There is also an outstanding matter concerning the inclusion of a merge lane for northbound traffic on the B2237 Worthing Road at the proposed signalised site access junction.
- There is also a problem raised within the Stage One Road Safety Audit relating to right turning vehicle movements again at the proposed signalised junction.

July 2023: More information required. Based upon a review of the submitted Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan, further information is required:

- Confirmation is required regarding the width of the crossing points at the proposed signalised junction. The introduction of staggered crossings will require revised modelling and a revised Stage One RSA.
- Plans and details are required showing the provision of footways and crossing points within the Park and Ride site from the proposed signalised crossing points.
- Confirmation is required regarding the nature and potential off-peak traffic generation associated with the non-residential uses to determine if a traffic management plan is needed for any major events.

- The undertaking of suitable and appropriate modelling for off-site junctions (the scope of which is to be agreed with WSCC Highways) using the traffic flows derived from the Horsham Strategic Model.
- The provision of network diagrams showing the distribution of development traffic.
- A full design audit for the proposed segregated left turn lane referencing and demonstrating how all appropriate design standards are being met.
- Confirmation over the nature of the crossing improvement on the A24 Hop Oast Roundabout south arm and the updating of the Road Safety Audit response as necessary.
- If a controlled crossing is proposed on the A24 Hop Oast Roundabout south arm, a full design demonstrating how all appropriate standards are being met will be necessary.
- Details of the improvements to footpath 1668 where this lies outside of the site boundary. Ideally this would include a cross section showing achievable widths and surfacing.
- Confirmation and details of footway improvements on Coltstaple Lane, which includes the link between the by-way and bridleway, and the by-way and Kings Lane.
- Investigation and provision of suitable improvements to highlight the existing cycle route on Coltstaple Lane/Southwater Street.
- An updated Framework Travel Plan.

3.34 **WSCC Public Rights of Way:** No Objection (summarised).

As amended, the original concerns of the WSCC Rights of Way Team have been addressed.

3.35 **WSCC Waste & Minerals:** No Objection (summarised).

- In response to comments from the WSCC Minerals Team, a Waste Infrastructure Assessment has been submitted. WSCC is broadly satisfied that the submitted statement demonstrates that the proposed development would not result in the introduction of sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the operational waste infrastructure that may prevent or prejudice its continued operation.
- The value of the application site with regard to its mineral reserves is currently not well understood as the submitted Mineral Resource Assessment is not sufficient. Preliminary site investigation are required and discussion around potential quantity of resource to be sterilised. WSCC refer to HDC to assess the importance of the mineral reserve.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

3.36 **Southwater Parish Council:** Objection (summarised).

The proposed development broadly conflicts with the numerous policies contained within the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) and has failed to demonstrate compliance. In fact, the developer acknowledges in their submission that they do not comply with the SNP.

- The development area has not been allocated for housing development within the SNP being beyond the Built Up Area Boundaries as defined by the SNP and neither has it been included as a site in the emerging Local Plan. Policy SNP2.2 allocates land west of Southwater for the delivery of 422-450 new residential units. The site was allocated in accordance with paragraph 73 of the NPPF as the most suitable and sustainable location for an appropriate amount of residential development that could be accommodated in the Parish, being within walking distance of a range of shops and services including Lintot Square. The proposed development would not be in as sustainable a location and would not be within walking distance services needed by future residents. The proposal therefore conflicts with the development strategy set out in the adopted development plan, and in particular conflicts with SNP1 (SNP1.1(b)), SNP2, and HDPF Policy 15.
- SNP1 requires development to positively contribute towards Southwater Village remaining a single centre settlement, with shops, services and facilities centralised

in/around Lintot Square. Whilst the like for like replacement of the golf course may be acceptable, the provision of other facilities, most notably the mixed-use local centre (which includes a community facility and local shop) would conflict with SNP1.1(a).

- The proposed development, by reason of the size and scale would have an urbanising influence in the countryside beyond Southwater resulting in harm to the countryside character of the area. This is emphasised by the fact that higher density development is constricted to the west of the A24 with no development of any significant density to the east. The high density of the development would be inappropriate for its countryside location. In addition, dwellings to the north of the Parish are typically a maximum of two storeys in height, the proposed development seeks to provide units of up to 3 storeys close to Worthing Road and units of up to 2.5 storeys to the east within the more rural landscape which is clearly inappropriate and harmful to the character of the parish.
- Given the location of the proposed site to the northeast of Southwater, separated by the A24, would be a settlement in its own right and as such would not fit with the established pattern of Southwater or Horsham, adding pressure for further development and contributing to settlement coalescence between Horsham and Southwater.
- Whilst the applicant is proposing 35% of units as affordable in accordance with Policy 16 of the HDPF, the latest SHMA1 states that for social/affordable rented properties, there should be a mix of 35% for 1-bed properties, 30% for 2-bed properties, 25% for 3-bed properties and 10% for 4+ bed properties. The submitted Affordable Housing Assessment demonstrates a considerable shortfall in 1-bed properties (22%), an overprovision of 3-bed properties (30%) and an overprovision of 4+ bed properties (15%).
- The Parish Council also has significant concerns in relation to traffic safety and access to the site. Firstly, it is worth noting Southwater has the highest car ownership based on Census 2021 data with 92.4% of households having at least one car or van versus West Sussex where 84% have at least one car or van and 76.5% for England as a whole. With the addition of 800 units, two hockey pitches, increased sports and golf facilities with Horsham Football Club already established with a significant burden on the road network on match days, the Parish Council has considerable concerns in relation to the 2,000 additional cars the site will likely come forth with plus the additional vehicle movements generated from the increase to the sports facilities provision as documented by the applicant.
- The Parish Council also has further concerns in relation to the long term viability and sustainability over the applicant's reliance on citing the Park & Ride at Hop Oast as a viable solution to limit car use into Horsham.
- Regarding arboriculture, the proposal makes no consideration for tree planting in line with SNP policy SNP18.1, or the planting of new trees in accordance with SNP Policy SNP18.3.
- Regarding ecology, the Ecology and Biodiversity section of the Environmental Statement highlights that there will be an adverse impact on the St Leonard's Park Ponds SSSI, the St Leonard's Forest SSSI and the Slinfold Stream and Quarry SSSI as a result of a possible increase in visits by new residents.
- The Parish Council has great concern over the long-term sustainability of the solution submitted inclusive of insufficient information on funding and securing the long-term maintenance of the complex system of water abstraction. The borehole supply is not a long-term solution for the duration of the existence of the development and the application requires further considerable water mitigation strategies. The Parish Council is also concerned about the impact of these boreholes on the Arun Upper Operational Catchment and resultant impacts downstream. The proposed development does not achieve water neutrality and therefore the development will negatively impact the Arun Valley Special Area Conservation (SAC), Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA), or the Arun Valley Ramsar Site.

3.37 **Forest Neighbourhood Council:** Objection (summarised).

Although Planning Application DC/23/1178 is not in the Horsham Forest neighbourhood, Denne Hill is visible and easily accessible for many of our residents. The Council object for the following reasons:

- Loss of a unique landscape; this complex biodiversity could never be replaced.
- Concreting over acres of land and reducing the gap between Horsham and Southwater that does not comply with Strategic Neighbourhood Plan 1.
- This was designed to guide future development in a controlled and sustainable manner.
- Putting additional strain on an already overwhelmed infrastructure that includes education, transport and healthcare.
- An unclear policy on water extraction and water neutrality - promises are not guarantees and it is not considered that there is substantiation to the claims made by the developer.
- Major safety concerns about access to the development
- Major safety concerns about pedestrians using a single width pavement along Worthing Road where the speed limit is 40 mph +.

3.38 **Horsham Denne Neighbourhood Council:** Objection (summarised).

Although the application is not in the Horsham Denne Neighbourhood Council (HDNC) area, the proposed development does border the Denne NC area. The Council object for the following reasons:

- At the moment there is no major development to the east of Worthing Rd and A24, so this would completely change the character of the area. HDNC is concerned about encroaching coalescence between Horsham and Southwater.
- The infrastructure and facilities included in the application will impact on the HDNC area. Regarding Community facilities there is mention in the Design and Access statement regarding “potential” for a convenience store, co-working and a healthcare centre although that is dependent on a request from the NHS and a large financial contribution from the Developer. Slightly firmer intentions are stated regarding a community centre and nursery, but basically there are no specific commitments; so the development may be dependent on existing settlements for facilities.
- Public Transport seems to be totally reliant on the Park and Ride which only operates at reasonably frequent intervals during business hours. HDNC is very concerned about the likelihood of more pedestrians and cyclists using Worthing Rd, which is very dangerous due to the narrow road and lack of pavements.
- As the development is on the top of the hill overlooking Horsham Town, there is a potential for water run-off which could cause flooding. 800 residences will obliterate a large area of permeable land. HDNC could not find any clear information regarding the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) or other methods to mitigate against flooding.

3.39 **Horsham Blueprint Neighbourhood Forum:** Objection (summarised).

The Steering Group has carefully considered the application which, although outside the immediate area of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan, has serious implications for the southern boundary and the wider well-being of Horsham town.

- This is first and foremost an application for a strategic housing development of up to 800 homes and nearly 2000 residents in a wholly inappropriate location. The proposed intensification of sporting activity, the funding alone for which could never require such a huge number of houses, is ancillary in that without the housing one assumes it would not go ahead as currently devised. However, in any case, this is not a suitable site for a sports and leisure hub.
- The site is outside the built-up boundaries of both Horsham town and Southwater Parish, and lies within the green rural gap which is currently an area of ‘quiet recreational use’. It is not identified for housing within the Horsham District Planning Framework or the Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan. Thus it should

be protected from inappropriate development by HDPF Policy 26 and Policy SNP 1.1 of the SNDP.

- It would have a significant adverse impact on the rural gap between Horsham and Southwater. This provides a vital buffer against settlement coalescence, important informal leisure links between town and country, an important wildlife corridor, and is an important feature of the River Arun hydrological system.
- Covering a substantial area of countryside with new homes, recreational infrastructure and other buildings, roads etc would clearly result in significant loss of green infrastructure. The adjacent parkland has been designated as a priority habitat of 'good quality semi improved grassland'.
- The proposed development at Horsham Golf would create large areas of impermeable surfaces (tarmac, concrete and artificial 4G pitches) which will increase the risk of rapid surface runoff and downstream flooding during periods of intense rainfall.
- HDPF Policy 39 states that the release of land will be dependent on there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the additional requirements arising from new development. The absence of any plan for local facilities, other than a community shop and a nursery, means that up to 2000 residents would be dependent for almost all aspects of their life on facilities and infrastructure in Southwater and Horsham town.
- Turning to the question of water neutrality, the applicant is proposing to extract groundwater from the Tunbridge Wells Sandstone aquifer below Denne Hill through a series of boreholes. In view of the close proximity of the boreholes to Chesworth Farm where the River Arun flows directly on top of the same aquifer we are concerned that this would have a detrimental impact on the River Arun.

#### 3.40 **Horsham Society:** Objection (summarised).

- Even were the site suitable for housing, which it is not, the proposed sporting facilities and improvements would in no way justify the scale of housing proposed. That all matters would be reserved is also unacceptable as it would foreclose any proper public scrutiny of the proposals as the development evolved.
- The site is not identified for housing in the Horsham District Planning Framework and lies outside the built-up boundaries of both Horsham town and Southwater. Development on this site would be contrary to policies within the HDPF and the Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Policy 25 states that the natural environment and landscape character of the District landform and development pattern will be protected against inappropriate development. Clearly, the building of up to 800 homes would not protect the natural environment and current landscape character. The overwhelmingly green landscape between the edge of Horsham town's southern built-up area boundary and the A24 would be significantly impaired by the construction of a housing estate of up to 800 homes, and the large intensification of sporting infrastructure proposed.
- Policy 27 states that landscapes will be protected from development which would result in coalescence of settlements and that development between settlements will be resisted unless there is no significant reduction in the openness and "break" between settlements and it does not generate urbanising effects within the settlement gap, including artificial lighting and traffic movements. A large new settlement in this position would significantly reduce both the size and appearance of the gap between Horsham and Southwater, introducing urban effects including light pollution, development along key corridors and increased traffic movements.
- Policy 39 states that the release of land will be dependent on there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the additional requirements arising from new development. The absence in the application of any plan for local facilities, beyond a local shop and a school, for what would be an new orphan community of almost 2000 people makes it clear that they would be dependent for almost all aspects of their life on neighbouring facilities and infrastructure in Southwater and

Horsham town, including shopping, markets, non-sporting recreation, cinema, restaurants, dentists and doctors etc.

- The scheme is also contrary to Southwater Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- The statements included within the application regarding water neutrality appear to be cast in generic terms and provide no confidence that the current requirements imposed by Natural England could be complied with.

3.42 **Homes England** have objected to the proposal on the following grounds (summarised)

- The accompanying Golf Needs Assessment is not sufficiently robust to assess the impact of the proposal on golf provision.
- The proposed water neutrality strategy is not sufficiently robust and there is no certainty that the strategy is agreed with the Environment Agency.

3.43 **945** representations have been received for this proposal. This is broken down into **827** objections and **78** representations of support. A petition of 3,293 signatures was submitted opposing the development. 2 petitions of 54 and 89 signatures were also submitted in support of the application.

3.44 The grounds of the objection received are summarised as follows;

#### **Highways**

- Additional traffic - Development abuts 2 main junctions.
- Current walking/cycling routes to town are narrow & dangerous – no proposal to change/improve.
- Roads are too narrow for traffic to pass safely.
- Cars often parked on verges as no space – blocking pavements.
- Supporting infrastructure has not been thought through with proposed plan.
- Lack of safe pedestrian routes into town.
- Accident blackspot on Worthing Road near Boar's Head pub.
- Residents on the new estate would be unlikely to merge easily from proposed roads and additional housing in that area would add to traffic by at least 800 - 1000 cars.
- Additional risk of road collisions.
- Single file pavement – no adequate footpath especially for young children/prams etc.
- Only 1 access route for emergency services provided.
- The proposed crossing at Hop Oast is inadequate.

#### **Infrastructure and Services**

- Overstretched GP/Dentists/police/fire/ambulance/schools.
- Lack of basic infrastructure to support more people in the area.
- Local schools are oversubscribed, children attending outside of catchment area/district to get school placement.
- Nearest hospital/ A&E services is East Surrey/Worthing 40+ minute drive (*some residents commented that they would support development if hospital/schools/NHS Dentist/GP will be built in conjunction*).
- Current resources in Southwater are insufficient for additional housing.
- Southwater doesn't have a secondary school & Children attend secondary in Burgess Hill as no local options.
- Existing Sewage infrastructure cannot support 800 more homes.
- No Footbridge over A24.
- No local dental practices are taking on NHS patients (adults or children).

#### **Environment, Ecology and Health**

- Lack of areas for wildlife.
- Lack of green areas.
- No plans for environmental facilities, water retention/recycling, green energy sources.



- More residents = more cars & more pollution.
- Frequent flooding on Worthing Road – less green space means more flooding.
- Vital green corridor between Southwater and Horsham.
- Loss of irreplaceable natural resources which cannot be restored i.e., ancient woodland.
- Loss of habitat for rare and vulnerable species.
- Proposition of reducing golf course to 9 holes and to offset water neutrality does not add up to water capacity for 800 homes.
- Current golf club provides a wildlife corridor.
- Need a substantial reservoir to support additional water strain.
- Unique species i.e., 10 of the 18 species of bats present in the UK; red kites, buzzards, tawny, barn and little owls and kingfishers; and larger mammals, including deer, badgers, foxes, stoat, weasel, and polecat.
- It is unsustainable to build over green environmentally friendly fairways to create more artificial surfaces.
- Can't replace the complex biodiversity that has accumulated over hundreds of years.
- Denne Hill is an important catchment area of water to the river Arun, a vital source of drinking water which sustains multiple ecosystems.
- Concreting over areas in the proposed development will accelerate rainwater run-off and exacerbate rapid bypass of water through storm surge down the Arun, bringing increased risk of flooding downstream.
- New Trees aren't equal to ancient trees.
- Mature trees and meadow act as Carbon Storage.
- The proposed site was previously used as a landfill tip are HDC satisfied no contaminated material made its way into the site.
- The proposed development will compromise the setting of numerous TPO trees.
- Denne Hill with its woodland connection to Chesworth Farm Local Nature Reserve has a rich and diverse fauna and flora. The parkland has been designated by DEFRA as a "Priority Habitat" of Good Quality, Semi-Improved Grassland".
- The current capability/ capacity of Southern Water to handle the increased volumes of Storm and Foul Water is limited. High rainfall would see increase in the need for direct discharge of raw sewage to streams and rivers and the consequential damage to the natural environment
- Lighting from the pitches is not good for the wildlife in the area especially Bats.

### **Landscape, Character, Amenity and Heritage**

- One of the outstanding features of Horsham is the green space on the southern side near the town centre.
- Erosion of walking and green areas.
- The proposal is visually inappropriate.
- The proposed floodlight will affect residential amenity.
- Development is too dense.
- Christs hospital and Horsham Sports Club already provide facilities for Hockey.
- The site provides an appropriate setting for the adjacent listed building Denne House, and this huge development may affect its setting.
- Unique landscape has been an important recreational area for Horsham.
- The area provides a beautiful and calm woodland and meadow for ramblers, dogwalkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders who enjoy the footpaths and bridleways.
- 800 houses would be a step closer to the coalescence of the built-up areas of Southwater and Horsham.
- Ancient woodlands which have persisted since the 1600s.
- All the amenities stated within the proposed plan already exist i.e. Golf Club, Hockey pitches etc.

- Increase in traffic, general noise and light pollution will disrupt the rural character of the area.

### **Housing**

- Overdeveloped/overpopulated area.
- Lack of social (affordable housing) – New homes are unaffordable and little/no low-income housing.
- Slow roll out of development shows there is no need/demand for more homes.
- Existing new build sites have not completely sold.
- Unaffordable homes for first time buyers and young families.
- Existing housing approvals are currently being built out at a much slower rate due to lack of demand and are also being advertised for sale in Asia.

### **Golf course specific**

- Lack of consideration for golf course users/ smaller course means less capacity.
- Golfers will not use a smaller course 6/9 holes cannot be used for competitions/handicap etc.
- Golf is great for fitness and social connection, helping to keep people physically and mentally healthy - young and old.
- Most golfers want to play 18 holes, not 9. A longer course provides more technical challenge, interest, and exercise.
- Loss of jobs in golf course.
- It is the only golf course (reasonably priced and in good condition) that remains open throughout the area. The other courses at Slinfold and Cottesmore are generally closed during the winter months.
- Current golf course is a social hub for many people.

### **Other**

- Redevelop brown sites rather than green spaces.
- The developer's aspiration to "promote active travel" and "discourage the use of private cars" is not possible for families with school-aged children.
- The Neighbourhood plan was approved by 82% of Southwater residents that voted in the 2021 and this site was not designated for housing in that plan.
- The boreholes are inappropriate and will detrimentally affect the environment.

3.45 The grounds of support are summarised as follows:

- Horsham Leisure are proposing an ambitious development of the sporting facilities to create a 'sporting hub' with commitments to community benefits exceeding those that might accompany such an enabling development. The sporting element will be focused in and around the existing golf clubhouse and car park. The scheme's ambition is to provide a new home for Horsham Hockey Club, a new facility for Warren Clark Golfing Dreams, a charity working with disabled and disadvantaged children through sport; and a new home for The Golf College, an educational facility for sixth form students looking to pursue a career in golf.
- Horsham Football Club support the principle of this planning application. We believe there is significant merit in the concept and community benefit that arises. HFC are confident that we will be able to work with Horsham Leisure and the other resident sports organisations to advance our community outreach and awareness, along with the sporting partners that will co habit Hop Oast. We have already committed to participate in the newly created 'Hop Oast Sports Committee' to deliver 'local access to sport for all' and significant community benefit.
- The scheme includes hydrotherapy, a much need therapy for people with physical difficulties.
- The opportunity for the hockey club to have pictures and a clubhouse in one place is essential and unlike many other local clubs such as football and rugby in Horsham, until now has never been an option for Horsham hockey club.

#### **4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY**

- 4.1 The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.
- 4.2 The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

#### **5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER**

- 5.1 Sussex Police have commented that, with the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in Horsham district being above average when compared with the rest of Sussex, additional measures to mitigate against any identified local crime trends and site specific requirements should be considered.
- 5.2 Given that this is an outline application, the proposal does not include details of the scheme. As such, Sussex Police are not able to provide detailed comments on the proposal at this stage. Sussex Police refer the applicant to guidance on crime prevention and 'secured by design' measures outlined in their website.

#### **6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS**

- 6.1 Outline planning permission is sought for the development of the site for up to 800 dwellings and a new sports and leisure complex, as described in detail above. An outline application allows for an assessment of the general principles of how a site can be developed, with full details of the proposal to be submitted under subsequent reserved matters, in the event that outline permission is granted.
- 6.2 For this proposal, matters relating to appearance, layout, scale and landscaping are reserved for subsequent reserved matters applications. The matter of access is included for assessment under this proposal. Access relates to the accessibility of site for vehicles, cycle and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding highway and footpath/bridleway network. Under this application, taking into account the quantum of development proposed, the main areas for consideration for the outline application are as follows:
- Principle of Development (Existing and emerging Local Plan, 5 year housing supply, Neighbourhood Plan and Facilitating Appropriate Development guidance)
  - Housing Mix and Affordable Housing
  - Site Masterplan and Parameters (including Open Space and Employment provision)
  - Sport & Leisure Offer
  - Landscape Impact
  - Highways Impact, Access, Active Travel and Parking
  - Impact on Residential Amenity
  - Drainage and Flooding
  - Infrastructure Provision: Education & Health
  - Ecology
  - Water Neutrality

- Climate Change
- Other Matters (gas pipeline, land contamination, air quality, mineral safeguarding, legal agreement)
- Planning Balance

### **Principle of Development:**

#### Existing and Emerging Local Plan:

- 6.3 As it stands, the main planning policy framework that is relevant to development on this site is the adopted local plan which comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF, 2015) and the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (SNP), alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023). The West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and West Sussex Waste Local Plan (2014) are also relevant to this proposal. In accordance with planning law, these documents are the starting point for the assessment of any development proposals in Horsham District.
- 6.4 The site is located outside any of the district's defined built-up area boundaries (BUAB's) and does not form part of Horsham's adopted development plan (comprising the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) or the 'Made' Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan), nor an adopted Site Allocations DPD. As a result, development here would conflict with the requirements of Policy 2 'Strategic Development' and Policy 4 with 'Settlement Expansion' of the HDPF. The proposal is also in conflict with policy SNP1 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, as discussed further below. As such, in strict policy terms, the principle of development is not considered to be acceptable. In addition, the development would conflict with the countryside protection policy of the HDPF (Policy 26) owing to its siting outside the BUAB and as the proposed residential development is not considered to be essential to this countryside location. The conflict with the adopted local development plan carries significant weight against the proposal.
- 6.5 As such, in strict policy terms, in order for the principle of this development to be considered acceptable, the site must be formally allocated within a version of the local plan or a neighbourhood plan. Given that the HDPF is over 5 years old, a review of the existing Local Plan is underway, with an updated Local Development Scheme agreed by Cabinet in September 2023. The Horsham District Local Plan (HDLP) was agreed to progress to Regulation 19 consultation by the Council on the 11 December 2023. The consultation period started on the 19 January 2024 and ended on the Friday 1 March at 5pm. All representations received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate together with the Local Plan for independent examination later in the year. Submission is expected to take place in June this year (2024).
- 6.6 The HDLP sets out the emerging development strategy for the district to deliver housing and wider development needs in the period 2023 to 2040. This includes a continuation of the current settlement strategy which focuses growth within existing built-up area boundaries, on allocated sites, and with planned strategic extensions to settlements. This includes a proposed allocation of around 1,000 homes (735 to be delivered within the plan period) to the west of Southwater (Policy HA3 refers). This site at Horsham Golf & Fitness is not included in the HDLP. The reasons for not including this site in the HDLP are stated as follows within the Strategic Sites Assessment document that supports the HDLP:

*'The site, whilst close to Southwater is located on the eastern side of the A24 and is therefore physically separated from the existing services and facilities in the village. Whilst linkages could be enhanced as part of the proposals, the scale of the development is not at a level where new infrastructure could be provided on-site to provide a range of services and facilities and therefore deliver a new community with a sense of place. There would be a need to travel to either Southwater or Horsham or beyond to meet day-to-day needs such as schooling and convenience retail, most of which would likely be by car. The site*

would in landscape and geographic terms read as a relatively separate community, with uncertain sustainability and cohesiveness given the poor relationship with existing settlements and communities.

*The site is also located in the countryside between Horsham and Southwater. Although there are urban influences, the landscape in this area is predominantly rural in character and development of the site would cause landscape harm by reducing the separation and distinction between Horsham (incorporating the small village of Tower Hill) and Southwater and negatively impact upon the character of each settlement. The allocation of this site could set precedent for further development in the future and further contribute to settlement coalescence.*

*Development in this location has also been identified as having possible heritage impacts on Denne Park, which is located to the north. Whilst the site does have some positive aspects with respect of leisure provision (most notably from the provision of hockey pitches which could meet an identified local need), it is unclear as to how much benefit this would bring to the wider community. The proposal will also lead to a reduction of the existing golf course from 18 to 9 holes.*

*Officer Recommendation: The site is separated from any existing established settlement, resulting in limited opportunity for self-containment. Whilst potentially contributing to new upgraded sporting and leisure facilities, in other respects the site and proposals for it are not considered to meet the tests of sustainable development as set out in national policy. The site is not recommended for allocation.'*

- 6.7 In terms of the weight attributed to the emerging Local Plan, paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of plan preparation (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be afforded). Consideration is also given to the extent of unresolved objections to the relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies to the NPPF.
- 6.8 Paragraph 49 goes on to say that: *'However, in the context of the Framework – and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than in the limited circumstances where both:*
- a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan; and*
  - b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.*
- 6.9 Paragraph 50 goes to state that; *'Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how granting permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.'*
- 6.10 Refusing applications on the grounds of prematurity must therefore be based on the status of the emerging Local Plan and the degree of conflict with relevant policies within it and the NPPF. When this application is considered at planning committee in May2024, the consultation period for the plan will have ended and the policy team will have collated all the responses. At this stage, the emerging Local Plan is considered to have low to moderate weight. The views of an inspector on the plan will not yet be known.

- 6.11 The plan will be considered to have moderate weight at the time all representations from the consultation are submitted to the government appointed inspector. This expected to happen in June 2024. At this stage, areas of general agreement and disagreement and concerns raised by the inspector will then be understood. Following this, the emerging HDLP will be subject to examination hearings, which the Policy Team is hoping will occur in late Autumn 2024. At this stage, the emerging Local Plan can be given moderate to substantial weight. The emerging local plan cannot be given full weight until its final adoption.
- 6.12 The principle of the development of this site is clearly in conflict with the emerging local plan as the site is not allocated for development, however given the HDLP has not yet been submitted it is considered to carry low to moderate weight in the determination of planning applications at this point in time. This is due to the lack of certainty as to how the HDLP will progress and what amendments could be imposed as result of the representations received through the consultation process and any amendments imposed by an Inspector.
- 6.13 As such, having regard to paragraph 50 of NPPF, which states that the *'refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination'*, officers advise that a reason for refusal on the grounds of prematurity would not be warranted at this stage and would be difficult to justify given the current status of the emerging Local Plan.

Southwater Neighbourhood Plan:

- 6.14 The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (June 2021) forms part of the development plan for the District and includes relevant policies that must be considered when assessing the acceptability of this site. The proposal is contrary to Policy SNP1.1(b) which states that *'settlements within the Parish will only grow beyond their Built-Up Area Boundaries (as defined by this Neighbourhood Plan and shown on the Policies Map) in accordance with policies contained in the Development Plan.'* This proposal is beyond the Built up Area Boundaries of Southwater and is therefore not supported by this policy.
- 6.15 Policy SNP1.3 states that *'the unique and separate identities of Southwater Village, Christ's Hospital and Tower Hill will be maintained. To this end development must not individually or cumulatively result in the coalescence of these settlements with each other or Horsham Town.'* Policy 27 of the HDPF (2015) also states that landscapes will be protected from development which would result in the coalescence of settlements.
- 6.16 As stated in the Council's assessment of this site, this area, whilst close to Southwater is located on the eastern side of the A24 and is therefore physically separated from the existing services and facilities in the village. The proposal would result in a need travel to either Southwater or Horsham or beyond to meet day-to-day needs such as schooling and convenience retail, most of which would likely be by car. The site would in landscape and geographic terms read as a relatively separate community, with uncertain sustainability and cohesiveness given the poor relationship with existing settlements and communities.
- 6.17 The site is neither part of Horsham nor Southwater and is an area of relatively open countryside. As such, the proposal is considered to significantly reduce the separation between Horsham, Tower Hill and Southwater and negatively impact upon the character of each settlement. The scheme is therefore contrary to policy SNP1.3.
- 6.18 Policy SNP1.1(a) also states that *'Southwater village will remain a single centre settlement, with shops, services and facilities centralised in/around Lintot Square. Any development proposed in/around Southwater village consisting of 10 or more residential units should be within reasonable walking distance of Lintot Square or be able to easily access Lintot Square using public transport networks.'*

- 6.19 One of the core principles of the made Southwater Neighbourhood is to create a sustainable central focus to the village around Lintot Square. The Neighbourhood Plan allocation of around 450 homes on the west of the settlement fits in with their vision. Currently, the connectivity between the centre of Southwater village and the application site is separated by the significant barrier of the A24. There will be an expectation that further investment will need to be improved connectivity especially for pedestrians and cyclists to Lintot Square, however the development is considered to be sufficiently distant from Lintot square that it would not form part of this focus, and is therefore not in accordance with this vision. The application site would therefore be in conflict with SNP1.1 (a).

#### 5-Year Housing Supply Position:

- 6.20 In January 2024, the Council published the latest Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) which revealed that the Council currently has a housing land supply of 2.9 years against current targets. In light of this, it is acknowledged that the Council is unable to demonstrate a full 5-year housing land supply, and it is recognised that this forms a material consideration in decision making which triggers the application of the 'tilted balance' at Paragraph 11d of the NPPF, which presumes in favour of sustainable development. In accordance with Paragraph 11d, the Council is required to grant permission unless either (or both) of the following limbs apply:

*(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*  
*(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

- 6.21 According to Footnote 7 of the NPPF, the areas referred to in limb (i) above include habitat sites (and those listed in NPPF para 187), SSSIs, Green Belt, AONBs and National Parks). A determination on whether the tilted balance is engaged or not is dependent on whether the proposal is able to protect the areas of importance listed in Footnote 7. This is discussed later in this report.
- 6.22 In light of Natural England's requirement for all development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone to demonstrate that it is 'water neutral' in order to protect the habitat sites within the Arun Valley designations, the Council (as the decision maker) is required to determine whether water neutrality has been demonstrated. If the proposal is unable to demonstrate water neutrality through mitigation (as tested by Appropriate Assessment), then the tilted balance of paragraph 11d is not engaged, and in accordance with limb (i) the application must be refused. Further advice regarding Natural England's requirements for water neutrality, and the applicants strategy for achieving water neutrality, is provided further on in this report.

#### Facilitating Appropriate Development:

- 6.23 In light of the Council's inability to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites, as in recognition of the key objective of Government policy to significantly boost the supply of homes, the Council has adopted a Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD, Oct 2022) document which now forms a material planning consideration in decision making. The advice contained in the FAD is guidance only and does not form policy and does not alter the statutory decision-making framework.
- 6.24 The FAD sets out the weight that can be given to current and emerging local policy and has been produced to enable the Council to act proactively to continue to deliver housing in a sustainable manner. For development proposals located outside the defined BUAB, the FAD (at paragraph 5.7) echoes the requirements of HDPF Policy 4 and states that applications will be considered positively provided that all of the following criteria are met:

- The site adjoins a BUAB
- The level of expansion is appropriate to the related settlement
- The proposal meets local housing needs
- The impact does not prejudice long term development
- The development is within an existing defensible boundary

6.25 This proposal would not meet the criteria of the FAD as the site does not adjoin a built area boundary and the level of expansion is not appropriate to any related settlement. The proposal can otherwise be argued to help meet local housing needs (discussed below), not prejudice long term development of the site, and sits within a defensible boundary, however this does not outweigh the conflict with the first two requirements of the FAD as all criteria are required to be met. The lack of compliance with the FAD is a material consideration in the determination of the principle of this proposal.

Conclusion:

6.26 Given the site is located outside the defined BUAB and is not allocated for development in the adopted development plan (the HDPF and the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan), the principle of the development is contrary to Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, and 26 of the HDPF, and Policy SNP1 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. Notwithstanding this, it is recognised by Officers that in the context of the Council's 5-year housing supply position, the benefits that would arise from the delivery of extra housing and other benefits, such as the sports and leisure offer, carry positive weight in the determination of the proposal. In order to come to a considered conclusion, it is necessary to therefore balance the benefits of the proposed development against this policy conflict and any other policy compliance, conflict and harm. The following sections of this report consider all other detailed planning considerations, with the final section considering the overall planning balance.

**Housing Mix and Affordable Housing**

6.27 HDPF Policy 16 requires a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the district and local communities and of the number of dwellings as proposed, that 35% of the provision be affordable with a tenure split of 70% affordable rented and 30% intermediate tenure.

6.28 The emerging Local Plan (HDLP), currently under consultation at Regulation 19 stage, includes an amended Affordable Housing Policy (Policy 39). This policy requires, amongst other things, a provision of 45% affordable housing on greenfield sites. As previously stated, given the current status of the emerging Local Plan as not yet submitted, Policy 39 of the HDLP is given low to moderate weight at this time. As such, at the current time officers consider the requirement for affordable housing to remain at 35% as stated in the HDPF 2015.

6.29 The proposal is for on-site delivery of 35% affordable housing units. This equates to up to 280 units. The proposal is for a tenure split of the affordable housing of 70% social / affordable rent (up to 196 units) and 30% intermediate / shared ownership housing (up to 84 units). This is also compliant with Policy 16 of the HDPF. As this application is in outline, the exact type, mix and tenure of the housing will be based on an assessment of local housing need at the time of approval of reserved matters.

6.30 The Council's Housing Team has commented that the Housing Register in Southwater/Christ Hospital currently has 296 households waiting for housing. This includes 81 households in need of a 1-bedroom unit, 69 households in need of a 2-bedroom unit, 111 households in need of a 3-bedroom unit and 35 households in need of 4 or more bedrooms. This site indicatively proposes to deliver 23 x 1 bed units, 65 x 2 bed units, 59 x 3 bed units and 29 x 4 bed units as affordable rent, which meets local demand. No objection is raised to this proposal from the Housing Team.



- 6.31 In terms of market housing, the proposal is for up to 520 units. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2019) recommends an open market mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4-bed dwellings, at a target split of 5%, 30%, 40% and 25% respectively. The market housing includes 5% self build units (up to 26 units). At this stage, the exact housing mix of the market housing is not known. This would be agreed at the reserved matters stage taking into account the latest housing market assessment and local requirements.
- 6.32 In the event that planning permission is granted, a Section 106 legal agreement would need to be provided to secure this on-site affordable provision and tenure, and a registered provider who will take on the units, as per the requirements of HDPF Policy 16 and the accompanying Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD. The legal agreement would also require the provision of the self build units and a requirement for the proposal to meet the housing market assessment for housing needs in the District.

### **Site Masterplan and Parameters (including Open Space and Employment Provision)**

- 6.33 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that in order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment, developments shall be required to ensure that the scale and massing of development relates sympathetically within the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within the adjoining site.
- 6.34 Policy SNP16 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) also states all development must be of high quality design. In Southwater this means:
- (a) Facing buildings with locally sourced materials, or materials equivalent to those that would historically have been sourced locally wherever possible.
  - (b) Encourage a variety of complementary vernaculars to encourage contextually appropriate design and diversity in our building stock.
  - (c) Using Secure by Design principles to ensure developments are safe to live in, supported by natural surveillance.
  - (d) Making sure the design of new development actively responds to other properties in the vicinity ensuring no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity occur.
- 6.35 The Design and Access Statement, submitted Parameters Plans and Illustrative Masterplan provide an indication of how the development is anticipated to be laid out, with the use of a range of heights and densities. As the proposal is in outline, with all matters reserved except access, the exact layout and design of the proposal is not under consideration with this application. If recommended for approval, the details of the scale, layout, landscaping and appearance of the development will be considered under future reserved matters application, informed by a Design Code document to be submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of development. At this stage, therefore, the main consideration is whether the quantum of development proposed is acceptable taking into account the submitted parameter plans. Parameter plans dictate the general form and layout of an outline proposal.
- 6.36 The submitted parameter plans cover land use, density, buildings heights, access and movement, and green infrastructure. The Land Use plan identifies the distribution of uses across the site, which includes housing predominately sites to the southern parcel of the site, south of the main access road. This residential parcels are shown split into 11 areas to the southern parcel on land which is currently being used as part of the 18-hole golf course. One of the parcels is shown north of one of the retained dwellings at Harwood Farm House. The Land Use plan indicates a buffer to separate the proposed residential use and retained dwelling.
- 6.37 The plan also indicates an area for a Local Centre to the western side of the site, just south of the proposed access off Worthing Road. This area is shown for a variety of uses under Class E, F2 and C3. Class E covers a range of commercial uses including retail, food drink, financial services, nurseries and offices. Class F2 relates to Local Community, such as

shops, halls and swimming pools. Class C3 relates to residential dwellings. The Land Use plan indicates area of green space including a large area retained to the east side of the site for a retained golf use. The northern section of the plan shows an area for sports and leisure facilities. This area is adjacent to Horsham Football Club.

- 6.38 In terms of the proposed density of the residential areas, the Density Parameter Plan indicates a range from 67.5 dwellings per hectare (dph) within the most western zones and around the central area. This is shown to reduce down to 45.6 dph and 35 dph along the eastern zones. For building heights, the Building Heights Parameter Plan identifies maximum heights of three storeys which would be mainly to the area adjacent to Worthing Road and the A24. The remainder of the site will generally be two and half stories. Three stories is indicated as 12.5m maximum ridge heights and two half stories is indicated as up to 10m high to ridge level from existing ground levels. The sports and leisure uses are shown as up to two storeys tall with a maximum ridge height of 11m.
- 6.39 The Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan illustrates the existing landscape features alongside the proposed green infrastructure that will include a network of green corridors, links, and landscape buffers alongside the formal provision of open space and sports facilities in the northern area of the site. The Planning Statement states that these features will offer opportunities for informal recreation and connect various development areas with formal open space, golf provision, and public rights of way within the Site. The green corridors will provide opportunities for the creation of fitness trails and cycling/walking routes. In total, 18.52 ha of open space will be provided across the proposed development. The Access and Movement Parameter Plan indicates the proposed access to the residential area of the site, south of the retained access for Horsham Football Club and the new sports and leisure uses. This plan also shows a proposed pedestrian and cycle path along the western boundary of the site and the retention of the existing public right of way through the site.
- 6.40 Policy SNP12 of the SNP requires all major development to provide appropriate play areas on site, and if on-site provision is not achievable, then a contribution must be made towards off site facilities. The application indicates c. 55ha will be reduced to 18.52ha open space of which 9.461ha will be outdoor sport, including the retained 3.6ha for the football club.
- 6.41 Based on a housing scheme of 800 dwellings of unknown size, given such matters are reserved, the total generated open space need should be taken to equate to a minimum of 8.95 hectares. This is based on the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment and is split as follows:
- Allotments provision = 3,456sqm
  - Multi functional greenspace = 84,288sqm, split as follows:
    - Parks and Garden = 26,496sqm
    - Amenity Greenspace = 11,236sqm
    - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace = 46,656sqm
  - Children and Young People = 1,728spm, split as follows;
    - Children play = 960sqm
    - Youth area and facilities = 768sqm
  - Community Hall = 105.6
- 6.42 The submission indicates that will provide the following:
- Allotment provision = 3.400sqm
  - Multi functional greenspace = 179,500sqm, split as follows:
    - Parks and garden = 45,200spm
    - Amenity Greenspace = 35,500spm
    - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace = 98,800sqm
  - Play Space and Youth Area = 3,100spm
  - Community Hall = not known at this time

- 6.43 The above equates to a provision of 18.52 hectares of open space areas. This doesn't include the floor area of the community hall to be provided as these details are not known at this stage. Overall, the proposal meets the open space standards required of a development of this size.
- 6.44 In relation to employment uses, the scheme indicates the proposal would generate around 100 FTE jobs in addition to the 35 FTE jobs that already exist on site. The jobs will be provided across golf, catering and customer service operations within flexible local centre / sports / health hub (Use Classes E [excluding E(g)(ii) and (iii)], F1 and F2). Whilst additional jobs are welcome, and acknowledging a development proposal would also generate construction jobs, a scheme of this size would normally be expected to offer some traditional 'employment' uses (Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8). This is expected in order to provide a range and mix in the employment offer and create a sustainable neighbourhood, especially in a relatively isolated location somewhat akin to a separate settlement. For example, based on the draft Local Plan, a minimum of 0.5 hectares employment use (Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8) would be attached to an allocation of this size. As outline above, the weight attached to emerging local plan is limited at this stage. In addition, taking into account the employment generated uses associated with this application, a refusal on the grounds of lack of employment uses cannot be justified on the basis of the current development framework.
- 6.45 Overall, notwithstanding other considerations, such as the principle of development, amenity impact and landscape impact, the proposed masterplan and parameter plans are considered largely acceptable.

#### **Sports & Leisure Offer:**

- 6.46 Policy 43 of the HDPF states that the provision of new or improved community facilities or services will be supported, particularly where they meet the identified needs of local communities as indicated in the current Sport, Open Space and Recreation Study and other relevant studies, or contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure. In addition to supporting facilities or services located in accordance with the Development Hierarchy and Strategic Development locations, sites located outside built-up areas will be supported where this is the only practicable option and where a suitable site well-related to an existing settlement exists. Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states existing open space, sports and recreational buildings should not be built upon unless certain criteria are met. This criteria is reflected in the wording of Policy SNP7.
- 6.47 Policy SNP7 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states that certain areas as identified on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map are designated as Formal / Informal Sports Areas. This includes Denne Park Recreational Area (including the golf course, driving range and Horsham Football Club ground). The policy states that these areas should not be built on unless:
- a) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
  - b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
  - c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- 6.48 The policy states that where development is allowed on Formal/Informal Areas, the development should not result in unacceptable impacts on the surrounding environment of amenity of nearby properties.
- 6.49 The loss of the existing 18-hole golf course must therefore be considered against Paragraph 103 of the NPPF, Policy 43 of the HDPF and Policy 7.1 of the SNP. To help assess the

development proposals against part a) of NPPF Paragraph 103 and SNP policy 7.1, HDC has undertaken a Golf Supply and Demand Assessment.

- 6.50 This assessment concludes that whilst there is a sufficient provision of golf courses to meet current demand overall, the study also notes that each golf course in the District also meets particular different points in the golf 'market' in terms of the type of course and cost of play. The study recommends that if the potential loss of any golf provision is to be pursued, separate site-specific needs assessment studies are needed to fully determine requirements, with a full and specific focus on the site/s in question and concentration on a more closely defined and more relevant catchment area (a 20-minute drive time from the site/s). For a proposal to go ahead, any needs assessment will need to evidence that the provision is surplus to requirements or set out a mitigation proposal that replaces the supply to an equivalent or better quantity and quality in a suitable location, as per the NPPF's requirements.
- 6.51 A number of sites (including Horsham Golf and Fitness) have been submitted to HDC as possible locations for strategic development as part of the preparation of the Council's emerging Local Plan. Promoted land includes other golf courses, and of particular note is Ifield Golf Course, which forms part of the proposed land allocation 'Land West of Ifield' in the Regulation 19 HDLP. However, the weight to be given to the HDLP and its allocation is low to moderate.
- 6.52 Furthermore, the proposal would not result in the complete loss of the golf course. The proposal would retain a golf course with a 9 hole shorter golf course, a driving range, putting green, and a mini / adventure golf provision. The proposal would also offer a new home for Horsham Hockey Club, a multi-use pitch, a permanent home for Warren Clark Golfing Dreams and The Golf College. The applicant has provided Golf Needs Assessment Report as part of the submission.
- 6.53 This assessment concludes that there is not a clear need for retention of the site in its current form. The report states that there are enough alternative traditional 9 and 18 hole format courses (at similar price points) that have adequate spare capacity to absorb any displaced membership. The report also states that there is a clear need for alternative provision, in the form of non-traditional formats of the game, including enhanced range provision, mini-golf and a retained six-hole and nine-hole Par 3 course.
- 6.54 The proposal includes a new sports and leisure facility located to the northern part of the site adjacent to the existing football club. The application refers to the provision as the Horsham Golf & Fitness Village and is stated as helping the District meet its sporting and leisure needs. The vision is the result of the collaboration between groups including the land owner, sports clubs, charitable organisations, end users and the developer. The vision is to *'establish the site as a leading provider of sports and leisure activities, central to local community life, with a sense of engendering a sense of local pride and ownership.'*
- 6.55 The Design & Access Statement states that golf has struggled to attract and retain a time constrained consumer over recent years. The statement goes on to say that it *'has become increasingly clear to the golfing industry that the sport needs to evolve, with customers' preference for shorter formats of the sport, alongside enhanced modern training and "fun" facilities'*. The proposal seeks to adapt the existing golfing offer to ensure it is modern, inclusive, and sustainable, which requires less space when compared to 'traditional' golf. The proposal envisages the following:
- Retaining a 9 hole shorter golf course.
  - Providing a permanent home for the Golf College and Warren Clark Golfing Dreams.
  - Provision of a modernised 'technology driven range' and short game practice area.
  - Provision of a 'fun putting' or a mini golf facility.

- 6.56 The aim of the proposal is to ‘compliment’ rather than compete with the other larger golf courses in the area, such as the courses at Rookwood, Slinfold and Mannings Heath. In doing so, the statement makes the case that the new golf offer would *‘nurture the next generation of golfers to help feed and sustain the existing golf courses in the future.’*
- 6.57 Warren Clark Golfing Dreams is a registered charity, set up to deliver S.N.A.G Golf (Starting New at Golf) and Tri Golf to disabled and disadvantaged individuals and groups. The proposal would rehome the charity within the new sports facility. The submission states that *‘a new facility for the charity will help them meet their aspirations to dramatically expand their reach amongst local disabled and disadvantaged groups.’* The proposal would also enable them to offer a much wider range of services, including therapy and classes focused on life skills and increasing independence.
- 6.58 The proposal would also deliver a new home for The Golf College. This is an educational facility for sixth form age children aspiring to a career in golf. The submission states that *‘a new home for The Golf College will build on its educational legacy and establish a first-rate centre for sports and coach training and an environment attractive for all ages and abilities across an abundant range of interests’.* The college aspires to offer Masters level qualifications, given the right facilities. By providing a new home Horsham Golf & Fitness Village will be able *‘to establish Horsham as a district of golfing excellence, fostering new talent and building the next generation of UK golfers. It is estimated that The Golf College will deliver £100,000 per year in social value benefits to Horsham District once established on the Site.’* It is unclear how this figure has been evidenced and calculated.
- 6.59 Finally, the proposed Horsham Golf & Fitness Village will deliver a new permanent home for Horsham Hockey Club. Currently, the club does not have a permanent home. This proposal includes the provision of a hockey pitch and a hockey pitch practice zone. One of the pitches could be used by other sports, such as football, when not required for hockey. Changing, administration and classroom facilities, alongside a shared clubhouse facility will also be provided. The submission states that a permanent home *‘will enable the club to become a regional Talent Centre and offer a wide range of training and outreach programmes to local schools and community groups.’*
- 6.60 The indicative masterplan proposes the sports facility laid out with new buildings, sports pitches and driving range located north of new buildings. Currently, the existing driving range is enclosed by large conifers which separate the existing golf club from the football club. The proposal would generally be in the same position of the existing conifers and golf clubhouse, albeit it would result in the loss of the northern section of conifers to allow the new facility. The new sports facility would also include a spectator area, a restaurant, driving range and nets, gym, co-working space and a new clubhouse. North of this, the majority of the existing golf course adjacent to the access road to Denne Park is to be retained as a short format golf course. The proposed mini golf and putting green would be to the east of the new facility. The existing golf holes to the eastern part of the site within areas of woodland are to be retained as part of a consolidated 9-hole long format provision.
- 6.61 The new hockey ground would provide two pitches, one of which would be used as a multi-usable pitch. Unlike normal grassed playing fields, 3G pitches can be used all year round and are more durable than grass. The Sport, Open Space and Recreation Assessment: February 2014 (SOSR) and Open Space, Sport & Recreation review June 2021 are background documents to the local development framework. Policy 43 states that the document is to be taken into consideration in the provision of new community facilities. The SOSR 2014 and 2021 identify quantity and quality standards for a range of sports facilities in the District. There is currently a deficiency of 3G pitches in the District as identified in the SOSR and the emerging Local Plan Review. The SOSR recognises the importance of 3G pitches and states that towns and larger villages in the District should have at least sufficient 3G artificial turf pitches to accommodate a proportion of local football demand. It does not identify a deficit of adult football pitches but it does state (Pg.11 Sports Pitches) that ‘all of

the club and private facilities play an important role in meeting demand by offering opportunities for individuals to join a facility-owned club’.

- 6.62 The proposal would provide high quality 3G pitches which could be used by adult and youth teams to alleviate some of the difficulty with pitch deterioration as identified in the SOSR. If recommended for approval, details would be needed of the community use of the proposed pitches.
- 6.63 It is recognised that this proposal will bring forward a number of additional recreation facilities, including a site for Horsham Hockey club and would also deliver a new type of golf provision aimed at introducing the game to novices.
- 6.64 Having regard to the proposed sports and leisure provision in this proposal, it is considered that the new offer will deliver an alternative viable golf venue for Horsham residents and those in the wider catchment. The changes in golf provision will deliver a venue capable of supporting a much higher level of use than the existing configuration, with a range of golfing and other opportunities better able to serve and support demographics that are currently not provided for. Additionally, the facilities will provide an entry point for those wishing to embark on a journey along the golf participation pathway to more traditional forms of the game.
- 6.65 It is considered that the requirements of NPPF and SNP7 have been met. The loss of the golf course has been addressed with an appropriate assessment, and the loss would be replaced with equivalent or better provision. As such, it is not felt that a refusal on the grounds of the loss of part of the existing golf course can be sustained.
- 6.66 In conclusion, the proposed new sports and leisure facility, together with Horsham Football Club, would result in a new centre and dedicated areas for a multitude of sports as well as offering new homes for a sports charity, Horsham Hockey Club and the Golf College. This clearly would have benefits for the surrounding area, Horsham Town and the District as a whole. The merits of this provision are discussed in the overall planning balance, taking into account all relevant material considerations.

#### **Landscape Impact:**

- 6.67 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to preserve, conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape character of the district, taking into account individual settlement characteristics, and maintaining settlement separation. Policy 26 states that, outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Policy 32 requires development to complement locally distinctive characters and to contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings. Policy SNP17 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states that development will not be supported if *‘the final building’s height would have an adverse impact upon neighbouring properties or the character of surrounding areas.’*
- 6.68 The site is located outside the defined built-up area boundary and is therefore sited within a countryside setting. It is acknowledged that the site does not sit within any formal landscape designations and is not considered to be a ‘valued landscape’ in the context of paragraph 180 of the NPPF.
- 6.69 In terms of landscape character guidance, at a District level, this site is split between the H1 Southwater and Christ’s Hospital area in the southwest and M1 Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridge and Ghyll Farmlands in the northeast of the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. Relevant key characteristics of the southwest area, LCA H1, are a largely open character with extensive open views as well as lanes with wide grass verges. There are relatively few woodlands and hedgerows, the loss of which is one of the key issues of the area, along with increasing traffic and pressure for housing at Southwater. The Character

Assessment states that any new development must ensure integration by new woodlands and hedgerow, conserve existing hedgerows and field trees, and where possible, restore hedgerows and small woodlands.

- 6.70 The Council's Landscape Architect has commented that relevant key characteristics of the northeast area, LCA M1, are a strong pattern of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, ancient hedgerow oaks, field ponds, small lakes and confined views. There are numerous historic parks such as Denne Park and the traditional local building materials of sandstone, brick and tile hanging. Despite some localised suburban pressures, the area retains a strong rural unspoilt character. Key issues are a decline in coppice management of woodlands and introduction of suburban features. Overall landscape condition is good, although it is declining in some areas due to loss of hedgerows. Any new development must conserve the strongly rural, unspoilt character such as the strong pattern of woodland, shaws and hedgerows through coppice management, planting and natural regeneration. It must also respond to the historic dispersed settlement pattern and local building design and materials.
- 6.71 For the surrounding area, the A24 separates the site from Southwater village and runs along the site's south-western boundary, up to the Hop Oast roundabout, to become the B2237 Worthing Road, along the site's north-western boundary. This boundary is robust and heavily planted with hedgerows and trees and therefore there are little to no views currently experienced into the site. Immediately north of the A24 and to the north western half of the site, the wider landscape is characterised by the suburban influence of the road and roundabout, petrol station, recycling centre, depot and Horsham park and ride, concentrated around the existing site access. Beyond these areas, the surrounding area is predominately rural and fully reflective of the key characteristics identified within the published character studies the area sits in. Key characteristics include fields bounded by hedgerow and hedgerow trees, interspersed by woodland.
- 6.72 To the southern west part, south of the A24, the surrounding landscape is characterised as being suburban by influence of the northern part of Southwater village but also open land and woodland. Coltstaple Lane, a narrow and winding lane, bounded by heavy vegetation, touches part of the south-eastern boundary of the site. To the east, the landscape character is strongly rural with scattered development including equestrian activities. The field pattern is predominantly irregular defined by hedgerows and hedgerow trees and interspersed by blocks of woodland. The area is tranquil which highly contributes to its rurality and has high amenity value provided by a number of public rights of way and bridleways.
- 6.73 To the northern boundary, the site abuts Denne Park Avenue and to the north east the Grade II listed Denne Park House and its associated lodges and cottages. Here the landscape is characterised by the parkland features, topography and wooded character of Denne Hill, a feature experienced from the southern edge of Horsham Town, and one that contributes to the setting and sense of place of the southern east part of the town. The site access is currently made via the access to the golf course/football grounds and a local access to Hop Oast Farm, both off Worthing Road.
- 6.74 The Council has produced a Landscape Capacity Study (2021) for the district to support the preparation of the new Local Plan. The HDC Landscape Architect has commented that the key objectives of the study are to provide a transparent, consistent, and objective assessment of the landscape capacity of the land around existing and proposed new settlements to accommodate housing and employment development, and to identify areas where new development could best be accommodated without significant adverse landscape and visual impacts.
- 6.75 The site falls within two landscape character areas identified in the study as having slightly different character sensitivities:

- A small section, in the northeast of the site closest to Denne House, falls within the Landscape Character Area 22, Denne Park. This area recognises that the key landscape features and qualities are highly sensitive to large scale development and that the historic importance of the landscape and its attractive parkland qualities mean that there is no capacity for large scale housing or employment development. The proposals within the northern part of this area are predominantly associated with the existing use as a golf course but the southern part focus predominantly in the use as a car park and in turn eroding some of the tranquillity experienced within the area.
- The rest of the site falls within Landscape Character Area 24, Land North East of Southwater where the combined landscape sensitivity is identified as High and landscape value as Medium. The study concludes that this area has a strong, generally unspoilt rural character with a number of attractive features such as woodland and that the key features and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to development, limiting the capacity for large scale development. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges that close to the roundabout, the area is less sensitive due to existing suburban influences such as golf course, football club, Hop Oast depot, Horsham Park and Ride and the petrol station, *'It should be noted however that the north of this area (close to the Hop Oast Roundabout) contains a number of existing urban features which may very locally increase the capacity of the landscape for development in this area.'*

6.76 For context, the study defines Large Scale Housing Development *'of 500 or more dwellings associated with urban extensions to the main town of Horsham, small towns or large villages, or new settlements. It is assumed that this development would comprise mainly two storey developments of no more than 8.5m in height, at an average of 35-40 dwellings per hectare. This type of development may include some smaller areas of no more than 3 storey height flats, as well as community/retail facilities.'*

6.77 The HDC Landscape Architect has commented that, whilst the study refers to the potential of some localised development/change that could be accommodated, it is unlikely that the amount of proposed development (of up to 800 dwellings) would be easily assimilated by the receiving landscape. Nonetheless the study is clear at para 1.8, that a more detailed assessment needs to be carried out on any specific proposal and that the levels of landscape sensitivity and capacity identified are generalised statements across each area to provide a pointer to the detailed landscape and visual issues that would need to be addressed in a site allocation or development management context.

6.78 In relation to the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), the HDC Landscape Architect has commented that the approach to the site from the A24 is somehow underplayed within the LVIA assessment. Significant visual effects are identified within the submitted assessment, but the conclusions on landscape character are that there is a betterment to the site and immediate setting. These are not agreed. For example, the Landscape Architect considers that some of the viewpoints submitted in the LVIA are inaccurate.

6.79 In addition, the current information submitted does not clearly demonstrate that the impact of the tree and hedgerow removal associated with any of the cut and fill operations, which are likely to drastically change the approach to the site and the site's immediate setting, can be mitigated. Whilst the Landscape Architect is not questioning that the intention is to replant this buffer, as shown within the mitigation strategy, the access plans do not indicate visibility splays and it is not clear if a robust tree line and hedgerow corridor can still be achieved. This information must be provided in order to fully understand the effects.

6.80 The Landscape Architect has commented that, in her view, the location of the proposed development does not relate well to either of the two nearest large existing settlements, Horsham or Southwater. The officer's view is that although called 'Horsham' golf park, the proposal will be seen and experienced partly as an odd extension to Southwater, as the dual



carriage way/ A24 is a strong defensible boundary that limits the natural expansion of the village, but it cannot be said to be an extension of Horsham either as Tower Hill hamlet sits in between the two.

- 6.81 The Landscape Architect also states that, in terms of development pattern, whilst in keeping with other new development in and around Horsham and Southwater, the proposal is at odds with the site's immediate setting where development is of a much smaller scale and density, mostly described by the development cluster around Denne Park House, the golf club house, Horsham football grounds, few farm houses and the petrol filling station, park and ride, depot and other facilities at Hop Oast on the other side of Worthing road. These are, in proportion of a much smaller scale and lower density development than the proposed.
- 6.82 In addition, despite the loss of its pristine and rural landscape character, the site can be said to have retained some tranquil qualities, as the current use as a golf course does not fully detract from this, and the football club's detractor is more infrequent and focussed on events day. The introduction of residential development and other sport uses within the landscape will no doubt increase the overall levels of activity in the countryside location and overall tranquillity of the area, also amplified by the night time lighting glow inevitable as part of the introduction of the 800 new homes and sports activities.
- 6.83 The sensitivity of the site itself and immediate setting has been ranked as medium within the LVIA and as having a small magnitude of change, 'owing to the site's strong degree of visual containments and separation, afforded by the existing vegetation cover that defines the site's boundaries and its immediate context.' The HDC Landscape Architect has commented that this is true for the existing site condition and large parts of the development to the north but the proposals are likely to be experienced from the Hop Oast roundabout as result of the changes to the highway, new access into the site, removal of existing vegetation and proposed development heights of up to 3 storey (on a raised ground level in relation to the road).
- 6.84 Whilst this will be a localised change to the site and immediate setting, the character of the area would change from well wooded, contained, semi-rural and predominantly tranquil landscape, to a new urban setting. At this stage, the change is localised, but the residual nature of effect cannot be said to be positively mitigated and it is not demonstrated that the replanting and level of change to the sites immediate setting is protected, conserved or enhanced.
- 6.85 Given the location of the site, there is a significant reduction in the openness and 'break' between Southwater and Horsham. The proposals are also likely to generate urbanising effects within the settlement gap, contrary to HDPF Policy 27. This policy seeks to ensure that settlements retain their unique identity and the undeveloped nature of the landscape between towns and villages is retained.
- 6.86 The Landscape Architect has also commented that in terms of design, the SUDs basin proposed at the entrance of the site is extremely deep to one side which will be clearly visible and change the character and appearance of Worthing Road, due to the proposed level change. The Landscape Architect is also concerned that insufficient details have been submitted regarding the level of cut and fill required to facilitate development. There is concern that the introduction of built form on top of high ground is likely to significantly expose the development to view, also transforming the character of the area. The Landscape Architect is not persuaded by the indicative levels plan provided, that the existing levels are to remain largely at existing ground level as suggested.
- 6.87 The Landscape Architect feels that there is also insufficient information to demonstrate that the proposals will sit comfortable in the landscape without the appearance of a heavily engineered site 'squeezed' to fit around constraints. Given the man-made nature of the site, the existing landform is not one of a typical green field with a consistent topography across,

where the risk of dramatic changes are low, therefore the 'typical' approach to only undertake a more detailed levels exercise at reserved matter stage, may not be the most appropriate in this case.

- 6.88 The Landscape Architect has also commented that a plan is required indicating site access visibility splays and required tree removal but also demonstrating feasibility of replanting which meets highways requirements and maintenance/management constraints. This has not been provided. Given the application seeks permission for the access work in full, the Landscape Architect has commented that this information must be provided prior to determination.
- 6.89 The HDC Landscape Architect is also not satisfied that the full extent of tree and understory removal is clearly identified within the submitted information to understand the impacts this will have on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area. There is concern as to whether the proposed mitigation strategy suggested in the LVIA and illustrative masterplan can be delivered. Visibility splays have not been indicated to fully understand where/if replanting can take place and what that means for the appearance of the development. The contained nature of the site as existing will be considerably opened up to view by the access works and introduction of built form within higher land and there is no certainty that appropriate mitigation can be delivered.
- 6.90 Overall, notwithstanding some of the original landscape characteristics being lost due to the current use of the site as a golf course, concern is raised with the spatial strategy/location of the proposal and the principle of development within the site. The proposals are not deemed to be the right location for a large development such as this from a landscape perspective. In addition, insufficient information has been provided with regards the access aspects of the proposal. A number of residual effects as identified by the submitted LVIA are also disagreed with and overall, the proposals are considered to result in adverse impacts on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area. The scheme is therefore contrary to policies 25, 26, 27 and 31 of the HDPF and Policy SNP17 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **Highways Impact, Access, Active Travel and Parking:**

- 6.91 Policy 40 of the HDPF states that development will be supported if it is appropriate and in scale to the existing transport infrastructure, including public transport; is integrated with the wider network of routes, including public rights of way and cycle paths, and includes opportunities for sustainable transport.
- 6.92 Policy SNP4: Keeping Our Road Moving of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states the following:
- Where major development is proposed it must be demonstrated that it will not result in a severe or unacceptable safety impact on our highway network and actively promote alternative modes of transport.
  - Where major development requires highway infrastructure improvements/upgrades to make them acceptable, these works must come forward as part of the development. The completion of the highway works must occur in accordance with an agreed phasing strategy to ensure that the required infrastructure is in place upon occupation of each phase of the development. Such improvements/upgrades shall be required by condition or S106 Agreement.

#### Vehicle Access:

- 6.93 Detailed approval is sought under this permission for the means of access to the site. The proposed access would be provided from the B2237 / Worthing Road. This will be the primary access and will be created through the reconfiguration of the existing Park & Ride junction, providing a signalised junction. The access road is proposed with a 10m wide junction radii and 3.65m lanes in each direction. The signalised crossing is proposed with a 3m wide

crossing zone and a 2m wide refuge island. The crossing is proposed to link to a 2m wide footway on the northern side and a 5m wide shared footway on the southern side. The 5m shared footway would then continue south to the Hop Oast roundabout and beyond to the existing byway running through the southern section of the site. As amended and with the benefit of additional information (including Road Safety Audits), WSCC Highways have no objection to new junction and traffic signals.

- 6.94 The proposal would retain the existing access onto Worthing Road which currently serves the football and existing golf course. This mainly serves the non-residential uses and the three retained dwellings, which are not part of the proposal. The proposal would result in the closure in a secondary access to the southern part of the golf course used by the golf course groundsmen.
- 6.95 To address the transport impact, the application has been supported by a number of documents including a Transport Assessment (TA), Framework Travel Plan, Road Safety Audits, Illustrative Masterplan and Access and Movement Parameter Plan. WSCC highways have commented that this application has been subject to pre-application discussions. WSCC have commented that the principle of the proposed access has been established through these pre-application discussions.
- 6.96 With regards to the crossings over the B2237, WSCC Highways have commented that whilst these provide a means of access to the Part and Ride (P&R) site, and more importantly the bus services, there are no footways with the P&R site itself. This point is acknowledged within table 4.2 in the Transport Assessment. As such, whilst residents will be able to cross the B2237, there is then a potential difficulty in accessing the bus stops within the P&R site. A scheme of footway improvements would be required within the P&R site itself. These improvements will involve land outside of the public highway but that is within the control of WSCC as landowner. Further discussions would be required with the WSCC Property team regarding these potential works.
- 6.97 Although not requiring action at this stage, the Signals team have also advised that additional vegetation clearance will be required to maximise the northbound visibility towards the P&R exit as highlighted on the proposal. Also, the developer will need to ensure the latest RTIG bus priority control is included within the signals design.
- 6.98 Access to the various sports and fitness uses is indicated to be via the existing priority junction currently serving the golf course, Horsham Football Club, and three residential dwellings. This is recognised as an existing junction that has been in use for some time. The TA indicates some potential increased use at peak times although the increases are not considered significant.
- 6.99 Notwithstanding this, WSCC highways have commented that it would still be beneficial to understand more specific the nature of the proposed non-residential uses, particularly the hockey element and the potential for any significant traffic generating events. From this, it's then whether any specific major events traffic management plans may then need to be secured to cover these.
- 6.100 In terms of the access, in summary, WSCC Highways have no objection in principle to the amendments to the Park & Ride junction to create the primary access to the proposed site.

#### Trip Generation and Highway Capacity:

- 6.101 The submission sets out how the trip generation and highway capacity of the proposal have been calculated. This is summarised as follows:
- Vehicle trip generation is based on 800 dwellings.

- Although other non-residential uses are proposed, it is accepted that traffic generation from these during the assessed network peak hours would be minimal. These non-residential uses have been excluded from the assessment.
- The per dwelling vehicle trip rate has been derived from a survey of a comparable area (in terms of location to services and dwelling type) within Southwater.
- Vehicle trip rates are provided for the AM and PM network peak hours. These hours are recognised as those most sensitive to change.
- The site is estimated to generate 447 (137 arrivals, 310 departures) two-way movements in AM peak hour and 455 (278 arrivals, 177 departures) two-way movements in the PM peak.
- Vehicle trips are distributed using the Horsham Strategic Transport Model. This is the model that has and will continue to be used to test development options for the HDLP.
- The impact of the additional traffic has been assessed for a future year of 2038. This was understood to represent the end of the HDC Local Plan period at the time discussions on the modelling were agreed.
- Two scenarios with and without the proposed development have been run using the HDC Strategic Model.
- The 2038 reference case scenario (i.e. the without development scenario) includes traffic generated by consented developments such as West of Horsham and Land North of Horsham. The with development scenario includes both consented and the proposed development traffic.
- The modelling accounts for all consented development and associated improvements. The modelling also accounts for scenarios with and without the development. The modelling does not include those proposals forming part of the current HDLP Regulation 19 consultation. This is because, under paragraph 014 of the government guidance on Travel Plans, Transport Assessment and Statement, there is no requirement to include these given there is no certainty that these will be coming forward in the next three years.

6.102 WSCC Highways have commented that the above is agreed. However, as originally submitted, further information was required in order for the Highways Team to be satisfied that the trip generation and highway capacity had been adequately addressed. As part of the current application, the highways team would expect more detailed capacity assessments to be undertaken for those junctions agreed with WSCC Highways using the flows obtained from the HDC Strategic Model.

6.103 Whilst the outputs within the TA are acknowledged, these are considered to represent a more high level rather than detailed appraisal of how the junctions are expected to operate in the future year with the development. Specific junction assessments will consider in greater detail how queues and delays on individual arms of those assessed junctions will occur across the peak hour. Also, in support of the junction assessments, network diagrams would also be sought. These would show the routing of development traffic across the local highway network.

6.104 With respects to 'consented developments', reference is made within the Transport Assessment to potential WSCC led improvements to the A24 Hop Oast Roundabout. These improvements have been developed as part of the A24 Worthing to Horsham Corridor Feasibility Study. These works have not been the subject of any detailed design and remain unprogrammed. For the purposes of the Transport Assessment, these works are not consented.

6.105 As originally submitted, the applicant included (albeit subject to detailed design and potential change) a proposed Segregated Left Turn Lane as part of the development. The left turn lane was intended to provide a similar facility to that already in place on the Worthing Road (west) arm of the roundabout that benefits traffic heading northbound on the A24. The

provision of the left turn lane would have assisted traffic exiting the Worthing Road (east) arm onto the A24 southbound.

- 6.106 WSCC highways commented that a detailed junction assessment is required for the A24 Hop Oast Roundabout that includes the proposed left turn lane. In terms of the design of this feature, a full design audit identifying and demonstrating that all relevant standards are met in the design of this would also be required. With uncertainty surrounding the WSCC works to the A24 roundabout, the applicant needs to confirm what is proposed.
- 6.107 In response to WSCC Highways original comments, further information was submitted by the applicant. With regards to the proposed changes to the existing Park and Ride traffic signals, issues were raised with the width of the pedestrian crossing on the B2237 Worthing Road southern arm. To address this, the proposed traffic signals now includes a staggered crossing on the southern arm, thereby requiring pedestrians to cross in two phases rather than one.
- 6.108 This addresses the point previously raised. Further alterations have also been made to the proposed traffic signals layout. For northbound traffic, the layout previously included three lanes with a separate lane provided for each movement (i.e. right turns, straight ahead, left turns). The arrangement retains three lanes but includes a shared left turn/straight ahead, along with straight ahead only and right turn only lanes. This arrangement introduces a requirement for straight ahead traffic to merge into a single lane to continue northwards.
- 6.109 In response to the original comments from WSCC Highways, the wider scheme of improvements, including the segregated left turn lane have been omitted from the proposal. This is considered acceptable by WSCC who have commented that the left turn lane had limited operational benefit to the roundabout. WSCC have requested for land to safeguarded for the left turn lane in the event it is needed in the future for the development of the roundabout, as offered by the applicants. In the event that planning permission is granted, this could be secured under a legal agreement.
- 6.110 WSCC Highways originally commented that detailed junction assessments to examine how the proposed development traffic would impact upon local junctions were missing from the submission. An additional package of modelling work was subsequently submitted by the developer to look at impacts at identified junctions.
- 6.111 The highways team have commented that the modelling submitted has limitations. Notwithstanding the limitations of the model, in viewing the acceptability of the increased queues and delays, consideration must be given towards NPPF Paragraph 115. This states that, *'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'*
- 6.112 Overall, WSCC have accepted that the development will worsen forecast congestion issues. However, development traffic is clearly not the main cause of the situation with there being substantial queues and delays expected at peak times on identified arms. The added impact should be viewed against this context. Accounting for the NPPF, it is not considered that the development would result in a severe impact on the road network. This however is subject to the details required regarding the segregated left turn lane.

#### Active Travel:

- 6.113 'Active Travel' comprises walking, cycling and wheeling, and the proposals have been subject to consultation with the Government's Active Travel England unit. Taking access on foot firstly, it is recognised that, based on table 2.2 in the TA, the range of services within reasonable walking distance (this is considered by the applicant as 2km) is very limited and would not satisfy all day-to-day needs. It is accepted that some additional services will be

provided as part of the development itself (such as a local shop, gym and the leisure facilities) but it is apparent that the location of the site would not promote access to other services on foot due to the distances involved.

6.116 WSCC Highways have commented that, for cycling, it is accepted that a greater range of services could be reached. This includes Lintott Square (Southwater) as well as Horsham town centre. In principle and based on distance, cycling could replace some trips that would ordinarily take place by car. It is though recognised that distance is only one aspect in considering the potential to encourage walking and cycling trips, with useability and safety other important considerations. In this regard existing walking and cycling infrastructure in the immediate area surrounding the site to possible destinations is very limited. The application seeks improvements both for routes towards Southwater and Horsham to address this deficiency, as follows:

- Widening the footway of Worthing Road,
- Upgrading the bridleway to the east of site (Lovers Lane and Pedlars Way),
- Providing a footway connection along Coldstaple Lane and
- Improvements to pathway 1668 and Kings Lane.

6.117 WSCC have commented that the Kings Lane route makes use of footpath 1668, the majority of which falls within the application site and therefore the control of the applicant to improve. There is a short length of footpath 1668 that lies outside of the applicant's control. This route is narrow (albeit this is assisted by planting immediately adjacent to the footpath) and has poor surveillance (i.e. it's not in any way overlooked). Whilst the surfacing can be improved within the legal limits of the footpath, improvements beyond this would not be possible without the permission of the landowner. Given the Kings Lane route is indicated to be the primary pedestrian route towards Southwater, it would be beneficial to understand what is deliverable and intended for this option.

6.118 Beyond Kings Lane, a narrow footway is available alongside Southwater Street leading southwards into Southwater. The footway width is not ideal although it is recognised that there may well be constraints in locations preventing any significant enhancements, albeit this does not seem to be the case between Kings Lane and the A24 overbridge. WSCC highways recommend that a scheme of footway width improvements should be secured as part of this development between Kings Lane and the 30/40mph speed limit change south of the A24 overbridge. This should seek to achieve a minimum footway width of 1.5 metres.

6.119 WSCC Highways have also commented that the Coltstaple Lane access is via by-way 1668. This can be used by cyclists and pedestrians. It is recognised that there are no onward connections for pedestrians (i.e. footways) as such those on foot would have to walk within the carriageway until Kings Lane where the footway then starts. A footway should consequently be provided between by-way 1668 and Kings Lane to accommodate pedestrians. Cyclists exiting the site onto Coltstaple Lane will have use the carriageway. WSCC highways commented that this is not ideal but it is acknowledged that Coltstaple Lane and Southwater Street form part of a signed cycle route between Southwater and Horsham. It is accepted that Coltstaple Lane is relatively lightly trafficked and that cycling on the carriageway would still not be an option for all users. It is also accepted that there is however insufficient space within the highway to achieve any significant interventions to enhance cycling provision. The applicant should investigate whether there are any potential improvement options to improve conditions for cyclists on Coltstaple Lane/Southwater Street. 34. A length of footway is proposed between by-way 1668 and bridleway 1670 (Lovers Lane/Pedlars Way). This footway will provide a connection between the development and the bridleway to which the development is providing a contribution towards future improvements (which are separately referenced below).

6.120 Towards Horsham, there are two route options for those on foot or cycle; along the B2237 Worthing Road corridor or using public rights of way. The most direct route is along the B2237

Worthing Road corridor. This is recognised as being constrained in width, limiting the ability of the applicant to implement any substantial improvements to the existing footway width or provision. WSCC Highways states that a scheme of footway improvements/maintenance should still be pursued by the applicant from the development site to the Tower Hill junction. These improvements should seek to achieve a minimum width of 1.5 metres along with the provision of tactile paving at existing crossings.

- 6.121 For cyclists, there are very limited improvement options available along the B2237 Worthing Road with these having been separately assessed as part of the Horsham District Council Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP). Given the speed and volume of traffic on the Worthing Road, and based on LTN 1/20, the most appropriate solution to accommodate cycling would be a segregated off-carriageway route. However, this could not be required from this development given it would involve 3rd party land beyond the existing highway and outside the control of the applicant. Even without improvements, Worthing Road remains the direct route to Horsham and will continue to be used by some cyclists.
- 6.122 To provide for cyclist demands from the site to Horsham, the applicant is intending to fund a package of surfacing improvements to bridleway 1670. This is an existing route known as Pedlars Way. A scheme of this nature is included within the Horsham LCWIP. These improvements will be limited to be within the legal limits of the existing right of way. There is also concern to the usability of the bridleway by cyclists as it is unlit in a countryside setting.
- 6.123 For the Park & Ride site, WSCC are aware that this involves land outside of the existing public highway and beyond the control of the developer (albeit the land required is within the ownership of WSCC). As a result, the works to improve the layout of the Park & Ride site for pedestrians cannot be insisted upon or secured through a positively worded obligation. The developer has still agreed to use all reasonable endeavours to gain landowner consent to undertake the works. In the event the footway within the Park and Ride cannot be achieved, a footway is proposed leading from the traffic signals northwards along the western side of the B2237 into the Park and Ride site. This route is entirely within the existing highway and will be provided regardless of the outcome of the alternate Park and Ride footway option.
- 6.124 Various improvements have been identified by the applicant to walking and cycling routes. WSCC accept that the potential for significant improvements along certain routes, such as the B2237 Worthing Road, is limited by land availability. Nevertheless, with the exception of the footway into the Park and Ride, schemes are proposed within existing constraints that will offer improvements to walking and cycling. If recommended for approval, WSCC recommend a range of measures to be provided by way of condition, through a legal agreement or by way of a contribution towards WSCC led works.
- 6.125 Active Travel England (ATE) have commented that they have concerns about the location of the site given the poor quality of the surrounding active travel infrastructure, including Worthing Road, the footpath network to the north-east of the site, Coltstaple Lane/Southwater Street, and the barrier to non-motorised movements caused by the A24 and the Hop Oast roundabout.
- 6.126 In terms of access to Horsham, the infrastructure along the section of Worthing Road between the site and Horsham would require significant changes in order to be considered safe and attractive for walking, wheeling and cycling. The Horsham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) identifies existing conflicts between vehicular traffic and non-motorised users on this route and suggests that the funding for such improvements could be obtained via contributions from residential developments. While the aspirations in the LCWIP and paragraph 4.32 of the Transport Assessment to enhance Worthing Road as a walking and cycling route are noted, ATE has concerns regarding what is achievable along this route and when these improvements would be constructed.

- 6.127 ATE also have concerns regarding the use of existing rights of way for pedestrians and cyclist for direct access to Horsham. Improvements to these rights of way are subject to third party landowners to overcome constraints. For Southwater, Figure 4.2 in the Transport Assessment identifies two pedestrian and cyclist access points that would serve routes to Southwater. Site Access Point 3 would lead out from the Green Lane byway to the A24, where the existing crossing and pedestrian refuge do not meet current design standards. Significant improvements would be required at this crossing and the linkages to it were this route to be considered further. Site Access Point 5 is from Kings Lane – a cul-de-sac road serving five residential dwellings – that leads out onto Southwater Street, which has a narrow footway (circa 500mm wide) towards the A24 bridge. ATE contend that neither of these routes would engender walking, wheeling or cycling trips to and from the local primary school and other services in Southwater.
- 6.128 ATE have also commented that the changes to the A24 roundabout may improve safety for people using vehicles turning onto the A24 dual carriageway, but that this would further deter those walking, wheeling, or cycling crossing the roundabout/Green Lane byway just to the south. ATE are also concerned that the active travel access points to the site are unsuitable and that the indicative, internalised walking and cycling routes would not connect to safe or suitable access points to serve future residents and other users of the development for the reasons identified above.
- 6.129 It is recognised that the site benefits from being close to relatively frequent bus services between Southwater and Horsham. The available services provide four buses an hour to Horsham Monday to Saturday. The frequency of the bus service as well as the short journey time is considered to provide an alternative to using the private car. However, it is also noted that large parts of the site are over the recommended walking distance, deterring users.
- 6.130 Notwithstanding access to buses, the NPPF puts significant emphasis on the need for delivering sustainable development which promotes walking, cycling and public transport. The NPPF states the following:

*108. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of... development proposals, so that:*

*c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*

*109. ...Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.*

*114. In assessing... specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:*

*a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; [and]*

*b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users*

*116. Within this context, applications for development should:*

*a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas*

*b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport, [and]*

*c) create places that... minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles*



- 6.131 ATE states that, whilst it is acknowledged that this site will have access to some bus services, the application has failed to demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users. The proposed routes for active travel to a range of key amenities are not suitable or attractive for general everyday use in terms of safety and personal security. Moreover, the necessary active travel infrastructure to support a sustainable form of development in this location is not proposed nor considered deliverable at the current time, such that the development will have a high reliance on motorised vehicles even for short journeys.
- 6.132 Overall, WSCC highways have commented that the scheme is appropriate in terms of access arrangements, trip generation and highway capacity. The applicant has looked to improve sustainable transport links within the constraints of this site. Whilst this is acknowledged, the proposals to improve sustainable links is limited given the location and setting of this arguably unsustainable site. ATE have commented that the supporting off-site infrastructure to serve this development does not conform with the design standards in LTN 1/20 and Inclusive Mobility.
- 6.133 The proposed development is therefore contrary to the national policy requirement to promote sustainable transport as set out in NPPF paragraphs 108, 109, 114 and 116. The proposal is also contrary to Policy 40 of the HDPF and Policy SNP4 and SNP13 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan in relation to active travel.

#### Parking

- 6.135 Policy SNP15: Driving in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states the following:
- To facilitate the shift to low emission vehicles, development proposals must support the introduction and use of electric vehicles.
  - All proposals that include car parking must demonstrate that car charging points can or will be installed adjacent to all parking spaces on site with ease (either now or in the future).
  - Proposals which provide full car charging infrastructure at the outset will be viewed more favourably than those which do not.
- 6.136 Policy 41 of the HDPF states that adequate parking and facilities must be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users. Policy SNP14.1 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan also states that residential development must include provision for adequate off-road parking spaces in accordance with the following criteria:
- (a) Apart from one bedroom flats which shall have one allocated parking space, every dwelling will provide, for use associated with that dwelling, 2 parking spaces and one additional parking space for each additional bedroom over a total of three, with an upstairs study counting as a bedroom within its curtilage (or within the development).
  - (b) The proposed solution should avoid car parking dominating the street-scene. Therefore parking should be to the side rather than in front the property.
- 6.137 As the proposal is for outline permission, details regarding the layout and exact numbers of proposed parking spaces is not indicated in this application. These details would be agreed at the reserved matters stage. The Planning Statement outlines the provision of 350 car parking spaces for the non-residential uses. The car parking provision will also benefit from disabled spaces and electric charging provision. Cycle parking will be provided in accordance with the standards.
- 6.138 In the event that outline permission is granted, the details of the parking provision (including the provision of electric vehicle charging points) would be agreed under reserved matters.

## Heritage Impacts

- 6.139 Policy SNP19 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals will be supported where they protect and, where possible, enhance Parish Heritage Assets as identified on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map. Denne Parkland is stated as a heritage asset of significance in this policy.
- 6.140 Policy 34 of the HDPF relates to Cultural and Heritage Assets and states that applications should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensure that development in conservation areas is consistent with special character of the area.
- 6.141 Section 66 of the Listed Buildings Act and paragraph 205 of the NPPF (2013) also stress the importance and great weight attributed to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings.
- 6.142 To the north of the Site is Denne Park House, a Grade II listed building with separately designated garden balustrade, lodge and cottage (Pineapple Cottage) within its grounds, (all Grade II). The formal driveway avenue and area of parkland to the north of the house are recognised as a Parish Heritage Asset within the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (Policy SDNP19).
- 6.143 The site is not located within the boundary of a Conservation Area and does not contain any listed buildings, however there are ten Grade II listed buildings within 500m of the Site. To protect the setting and character of Denne Park, the most north/north-eastern areas will be retained as the golf course/areas of woodland. The northern boundary will also include areas of structural planting to strengthen the landscape setting of this area and reinforce the screening between the Site, the listed buildings and areas of parkland. In terms of the height of built form within the northern area that will only consist of the sport and leisure hub, this will be set at a maximum of up to two storey (11m max. ridge heights from ground levels +/- 2m) and will be consistent with the neighbouring Horsham Football clubhouse/ancillary facilities.
- 6.144 For these reasons, as stated by the submitted Built Heritage Baseline Assessment, the proposed development would have a minimal impact on the setting of the neighbouring Grade II listed heritage assets at Denne Park House, Garden Balustrade and Piers to the West of Denne Park House, Gate Cottage at Denne Park and Pineapple Cottage. This low level of change would not affect the significance of these heritage assets or diminish the way in which this significance can be appreciated, and therefore the special interest of the listed buildings would remain entirely preserved, as per s.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council's Conservation Officer agrees with the assessment and raises no objection to the proposal.
- 6.145 In relation to archaeology impacts, an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment has submitted in support of the application. The northern parts of the site are located within an Archaeological Notification Area associated with the historic estate at Denne Park, forming part of the parkland to that estate. The site was subsequently used as part of the D-Day landing mobilisation camps, and there are a number of surviving features that relate to this period of use. Previous archaeological fieldwork on the site has identified activity dating to the Roman period, a possible medieval deer park boundary pale as well as evidence for post-medieval drainage and possible World War II encampments.
- 6.146 The Council's Archaeologist has commented that they are in agreement with the archaeology assessment and raise no objections to the proposal subject to recommended conditions.

## **Impact on Residential Amenity:**

- 6.147 Policy 33 of the HDPF requires development is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers / users of nearby property and land. Policy SNP8 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan also states that development should not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of adjacent properties.
- 6.148 In the location proposed, the proposed sports facility would not result in a loss of amenity to adjacent properties in relation to loss of light, overlooking or an increased sense of enclosure to any adjacent properties. Given the nature of the facility, it is recognised that the proposal will generate additional noise in the countryside, particularly on hockey match days and during any functions. Additionally, consideration needs to be given to light spillage from the proposed floodlights and the potential impact this would have on adjacent properties.
- 6.149 This proposal would directly affect the three properties at Harwood Farm House, Homes Farm Cottage and Harwood Cottage. These properties would be located between the main area of residential development to the south and the new sports and leisure facility to the north. These detached dwellings would retain their existing vehicle access from Worthing Road. It is proposed to share this access with the football club and the proposed sports facilities.
- 6.150 In the event that planning permission was granted, it is clear that these three properties would be affected by any construction works for this development due to their proximity to the development areas. To reduce this impact, if recommended for approval, planning conditions could be imposed requiring details of construction working methods, including hours of work and noise, to mitigate this impact. It is proposed to locate residential parcels adjacent to the three properties. The residential parcels to the south would be separated from two of the dwellings by the existing access road with the residential set back. It is felt that under reserved matters approval, details could be secured which prevent the new dwellings resulting in a detrimental impact on the retained properties.
- 6.151 For the residential parcel to the north, this is separated from Harwood Farm House by a buffer zone. This buffer zone is shown on the submitted land use Parameter Plan. Currently, the area directly to the north of Harwood Farm House include an area of mature hedgerow and trees. This vegetation is shown to be retained as part of the proposed buffer zone. With the buffer zone, the existing green boundary in place and with consideration of future design of the reserved matters area, the amenity of Harwood Farm House could be protected from significant intrusion. A similar green buffer exists along the northern boundary of Home Farm Cottage. Proposed landscaping is also shown to the western area of Harwood Cottage. These areas will also help preserve the amenity of these two dwellings from the nearby residential dwellings.
- 6.152 The neighbouring properties to the north at Denne Park and Gate Cottage are set a significant distance from the development site separated by retained golf courses. To the south, six dwellings at King Lane are located adjacent to the boundary of the development site. The proposed Land Use masterplan indicates that the residential properties furthest south would be significantly set back from the southern boundary. As such, these properties would not be significantly affected by the proposal. There are no other immediate adjacent properties which would be affected by this proposal in relation to loss of light, outlook or an increased sense of enclosure.
- 6.153 The new sports and leisure complex, in combination with the existing football club, would result in a noise increase as a result of outside activities. Accordingly, a Noise and Vibration Assessment has been undertaken by the applicant and submitted as part of an Environmental Statement. The assessment states that noise levels from the outdoor sports pitches associated with the Proposed Development are assessed with reference to Sports England guidance. The document contains information on the noise implications with outdoor

sports pitches. The guide states the free-field noise level of LAeq,1h 58 dB was measured 10m from the sideline halfway marking. The dominant noise source are voices, rather than other noise sources, i.e. ball impacts.

- 6.154 The assessment states that the effect at three residential properties within Horsham Golf have been assessed to be 'minor adverse (not significant, direct and permanent (long-term)'. However, it is acknowledged that the sports pitches are unlikely to be in use simultaneously for significant parts of the day, and therefore typical noise levels are expected to be lower than reported in the assessment, i.e. the effects are likely to be intermittent. Overall, the effect at all other receptors has been assessed in the assessment to be 'negligible (not significant), direct and permanent (long-term)'.
- 6.155 In relation to the proposed uses, the main events at the new facility will be hockey matches. These in themselves would not generate the same amount of attendance or noise generated by the use of Horsham Football Club on match days. The new sports facility would generate noise but this would mainly limited to shouting and ball impacts during the daytime. As stated in the submitted Planning Statement, the use of the outdoor sports pitches will be appropriately managed, with the relevant design and operational controls to be confirmed through the approval of Reserved Matters following discussions with the necessary stakeholders. This would include appropriate hours of use and operation, which could be controlled by recommended conditions.
- 6.156 As stated in the submitted assessment, the dominant noise source identified during the baseline surveys was road traffic from the A24 and B2237 Worthing Road. This has the potential to detrimentally affect the amenity of the future residents of the proposed development, with residential parcels sited nearby to these roads. The Council's Environmental Health team have reviewed the submitted noise assessments and initially commented that the details were insufficient and important data was missing, such as a 3D noise model and an acoustic design statement indicating noise levels are across the site. Without this information, a full assessment of the proposed impacts could not be made.
- 6.157 In response, the applicant submitted further information. The Council's Environmental Health team commented that the details have not fully addressed their previous concerns. For instance, a 3D model and an acoustic design statement were not submitted. In the absence of this key information, it cannot be ascertained that the scheme would not result in a significant noise impact on the future residents of the development. As such, insufficient information has been submitted to overcome concerns that the proposal would result in a significant impact on the amenity of the future residents of the development contrary to Policy 33 of the HDPF.
- 6.158 The proposal would result in floodlighting for the proposed sports pitches. At this outline stage, the exact number and location of any floodlights is not known. This would be determined at the reserved matters stage. Notwithstanding this, a Sports Lighting Scheme has been submitted with the proposal. The submitted Sports Lighting Statement states that *'any directional lighting will be employed to limit light spill surrounding the hockey pitches. Alongside the screening to decrease the light spill, lighting on the driving range will be extinguished at 8pm each evening and will therefore cease to have any impacts throughout the majority of the night when bats are considered to use trees in proximity to the sports facilities.'*
- 6.159 There is existing lighting for the golf driving range and extensive floodlighting for Horsham Football Club. It is clear through experiences with the relatively recently completed floodlighting at Horsham Football Club that there have been issues with their floodlighting and the impact that this has on adjacent properties. The football club has been in discussion with residents of Denne Park and provided additional planting along the northern boundary of their training pitch to try and reduce the impact of the floodlighting.

- 6.160 Floodlighting is directional onto a pitch but can still be perceived as an intrusion from adjacent properties in this rural location, especially during the winter months when trees lose their leaves. The floodlighting at the football club and driving range is largely mitigated by extensive conifers which surround the club and the existing driving range. The proposal results in a large proportion of these conifers being removed to accommodate the proposal. The scheme does indicate 'structural planting' around the proposed sports facility, however, this planting would not be effective mitigation immediately for the proposed floodlighting, which is shown on the submitted plans to likely comprise 12 columns some 15m in height. In this instance, and acknowledging the concerns raised from experience of the floodlighting more distant at Horsham Football Club, it is considered that whilst there would be some impact from the floodlighting on nearby residents this would be mitigated by the distances to the nearest residential properties and conditions controlling the hours of use of the floodlighting, alongside effective planting around the facility and wider site boundary, and further details of the lighting intensity and direction. These mitigations, alongside the wider benefit of this sports offer, are considered sufficient to avoid undue harm to the affected residents, with any remaining impacts outweighed by the benefits of the sports offer.
- 6.161 In relation to the other commercial and community uses, these are proposed to the proposed local centre located to the western side of the site. These uses would not be directly adjacent to any residential properties. In addition, in the event that planning permission is granted, conditions could be imposed, such as hours of use, to limit the impact of these uses on nearby residential properties.

#### **Drainage and Flooding:**

- 6.162 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, with a band of low (0.1-1% annual) and medium (1-3.3% annual) surface water flood risk located to the northern part of the site north of the Horsham Football Club site, which extends down the eastern part of the golf course. In support of the application, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy have been submitted.
- 6.163 The FRA states that the proposed development is wholly situated in Flood Zone 1 with a less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding. Due to the Site's current use as a golf course, earthworks will be necessary to facilitate the proposal and an initial strategy has been submitted which demonstrates how the levels across the site can be balanced to accommodate development. As part of this, regrading works to flood routes will be redirected towards the edges of the development areas.
- 6.164 The submitted Planning Statement indicates that in terms of the surface water drainage strategy, this has been developed in accordance with the hierarchy for sustainable surface water disposal and given the site's underlying ground conditions, infiltration will not be suitable for the discharge of surface water runoff. Surface water runoff will therefore be discharged into the existing ditches and attenuated within the associated strategic attenuation ponds. The surface water drainage strategy also includes an allowance for greywater which will be recycled, for groundwater recharge, via soakaway boreholes. At this stage, the on-parcel attenuation features have not been specified or shown on the surface water drainage strategy. The current strategy represents the strategic surface drainage strategy for the entire development. The submission states that further details relating to each development parcel (including on-parcel SuDS and attenuation features) will be provided at the time of the associated reserved matters application.
- 6.165 The HDC Drainage Officer has commented that he agrees with the conclusions of the drainage strategy and that the scheme is appropriate at this outline stage. In contrast, West Sussex County Council as the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) have objected to the application. The LLFA have commented that the application is not in accordance with the NPPF, Government guidance (PPG) on Flood Risk and Coastal Change, WSCC SuDS Policies or Policy 38 of the HDPF (2015). The LLFA have commented that, following

discussions and amendments from the applicants, their concerns have not been fully met and that insufficient information for this outline application has been submitted to address the concern that flood risk may increase elsewhere, upstream, or downstream from the site.

- 6.166 The LLFA have commented that the site is clearly at risk of surface water flooding and the applicants have not submitted sufficient information to overcome this issue. No quantitative assessment has been submitted. In addition, the applicants have not submitted a sequential test in relation to flooding for this site.
- 6.167 The NPPF (December 2023) paragraph 165 states that *'inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.'* Paragraph 167 goes on to state that *'all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property.'*
- 6.168 The NPPF states that the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The strategic flood risk assessment will provide the basis for applying this test. The sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding.
- 6.169 Policy 38 of the HDPF (2015) states that development proposals will follow a sequential test approach to flood risk, giving priority to development sites with the lowest risk of flooding and making required development safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 6.170 Whilst this site is not within a flood zone, the site is subject to surface water flooding with EA mapping showing low, medium and high risk surface water flows through the site. As such, in accordance with the NPPF and accompanying PPG, this site is required to be subject to a sequential test in relation to all sources of flooding, including surface water. The applicant has not submitted a sequential test and has therefore failed the requirements of Policy 38 of the HDPF (2015), paragraphs 165, 168 and 173 of the NPPF, and the accompanying PPG. As stated above, the scheme is also considered unacceptable in relation to potential flooding and is also contrary to Policy 38 and paragraph 173 of the NPPF in this respect.

#### **Infrastructure Provision: Health and Education:**

- 6.171 Policy 39 of the HDPF (2015) states that *'the release of land for development will be dependant on there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the additional requirements arising from new development, or suitable necessary mitigation arrangements for the improvement of the infrastructure, services and community facilities caused by the development being provided.'*
- 6.172 The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan policy SNP23 states that any CIL funds raised by new development shall be used to support the delivery of projects identified in the Southwater Infrastructure Delivery Plan and to support any other projects identified as a priority by the Parish Council to address demands that development has placed on the area.
- 6.173 As stated in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (2023) the provision of infrastructure to support the growth and development of our communities and District is critical in providing new homes, building a strong, resilient and diverse economy and in helping to create sustainable communities. The IDP is identified as a key document forming part of the evidence base in local plan preparation that assesses the quality and capacity of

infrastructure within a local planning authority area and sets out the infrastructure likely to be required to support new development across Horsham District.

Education Provision:

- 6.174 The IDP states that it is the role of West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) as the Local Education Authority, to plan, organise and commission places for all maintained schools in the county. The WSSCC exercises this function in partnership with dioceses, academy sponsors, multi-academy trusts, governing bodies of schools, head teachers, local communities and other key stakeholders. To plan sufficiently for school places in the county, WSSCC is required to forecast future roll numbers. Forecasting pupil numbers is based on a number of factors, including birth data, migration patterns and anticipated future housing numbers. These requirements are based on the best available information at the time.
- 6.175 There are currently 44 primary schools within Horsham District, three of which are located within the South Downs National Park Authority administrative area. A new primary school at Kilnwood Vale opened in September 2019. A planned primary school at Wickhurst Green was withdrawn by the DfE due to surplus capacity at primary schools in Horsham, including a recent expansion at Shelley Primary School and a new primary school is due to open on the Bohunt Horsham campus in September 2024. A new primary school for East of Billingshurst is also planned although this is later in the phasing of the development.
- 6.176 In relation secondary schools, there are six secondary schools within the District providing education from 11-16 years of age. Bohunt Horsham opened in 2019 on a temporary site in central Horsham and has now relocated to its new purpose-built accommodation on the Land North of Horsham (Mowbray) site in early 2022. Bohunt is an all-through school arranged on a campus with primary, SEN and Early Years facilities.
- 6.177 The IDP goes on to state that housing growth set out in the proposed submission draft Horsham District Local Plan will require additional school places for primary, secondary, further education, SEND and early years. These requirements will be met through the provision of new schools and expansion of existing facilities. This includes a new primary, secondary and SEND education provision proposed in the Regulation 19 HDLP at the Land North West of Southwater site.
- 6.178 The Land North West of Southwater policy (HA3) requires land and contributions to meet the education provision standards, as advised by the Local Education Authority, to include a primary school, up to 6 form entry secondary school (expandable to 8 forms of entry) incorporating special education needs and a nursery. This provision is reflected in the SNP policy (SNP2.2) which directly relates to the Land West of Southwater site. This policy states that the development of this site should ensure it *'does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the local education system, and to reduce unnecessary journeys to and from school, land should be safeguarded for a secondary (or all-through) school in accordance with Policy SNP3.'*
- 6.179 The current proposal for the Horsham Golf & Fitness site includes space for a nursery. The Planning Statement also states that the Golf College that will cater to sixth form students aspiring to a career in golf, with aspirations to deliver Masters level qualifications. The proposal does not include provision or land for a new primary school, secondary school or a dedicated sixth form. In the event that permission is granted, the applicant is instead proposing financial contributions towards improving education facilities in the District.
- 6.180 WSSCC Education have commented that Bohunt Horsham is now filling to capacity and that secondary provision in Horsham District is therefore currently unable to expand. This takes into account existing anticipated growth and the lack of an allocated or secured site for a new secondary school. WSSCC therefore advise that as this development is coming outside the adopted HDLP and the HDLP Local Plan review there is no capacity. Consequently, the

WSCC Education objects to this application for significant unplanned housing coming forward at this stage.

- 6.181 Whilst Policy HA3 of the Regulation 19 HDLP and the made Southwater Neighbourhood Plan require new educational facilities at the Land West of Southwater site, there is no guarantee at this stage that these facilities will be delivered, when they will be delivered, or whether they will be available to meet the needs of this development. The HDLP has also not yet reached submission and can only be given low to moderate weight at this time. This includes Policy HA3.
- 6.182 Given there is no permission for a new secondary school in Southwater, and in any case no timetable for its delivery, this cannot be relied upon to provide for the education needs of the proposal for the Horsham Golf and Fitness site. The Horsham Golf & Fitness site is not part of the HDLP and the infrastructure requirements of 800 new homes at this site has not been factored into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. As a speculative development, the educational needs of up to 800 dwellings has to be either provided onsite or by existing educational facilities within the District. As stated by WSCC Education, there is currently no capacity for secondary school spaces within the District and at this point in time there is no permissions in place for a new school to potentially serve the educational needs of this development site in the future.
- 6.183 In respect of primary provision, the proposed 800 dwellings would normally create a demand for an approximate 1 form of entry primary provision (equivalent to some 210 pupils). The WSCC Education team have not raised an objection on the basis of an absence of primary provision within the site. Instead, the WSCC Education team have expressed concerns that the distance for parents to walk or cycle safely to nearby primary school facilities is inconvenient and unsafe, noting that parents will be unable to seek free school travel for their children as there are primary schools within two miles of the development. However, WSCC Education advise that these schools are not nearby or conveniently located, being towards the maximum walking distance for the children and their parents to travel, and have advised that it is questionable if there are suitably safe walking and cycling routes to schools in the south of Horsham or in Southwater. WSCC Education advise that the position for young families walking to school would be sub-optimal as in parts the pavements are quite narrow for pushchairs and adults and children walking two abreast.
- 6.184 Officers note that the nearest primary school is approximately 1 mile from the southernmost point of the development site, necessitating a walk of approximately 23 mins (according to Google maps) along Southwater Street and Worthing Road. For those living in the northern part of the development site the distance would be closer to 1.5 miles. To the north, the nearest primary school is some 1.3 miles from the main site entrance, a 28 minute walk (according to Google maps) along the narrow pavements alongside the busy Worthing Road. Whilst improvements to the more direct PROW route north to this school are proposed, these would not be suited for year-round use or for pushchairs etc. Whilst bus routes are available in the alternative, this is not considered appropriate as the only reasonable alternative means to the private car.
- 6.185 Given the distance, time and nature of these routes it is unlikely that the nearest primary schools within Southwater and Horsham will be attractive for parents to walk to, increasing the requirement for some 200 primary school age children to out-commute each day primarily via car trips. This is additional to the out-commuting of secondary age pupils and is fundamentally a result of this development site being in a weak location for optimising sustainable travel.

Health Provision:

- 6.186 For health provision, the IDP states that healthcare across the District is delivered primarily by NHS England and NHS Sussex, who commission Trusts to provide certain services and



facilities. Care is delivered both at primary level, within communities, through GP surgeries and dentists and at the secondary (acute) care level. Within the District, this secondary care is delivered through the Horsham in- and out-patient services, provided by the Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (SASH). Residents are also served by acute care facilities outside the District, including East Surrey Hospital in Redhill, also managed by SASH.

- 6.187 Future growth across the District is likely to have an impact on NHS capacity and demand on NHS services, particularly locally, for primary care services. Growth of a small settlement, or a new settlement may not necessarily justify, for example, a new GP surgery. However, there are instances where growth can help sustain an existing service or justify an increase in the specialist services at a nearby hub.
- 6.188 NHS Sussex have commented that new residents, as a result of this proposal, would register at Southwater and Horsham town centre general practitioners. The new homes are in the catchment area of 5x GP practices. NHS Sussex have commented that they have undertaken an assessment of the implications of growth and the delivery of housing upon the health need of the District serving this proposed development, and in particular the major settlements in the district where new development is being directed towards. They have established that in order to maintain the current level of healthcare services, developer contributions towards the provision of capital infrastructure will be required. As such, NHS Sussex have commented that, in the event that permission is granted, a contribution of £1,213,445 would be required. This contribution would need to be secured in a legal agreement.
- 6.189 In the absence of a legal agreement to secure this health contribution, the scheme is recommended for refusal. In addition, as outlined above, the scheme has not sufficiently provided for the educational needs of the proposal through the provision of on-site facilities. As outlined above, financial contributions to improve educational infrastructure in the District to accommodate this development are not considered acceptable given the lack of secondary school spaces and the poor sustainable routes to existing primary schools. The proposal has not therefore met the educational needs of the development. As such, the proposal is considered unacceptable in relation to educational provision and is contrary to Policy 39 of the HDPF (2015).

#### **Ecology:**

- 6.190 Policy 31 of the HDPF (2015) states that development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites.
- 6.191 The site is not located within the boundaries of any Special Areas of Conservation ('SAC'), Special Protection Areas ('SPA'), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'), National Nature Reserves ('NNR') or Local Nature Reserves ('LNR'). There are also no internationally or nationally designated ecological sites located within 3km of the Site – the closest being St Leonard's Park Ponds SSSI which is located approximately 3.2km to the north-east.
- 6.192 To support the application, ecological and botanical surveys have been submitted relating to the likely impacts of development on Protected & Priority habitats and species, and identification of proportionate mitigation. These include the Environmental Statement Vol I Chapter 11 Ecology and Biodiversity (including Annexes 1 to 11) (Trium, June 2023), Environmental Statement Chapter 15 Environmental Management, Mitigation and Monitoring (Trium, June 2023) and the Illustrative Masterplan Drawing Number 008-01 (Mosaic Urban Design & Masterplanning, February 2023). The submissions include a calculation of the existing baseline position using DEFRA's Biodiversity Net Gain metric.

- 6.193 The Planning Statement outlines that, in relation to ecology, a design objective was *'the preservation and enhancement of corridors of higher value habitat to maintain connectivity, as well as retaining and enhancing key features such as ponds, scrub and woodland. Subsequently, the Proposed Development will deliver a network of green corridors alongside a wider sustainable drainage system network to provide the opportunity for semi-wetland habitats.'*
- 6.194 The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the submitted information and they are satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination. The submission provides certainty for the Council of the likely impacts on Protected and Priority species and, with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable.
- 6.195 The Ecologist notes surveys undertaken on the barn concluded that bats are unlikely to be using the building to roost and that none of the other buildings on site had potential to support roosting bats (Environmental Statement Vol I Chapter 11 Ecology and Biodiversity (Trium, June 2023)). It is also further noted that the bat activity surveys concluded that the site is used for commuting by Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Nathusius Pipistrelle, Brown Longeared Bat, Barbastelle, Myotis Species and Serotine bat. The Ecologist agrees that no further surveys for bats are required.
- 6.196 The submitted surveys indicate that three of the on-site and three of the off-site ponds contain evidence of Great Crested Newt (GCN) and therefore translocation of GCN will be undertaken under a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) (Environmental Statement Vol I Chapter 11 Ecology and Biodiversity (Trium, June 2023)). Alternatively, the applicant has the option of the strategic district licensing scheme available in the Horsham area through NatureSpace. A GCN licence must be obtained before commencement of any works and a copy of the licence is secured by a condition of any consent. The applicant has indicated that they will obtain GCN licences via the traditional route of Natural England.
- 6.197 There is ancient woodland (irreplaceable habitat) to the west of the site surrounding the football facility. The Council's Ecologist has commented that a 15m buffer would be required to protect this woodland in accordance with Government standing advice. The proposal does not include any new build within close proximity of the ancient woodland however in the event that permission was granted a condition could be imposed requiring a 15m buffer to protect the ancient woodland.
- 6.198 The proposal retains the majority of the woodland present on site. The Council's Ecologist has commented that proportionate compensation will be required for any deciduous woodland lost to the development. The preparation of a woodland management plan as recommended in Section 11.23 of the Environmental Statement Vol I Chapter 11 Ecology and Biodiversity (Trium, June 2023)) is supported. This aims to deliver long term management of habitats used by commuting bats, including Barbastelle, and provide foraging opportunities.
- 6.199 The proposal includes a Biodiversity Net Gain of 14.31% for habitat units and 11.99% gain for linear hedgerow units (Appendix 11 Environmental Statement Vol I Chapter 11 Ecology and Biodiversity (Trium, June 2023)). The Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculations Technical Note sets out that, based on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplans for the northern and southern parts of the site, habitats would be provided to deliver a net gain in excess of 10%. The Council's Ecologist has commented that the proposed habitats should be subject to a long-term Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to ensure they are managed to benefit wildlife and deliver the promised net gain for biodiversity.
- 6.200 Further to the above Ecology comments, further comments have been received from the Council's newly employed BNG Ecologist who stated that they had concerns regarding the BNG calculations and the habitats being proposed. It should be noted that there is no

statutory requirement for this proposal to meet BNG requirements as it came in before the new BNG regulations came into force. Notwithstanding this, in the event planning permission is granted, further details could be sought by condition or through a legal agreement.

- 6.201 The proposed compensation, biodiversity enhancements and Wildlife Friendly Lighting Strategy are also supported. It is considered that impacts on biodiversity and ecology will be minimised and that overall, there is no objection to the scheme in relation to ecology impacts, subject to recommended conditions. The proposals would therefore accord with policy 31 of the HDPF and Chapter 15 of the NPPF in this regard.

#### **Water Neutrality:**

- 6.202 Horsham District is situated in an area of serious water stress, as identified by the Environment Agency. In September 2021, Natural England released a Position Statement which advised all local authorities within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone that it cannot be concluded that existing water abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites near Pulborough. The Position Statement advises the affected local authorities that developments within the Sussex North Supply Zone must not therefore add to this impact, and to achieve this, all proposals must demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.
- 6.203 In assessing the impact of development on protected habitat sites such as those in the Arun Valley, decision makers must, as the competent authority for determining impact on such sites, ensure full compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations). The Regulations require that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) be carried out to determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features of a habitats site, before the grant of any planning permission. Regulation 70(3) requires that planning permission must not be granted unless the competent authority (Horsham District Council) is satisfied (whether by reason of the conditions and limitations to which the outline planning permission is to be made subject, or otherwise) that the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of the affected habits site. Regulation 63 sets out the process by which an HRA must take place.
- 6.204 The requirements of Regulations 63(5) and 70(3) are reflected in paragraph 186 of the NPPF, which states that *'if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused'*.
- 6.205 The site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham (near Pulborough), adjacent to the Arun Valley sites. The water abstraction issues raised by the Natural England Position Statement are currently material planning considerations relevant to any future planning proposal on this site. Given the requirements of the Habitat Regulations and paragraph 186 of the NPPF, adverse impact on the integrity of the Arun Valley sites must be given great weight in decision making. In order to demonstrate that no adverse impact will occur at the Arun Valley sites, all new development within the supply zone that is likely to increase water consumption (such as housing) must demonstrate water neutrality. In order to demonstrate this, a Water Neutrality Statement must be submitted which sets out the strategy for achieving water neutrality within the development. This would then be considered through Appropriate Assessment (in consultation with Natural England) to consider whether the mitigations proposed will ascertain that adverse effects will be avoided.

### Proposed Water Demand:

- 6.206 The existing site consists of an 18 hole golf course which includes a club house and driving range. The proposal is to deliver up to 800 dwellings along with a new leisure facility and a new local centre. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing club house and driving range. For the proposed dwellings, the water neutrality statement calculates that this would be a mix of 1-4 bed dwellings resulting in a total daily water demand of 149,345 litres for the 800 dwellings.
- 6.207 The commercial daily water demand has been calculated for the proposed non-domestic uses. This includes the proposed nursery, café, restaurant, hockey facilities, gym and golf college. The total water demand for the non-domestic uses is calculated at 75,935 litres per day. In terms of the existing water usage, the applicant has commented that there is an existing borehole which is used to irrigate the golf course during the drier periods of the year. The applicant has stated that the site benefits from an existing borehole licence which allows for abstraction of 80,000 litres of water per day for 180 days a year. Potable water supply to the site is otherwise supplied by the Southern Water mains that serves the golf course clubhouse.
- 6.208 For grey water recycling, a combination of both a decentralised and centralised greywater recycling system will be installed on-site. The proposed Hydraloop system will recycle greywater onsite from the showers, bathrooms, and taps and clean it to the World Health Organisation drinking water standards. The recycled water will be used for toilet flushing, laundry, and aquifer recharge. Table 3.5 in the Water Neutrality Statement establishes that based on the occupancy of 1,757 the total amount of treated greywater available for aquifer recharge is 57,148 litres/day equivalent to 20,859,020 litres/year.
- 6.209 The statement outlines that, with grey water recycling, water demand for the residential units will be 75 litres per person per day. These specifications are achieved by utilising a mixture of water efficient fittings, spray taps, and showers together with the greywater recycling. This reduces the total water demand for the residential units down to 131,775 litres day. With grey water harvesting, the water demand for the whole of the development including the commercial elements is calculated as 207,710 litres day.

### Proposed Mitigation Strategy

- 6.210 Alongside the above mitigations within each new dwelling, the applicants are proposing that all remaining water consumption be provided via three new boreholes on the site, in addition to the existing borehole. The strategy also includes a system of rainwater harvesting to recharge the aquifer beneath the site, which is to be backed up by the proposed greywater recycling system.
- 6.211 The applicant has stated that, in addition, a SuDS Strategy with the appropriate SuDS attenuation features will be capable of capturing rainwater making it available for landscaping and car washing uses. BS 8515 provides the criteria for rainwater harvesting storage requirements, which states that typically 5% of rainwater could be used for domestic purposes. However, in this instance, it is proposed to use 10% of the impermeable area to provide adequate harvested rainwater for landscape irrigation purposes. This would represent a 36-day drought water supply, which would be able to cope with dry periods owing to climate change.
- 6.212 To recharge the aquifer, it is proposed to install a series of deep bore soakaways that will be fed with water from the site-wide rainwater harvesting via the SUDS strategy and excess recycled greywater. The SUDS will serve to cleanse the rainwater that will come from the development before discharge into the deep bore soakaways. The submission states that the borehole recharging strategy will facilitate the recovery of nearly 49% of the water used, meaning approximately 58,000 litres per day will be fed back into the aquifer. The total

amount of treated water that is available for aquifer recharge on an annual basis is therefore stated to be some 20,478,690 litres a year, representing a total of 34% of the annual water demand.

- 6.213 It should be noted that the applicant has stated that the Water Neutrality Strategy is not dependent on the borehole/aquifer recharge element. The borehole/aquifer recharge is instead proposed as a significant additional sustainability benefit and driven by their client's desire to maximise the sustainability credentials of the site.

#### Borehole

- 6.214 As set out above, all potable water is to be provided by three new boreholes on the site, in addition to the existing borehole. The submission includes a Borehole Prognosis Report which provides the hydrogeological conditions of the site. This indicates that according to the British Geological Survey Geological Map (Map Sheet 302), the site is underlain by the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. The applicant has stated that the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation is a suitable strata to abstract significant yields, with local borehole logs recording yields of up to 1,800 cubic metres (1,800,000 litres) of water per day. The Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation is not hydrologically connected to the aquifer which serves Hardham.
- 6.215 It proposed to apply to the EA for the necessary borehole licenses, with initial Groundwater Investigation Consent having been granted by the EA to pump test the boreholes. The existing borehole is to address the demand from the commercial element of the proposals, with the residential elements served by the 3 new boreholes.

#### Commercial Borehole Water Demand:

- The commercial water demand post-development is 25,935 litres/day for internal use with an additional 50,000 litres/day requirement for the 9 hole golf course and other sports facilities.
- A Pre-Application request has been made to the Environment Agency to upgrade the existing borehole license to supply 100,000 litre/day commercial borehole supply for 365 days.
- In addition it is also proposed to retain the existing water mains supply to provide an emergency water supply to the commercial facilities.
- A 24 hour holding tank will also be installed as part of the backup strategy.

#### Residential Borehole Water Demand:

- A Pre-Application request has been made to the Environment Agency for the installation of 3 new boreholes with a combined yield capacity of 423,000 litres a day. These boreholes will alternate in their supply of water to the development in order to ensure that the pumps are not seized, and a backup water supply is always available to the residential units. It is understood these boreholes have been installed, all in a cluster to the western side of the site.
  - An emergency power supply will also need to be considered as part of the backup strategy.
- 6.216 At the time of submission, the applicant commented that the initial stages of the works pursuant to the borehole licence application had been undertaken. Since the submission, further testing has also been undertaken but is not yet fully complete.
- 6.217 The proposal includes a Surface Water Pollution Strategy. This includes filtration through the proposed SUDs features and run off through permeable paving.

Horsham District Council Assessment:

- 6.218 Given the scale of the proposals and the complexity of the applicant's water neutrality strategy, officers have employed the services of an independent consultant hydrologist (H2Ogeo). The consultant hydrologist has confirmed that the proposal is to abstract 423,000 litres of water per day from the Secondary A Upper Tunbridge Wells Sands (UTWS) aquifer, and that this water will undergo treatment and then be put into supply. It has been further confirmed that the geological setting of the UTWS aquifer means it is not in hydraulic continuity with the Greensand aquifer which serves Hardham in the Arun Valley. It has also been noted that runoff from the proposed site will pass via SuDS to deep bore soakaways along with excess treated grey water generated by the development, and that this will be recharged into the underlying aquifer as part of the Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) scheme.
- 6.219 The consultant hydrologist has provided a number of detailed comments on the applicant's proposals, raising a number of queries and questions. The main matters raised can be summarised as follows:
- The site is underlain by Horsham Stone within the Weald Clay that overlies the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand. *"The Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation is considered a suitable strata to abstract significant yields, with local borehole logs recording yields of up to 1800 m<sup>3</sup>/d."* The source of this information should be referenced as there are no local borehole logs recording these types of yields.
  - In addition to hydraulic continuity between aquifer units it will be necessary to understand the contribution groundwater from the Tunbridge Wells Sands (TWS) makes to the River Arun and, how any abstraction from the TWS may impede this contribution.
  - It is proposed to maintain the existing mains water supply to provide an emergency backup supply to the commercial facilities. What are the anticipated volumes/flow rates anticipated and do these currently come from mains water? Has the existing commercial water consumption been catered for in the proposed mitigation – what is the existing mains water consumption?
  - Residential Borehole Water Demand – It is not clear if the application to the Environment Agency for a combined yield of 423,000 Litres/Day includes the proposed increase of the existing borehole from 80,000 Litres/Day to 100,000 Litres/Day as well as the four new boreholes? Figure 4.1 reference is made to three boreholes, the strategy is not clear.
  - Further details are required to understand the borehole mitigation strategy – insufficient evidence of schemes on Weald Clay (or similar) recharging the Tunbridge Wells Sands at depth (or similar) should be provided.
  - There are a total of six proposed borehole soakaways, three in the southern portion and three in the northern portion of the site. No further details such as depths, diameters, pollution prevention measures are provided.
  - The daily recharge using the 20,478,690 Litres/Year figure would be 56,106 Litres/Day rather than 58,000 litres/Day. This whole section requires clarification and updating. It would be useful to include the calculations in the document.
  - Queries around the evidence to support the anticipated commercial water consumption figures.
  - Inconsistencies in the figures used more generally.
- 6.220 Overall, the details of the proposed mitigation scheme were not clear and there were details missing from the Water Neutrality Statement. Based on this considerably more information and data was required to provide assurance that this scheme was feasible and would provide the mitigation required for the scale of development being proposed and timeframe required.

- 6.221 For the Borehole Prognosis Report, the consultant hydrologist has commented that the report was now out of date with lots of additional information provided by the new borehole logs (Drilled April to July 2023) that represent actual site conditions drilled on site.
- 6.222 For the Stephen Buss Consultancy Hydrogeological Assessment, the consultant hydrologist has commented that it is *“appropriate to assess four boreholes to achieve the desired yield of 423 m<sup>3</sup>/day.”* This is based on literature data alone and the field testing proposed is essential to confirm the applicability and resilience of the proposed solution. For the Horsham Management Co One Ltd – Horsham, Nicholls Licencing & Consulting Letter, the consultant hydrologist has commented that HDC will need to see the results of the pumping test, interpretation, water features survey and Hydrogeological Impact report prior to making a decision as the outcomes, in terms of water neutrality.
- 6.223 The scheme sets out that *“water will find its way back into the aquifer serving the site. Subject to infiltration tests and borehole strata it is proposed to install a series of recharge boreholes together with unlined attenuation ponds.”* Details of these structures must be provided along with results from infiltration testing, modelling of vertical recharge into the borehole soakaways and assessment of any hydraulic mounding in the UTWS and increased water levels elsewhere in the catchment, i.e. increased spring flow, groundwater elevations.
- 6.224 The hydrologist has also commented that, to date, no assessment of the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand formation (UTWS) aquifer has taken place to understand hydraulic boundaries and its potential to contain and store the recharged rainwater. The chemistry of rapidly recharged rainwater should be assessed and considered when designing the water treatment scheme. As previously discussed, recharge to this confined aquifer on site is likely to be via the outcrop north of the site. This has taken place over a long time period. Recharging via deep bore soakaways has the potential to rapidly change saturated zone beneath the site and its chemistry.
- 6.225 For the submitted Consent to Investigate a Groundwater Source Test Pumping Consent, the HDC consultant hydrologist has commented that there does not appear to be a chemical testing component to the pumping test therefore changes to water quality will not be detected with time. In theory a sample should be collected at the start of the test and at the end to identify any chemical impacts of pumping over the 24 hour period. Each individual test is consented for 24 hours. Longer testing, 48 hours+, would be recommended for the aggregate testing in addition to monitoring of surrounding boreholes and spring lines if possible.
- 6.226 In addition to the above comments, there is no field data to support the feasibility of this proposal or design criteria included in the application. This will be needed prior to making a decision. Water quality issues have not been considered in this review however the geochemistry of mixing treated greywater, rainwater and groundwater must be assessed in the application as well as the resource components of managed aquifer recharge. Long term trends should be modelled in the underlying aquifer to understand the role of precipitates in the matrix and aquifer/borehole yields.
- 6.227 There are nearby potential sources of contamination including the Hop Oast Petrol Filling Station, an historic inert landfill located along the western side of the A24, north of the Hop Oast Roundabout operated by Wimpey Construction UK Ltd and the Hop Oast waste transfer station to name a few. The Environment Agency have requested information on land contamination to be secured by a condition however this information will be needed to assess the potential risk to groundwater quality as part of a Hydrogeological Impact and Risk Assessment.
- 6.228 In summary, the HDC consultant hydrologist has commented that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the scheme will be water neutral until investigation works have been completed and it is demonstrated that the Upper Tunbridge Wells Sands aquifer can provide the yield required, sustainably and in perpetuity.

- 6.229 In response to the comments from the HDC consultant hydrologist, the applicants submitted further information and a meeting was held. Officers communicated that the three main hydrogeological issues associated with the Water Neutrality Strategy are:
- Borehole yield;
  - The sustainability in perpetuity of the strategy; and
  - Contamination.

Borehole Yield:

- 6.230 Whilst it is understood that the Environment Agency are involved with the licensing and permitting of the proposed abstractions, it is important to note that HDC, in addition to understanding the environmental implications of the abstractions, also need certainty from the testing that the boreholes will yield sufficient water supply on day one and, in perpetuity.
- 6.231 The advice of the consultant hydrologist is that the aggregate testing of the boreholes should mimic the proposed operational regime of the pumping and be tested at a time of year when the aquifer is under most stress, i.e. end of Summer – September / October when groundwater levels are at their lowest.

Sustainability of Yield:

- 6.232 Sustainability of supply will need further investigation and assessment by the applicant. It is unlikely that short-term pumping tests, carried out in winter months, will provide enough confidence of water supply in perpetuity. The means and methodology for investigating and presenting the sustainability of the abstractions needs to be considered in more detail. The EA have since commented that *'an abstraction licence does not guarantee the quality or quantity of the abstracted water. The abstraction licencing process assesses the abstractions impact on the environment, and does not consider the long-term sustainability of the abstraction'*.
- 6.233 Climate change must also be factored into the abstraction assessment and regime, along with groundwater protection measures (quantity and quality), to demonstrate the security of supply in the application. In addition to climate change the applicant should consider future development in the area and the potential stresses on the Tunbridge Wells Formation aquifer. It is important for them to present how this will be safeguarded against to protect the supply to the proposed development.

Contamination:

- 6.234 The application will require risk assessments identifying potential land contamination and polluting activities in the vicinity of the site. These must then be considered in relation to the proposed abstractions and any potentially complete pollutant linkages. As a first pass, it was discussed that the nearby petrol station located at the Hop Oast roundabout should be included along with a nearby former historical landfill, Horsham Waste Recycling Centre and the Hop Oast Depot.

Conclusion on Water Neutrality:

- 6.235 The comments of the HDC consultant hydrologist on the remaining issues have not been addressed and there are still significant issues with the water neutrality solution proposed. The scheme is for a large development of up to 800 homes and other uses, which will require 3 new boreholes (in addition to the existing borehole) to provide water supply. The HDC consultant hydrologist has commented that currently there is insufficient information to accept that this proposal will be water neutral. The HDC Environmental Team has also commented that their concerns regarding the aquifer recharge system and the impact this would have as water quality has not been addressed.



- 6.236 As per the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Habitat Regulations, the Council has consulted Natural England as the relevant statutory body. Having considered the Council's draft Appropriate Assessment, and the mitigation measures proposed, Natural England concurs with the conclusion the Council has drawn that it is not yet possible to ascertain that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley sites.
- 6.237 In summary, it is not possible to conclude with sufficient certainty that the development would not result in adverse impact on the integrity of the Arun Valley habitat sites. On this basis the development does not comply with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Act 2017, is contrary to Policy 31 of the HDPF and paragraph 186 of the NPPF, and must therefore be refused.
- 6.238 In reaching this conclusion officers have had regard to two recent appeal decisions which have indicated that water neutrality matters may potentially be managed by way of conditions and obligations that prevent development occurring until water neutrality is secured. However not all recent and similar appeal decisions have taken this approach. The decisions were reliant on a twin approach of relying on potential access into the emerging local authority-led offsetting scheme (SNOWS) as an alternative to a bespoke solution. The local authorities are in the process of finalising how access into this scheme will be prioritised. However it has been established that the purpose of the scheme is to deliver plan led development, and as the current proposals are speculative and not plan-led, there is no such opportunity to benefit from potential access to SNOWS credits.
- 6.239 Consequently, the only water neutrality solution being offered is that described above, for a development of considerable size and with an inevitably high water demand. In this context, and having regard to the aforementioned appeal decisions, officers are of the judgement that it would only be possible to address water neutrality by way of condition only once there is certainty that the required borehole yields and water quality are proven to be achievable and sustainable. For the reasons set out above this level of information and certainty has not been achieved therefore it would not be appropriate or reasonable to manage water neutrality by condition.

#### **Climate Change:**

- 6.240 Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The Planning statement details several measures which seek to build resilience to climate change and reduce carbon emissions, including:
- Use of energy efficient materials / construction methods,
  - All electric heating strategy with potential for roof mounted photo voltaic panels,
  - Delivery of 18.52 hectares of open space and green infrastructure,
  - A commitment to deliver at least 10% net gain in biodiversity,
  - Providing new habitats such as wetland areas, meadows, enhancement of existing grassland and woodland.
  - Provision of cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points.
  - Better integration with the surrounding cycle routes, bridle way and footpaths.
  - Limiting water consumption through the installation of water efficient appliances, grey water and rain water harvesting.
  - Non domestic buildings to be assessed under BREEAM, with an aspiration to comply with the 'Very Good' target.

- 6.241 Subject to the implementation of these measures (either within the design of the site or secured by condition); the application will suitably reduce the impact of the development on climate change in accordance with local and national policy.

**Other Matters:**

Air Quality:

- 6.242 The application site is not located within or close to either of the district's defined Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) at Storrington or Cowfold. The A24 and Worthing Road border the Site to the west and are the most prominent sources of air pollution. An Air Quality Assessment (AQA) has been submitted with this application. The assessment undertaken states that through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, residual effects of emissions to air from dust, construction vehicles and plant on local air quality during demolition and construction will be negligible. The measures include long and short stay cycle parking, electric vehicle charging stations, construction methods to reduce emissions and houses to use electric to provide heating and water. The assessment results also show that the impact of road traffic associated with the development on air quality, once completed and operational, would be negligible and not significant.
- 6.243 The key air quality consideration during the construction phase of development is dust emissions emanating from demolition, earthworks and construction. It is considered that mitigation in the form of a Construction Management Plan to include measures to reduce dust emissions (such as dust monitoring, dust suppression/screening etc) could reasonably be secured by condition.
- 6.244 The Council's Air Quality Officer has commented that details should be provided on particulate monitoring. In addition, details of the associated mitigation measures should be submitted. Subject to the inclusion of a conditions to secure details of particulate monitoring, an Air Quality Management Plan to demonstrate costed mitigation measures and a condition to secure a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), it is considered that the proposal would not significantly further reduce air quality in the local area, in accordance with Policy 24 of the HDPF and Paragraph 192 of the NPPF.

Minerals Safeguarding:

- 6.245 The application site is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (as defined in the WSCC Joint Minerals Local Plan 2018) for Brick Clay and Building Stone. As required by the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2021) a Minerals Resource Assessment has been submitted to identify whether economically viable mineral resources are present on site, and whether prior extraction is practicable. Policy M9 (iii) of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan requires that for non-mineral development (such as residential development), the decision-maker must determine whether the overriding need for the development outweighs the safeguarding of the mineral. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that prior extraction is not practicable or environmentally feasible.
- 6.246 WSCC Minerals and Waste Authority have commented that the submitted Assessment does not fully assess the quality and quantity of the mineral resources on this site. Preliminary site investigations are required and discussion around potential quantity of resource to be sterilised. WSCC have commented that the submitted Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) does not demonstrate any primary investigative techniques, however, it does refer to existing BGS borehole data (taken 100m to the south of the site) to broadly confirm that the site is underlain with both safeguarded mineral resources. The MRA does not provide an assessment as to the quality and quantity of the mineral resources and concludes that the extraction of these resources would be neither practical nor environmentally feasible. The assessment states that this down to the lack of local demand for both mineral resources. Additionally, given the existing landbank localised site constraints, including the presence of

underlying utilities, and the anticipated disruption that prior extraction would cause to the feasibility of the proposal, should it be undertaken.

- 6.247 WSCC further comment that the value of the application site with regard to its mineral reserves is currently not well understood as the submitted MRA solely relies on third party data to form the basis of its assessment. While the MWPA appreciates that the underlying brick clay is of relatively low priority, WSCC recommend that the applicant apply primary investigative techniques to form a more comprehensive understanding of the quality and quantity of the underlying resources should HDC deem this necessary when considering the need for the non-mineral development against the safeguarded resource.
- 6.248 WSCC have commented that it is down to Horsham District Council, as the determining authority, to assess whether the overriding need for the proposal outweighs the safeguarded resource, in accordance with Policy M9 of the Joint Minerals Plan. They advise consultation with the HDC Conservation Team.
- 6.249 The HDC Conservation Officer has commented that Policy M9 of the Joint Minerals Plan seeks to ensure the avoidance of sterilisation of the site for stone extraction. Horsham Stone does not have a reliable source. Most importantly, the stone suitable for use as roofing slabs has not been successfully quarried for some time. Many of the listed buildings in and around Horsham are roofed with Horsham stone and this will have to be replaced at some point in the future. It is therefore important that any source of stone is identified and that this stone is extracted before it is built over. The importance of Horsham stone as a building material goes further than the limited area it exists. Many listed churches and high status buildings are roofed with Horsham stone as far as the North Downs in Surrey and through West & East Sussex. The applicant is required to do everything possible to identify and excavate Horsham stone from this site before it is developed. As such, given the lack of details regarding the presence of Horsham stone on this site and its potential extraction, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy M9 of the Joint Minerals Plan.
- 6.250 WSCC Minerals and Waste Authority also commented that the north-western area of the residential element of the proposed development would be within 250m of the operational waste infrastructure at Hop Oast (including Horsham Recycling Centre), which is located on the western side of Worthing Road. Accordingly, the applicant should demonstrate that the proposed development would not prevent or prejudice the continued operation of the existing waste site, as required by Policy W2 of the Waste Local Plan (2014).
- 6.251 In response to this, the applicant has provided a Waste Infrastructure Assessment (WIA) that broadly concludes that the proposed development would be compatible with the safeguarded waste infrastructure, as required by Policy W2 of the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (2014). The WIA makes reference to the existing noise and dust emissions from the Depot, as well as combined highways impacts and air quality assessments, and concludes that, subject to mitigation measures, that there would be no significant environmental impacts from the operational waste infrastructure on the amenity of potential future residents.
- 6.252 WSCC have commented that they are broadly satisfied that the submitted WIA demonstrates that the proposed development would not result in the introduction of sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the operational waste infrastructure that may prevent or prejudice its continued operation.

#### Gas Pipeline:

- 6.253 Mapping systems indicate that there is a High Pressure Gas Pipeline which runs through the site from the east. The Land Use Parameter Plan indicates the route of the gas mains with a 3m easement. This is also indicated in the submitted indicative masterplans. Southern Gas Network have sent a standard response to the Council's consultation request which refers to their website. At this outline stage, the exact details of the proposal are not known.

The gas pipeline has been appropriately indicated in the submission with relevant easements. In the event of outline permission being granted, any future reserved matters application located within the gas pipeline area would need to indicate due consideration of the pipeline with relevant easement requirements.

Impact on Trees:

- 6.254 The Council's Arboriculturist has commented that the tree coverage at the Horsham Golf & Fitness site is vast and varies in condition and age from young saplings to mature specimens. There are numerous individual and groups of trees and parcels of woodland. Two veteran oak trees have been recorded (T29 and T35) at the site, but they do not appear to be affected by the proposal due to their location in the eastern section of the site, which is shown to be retained as a golf course.
- 6.255 Many Ash trees at the site have been severely affected by *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (Ash Dieback). Due to the poor condition of the ash trees at the site, regardless of the outcome of this outline application, it is evident that many mature ash trees will need to be removed as their condition deteriorates. Acute oak decline, a relatively new disease that affects oak trees, was also observed on several individual specimens within the main wooded areas at the site; it is likely that a high number of oak trees will also need to be removed whatever the outcome of the application.
- 6.256 The Arboriculturist goes on to say that there are some good-quality trees within the site's boundaries, but for the most part, the quality of the tree stock at the site is fair to poor. The change and current use of the site has likely affected the trees around the edges of the golf course due to the manicured nature of the golf course and the level of activity within the key rooting area of these trees. Most of the trees around on and around the edges of the course are showing clear signs of decline consistent with post-development stress and root disturbance. Several trees within the site's boundaries are protected by a TPO ref TPO/1411; none of the protected trees appears to be impacted by the proposal due to their location in the eastern section of the site, which is proposed to be retained as a golf course.
- 6.257 In relation to the overall site layout, as suggested in the Illustrative Masterplan Drawing Number 008-01, the Arboriculturist has commented that the development is reasonably favourable towards the mature trees that currently border the open areas within the site. The service roads for the proposed dwellings are shown to be located around the edge of the fields, the new homes and, more importantly, their rear gardens are in a central location away from any retained trees. This layout would reduce the threat of post-development pressure to have the trees at the site heavily pruned or possibly removed due to concerns about their proximity to the dwellings.
- 6.258 The proposal would not result in the loss of any Class A trees to facilitate the development. Three groups of category B modest quality trees a proposed to be felled, these being G3, G4 and G52. The trees within G3 and G4 are semi-mature specimens. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment suggest that some of these trees may be suitable for translocation and could be moved elsewhere on the site. In addition, 16 groups and 5 individual low quality category C trees are to be removed. 11 individual trees and three groups of category U trees are also to be removed. The Arboriculturist has commented that the trees to be removed are not of any special or particular merit. Subject to a robust tree planting program proportional to the number of trees being removed, these losses could be appropriately compensated for elsewhere at the site.
- 6.259 The Council's Arboricultural Officer has also commented that the proposed units located in a bundle of houses within the site to the northeast Green Lane are bounded by woodland.

The officer is concerned that future residents of these dwellings would experience issues with natural light, which would pressure to have the trees in the immediate vicinity reduced or possibly removed. The applicant has responded that consideration would be given to these comments at the detailed design stage and, in the event that planning permission is granted, addressed in future reserved matters applications. This is considered acceptable.

- 6.260 Policy SNP18 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan states that major development must provide a minimum of one new tree (conforming to British Standard BS 3936-1 / Standard 8-10cm girth) per 40m<sup>2</sup> of floor space created. This should be provided on-site or off-site within the Plan Area if there is nowhere suitable within the site. Measures will be implemented on any permissions granted to secure these trees and their survival. If these trees cannot be provided on site, and the applicant is unable to deliver the trees at an alternative location within the Plan Area, a commuted sum may be paid in lieu of tree planting.
- 6.261 At the outline stage, the exact layout of the proposal and the number of trees to be provided is not known. It is however clear that the proposal includes a significant number of proposed trees to be provided, including trees to the proposed streets. In the event that outline permission is granted, the subsequent reserved matters would need to indicate compliance with Policy SNP18, indicating the number of trees to be lost for each reserved matters area and the number of new trees to be provided. If there is a shortfall of trees to be provided, a commuted sum would need to be sought.

#### Land contamination

- 6.262 In support of the application, a Land Contamination report has been submitted. The report is prepared by RMA Environmental Ltd and is a Phase 1 Contamination Assessment. The Council's Environmental Health Officer originally commented that details were lacking from the report and that significant amendments were required. In response, the applicant submitted a response to the Environmental Health Officer's comments. The Environmental Health Officer commented that, whilst a number of his comments had been addressed, there was still an issue with imported material on the site and potential contamination.
- 6.263 The applicant's information states that: *'the imported infill material associated with the remodelling of the golf course was subject to a permit issued by the Environment Agency (December 2011) which confirmed that no contaminated materials were used for the infill of the site. The type of materials permitted are detailed within the permit and are known to be concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics, soil and stones. Based on this information, the infill material does not pose a risk as a potential source of contamination and does not need to be included in Table 4.1.'*
- 6.264 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has commented that they have photographic evidence which indicates that a significant amount of waste materials was imported onto the site c. June 2011, the quality of which, in their view, was questionable. The officer appreciates that this material was imported under a permit and was technically 'inert', however in their view inert does not mean that the material is uncontaminated as waste types classed as inert can include construction and demolition wastes which can include a low percentage of non-inert waste. This is allowed and indeed was reported to be present to the Environment Agency by council officers when the golf course was under construction. Given this, and type of waste material imported onto the site, some of the material has the potential to be contaminated. Given the above, Environmental Health Officers advise that the Phase 1 preliminary land contamination report is not sufficiently comprehensive as imported material should be a potential source of contamination and should be included in the preliminary risk assessment.
- 6.265 Officers have had regard to the lack of adequate details within Land Contamination Report relating to waste materials imported onto the site in the remodelling of the golf course, and also to the evidence of the Council's Environmental Health team. This provides a rounded

understanding of the likely risks of contamination on the site therefore in this instance it is considered that a more comprehensive Land Contamination Report addressing the matters evidenced by the Council's Environmental Health team can be provided by way of a condition. In this way development would be able to proceed with assurance that land contamination is being addressed in a comprehensive manner in accordance with Policy 24 of the HDPF (2015).

Legal Agreement:

- 6.266 In the event that planning permission were to be granted, Policy 39 of the HDPF requires new development to meet its infrastructure needs. For this development, obligations would be required in relation to sport and open space provision, a contribution towards improving health facilities in the area, off site highway, cycle and rights of way improvements and affordable housing. The agreement could also include obligations to secure the phasing of the development and delivery of the non-residential aspects of the site, such as the local centre and employment uses.
- 6.267 Although the applicant has confirmed a willingness to enter into a legal agreement to secure the necessary sums, such an agreement is not yet in place. The development is, therefore, contrary to Policy 39 of the HDPF.

Planning Balance and Conclusion:

- 6.268 In accordance with planning law, the starting point for the assessment of this proposal is to consider whether or not it accords with the provisions of the adopted development plan (comprising the HDPF and the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan). The site is not allocated for development in either of these plans, therefore in the first instance, it must be concluded that the development of the site for housing is not acceptable in principle.
- 6.269 As has been established within this report, the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites when calculated against the identified need, with a current supply of 2.9 years. As such, the provisions of paragraph 11d of the NPPF are engaged, which requires decision makers to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development (the tilted balance) unless any of the policies in the NPPF that seek to protect areas of particular importance (for instance habitat sites listed in NPPF paragraph 187) provide a clear reason to refuse the development being proposed. If this is the case, the decision maker must decide whether the harm being caused to the habitat sites outweighs the wider benefits of the proposal.
- 6.270 As per the Position Statement that was issued in September 2021, Natural England cannot conclude that existing water abstraction levels within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the species and habitats within the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. As such, in order to prevent further adverse harm to the Arun Valley sites, Natural England have required that developments within this water zone must not add to this impact, by demonstrating that they are 'water neutral'. As the applicant for this site has not been able to demonstrate a suitable package of mitigation measures that would achieve water neutrality, the Appropriate Assessment (required by Regulation 63 of the Habitat Regs 2017) has judged that the proposal will likely have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/ SPA /Ramsar sites. The proposal therefore is contrary to Paragraph 186 of the NPPF, which provides a clear reason to refuse the development. According to Paragraph 188 and limb (i) of Paragraph 11d, this means that the presumption in favour of sustainable development no longer applies, and the tilted balance of the decision is dis-engaged.
- 6.271 In the event the Paragraph 11d tilted balance is to be engaged in the determination of this application, then Paragraph 14 of the NPPF would also need to be considered. Paragraph 14 states that '*in situations where the presumption at Paragraph 11d applies to applications*

*involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:*

*(a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*

*(b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.'*

- 6.272 It is the Council's view that at present, the above criteria are all met. The Southwater NP was formally made in June 2021, so it will remain 'in date' until June 2026, thereby satisfying part (a). The Southwater NP was supported by a Housing Needs Assessment (by AECOM, Nov 2017) which recommended that a housing target falling in the range of 420 and 460 dwellings is required in Southwater to be delivered over the plan period. Policy SNP2 of the Southwater NP allocates a site for 422-450 homes, which meets the needs identified in the HNA, thereby satisfying part (b) of Paragraph 14.
- 6.273 The criteria of Paragraph 14 are therefore all satisfied meaning consideration would be required as to whether *'the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'*. Officers are of the view that the conflict with the Southwater NP in this instance does significantly and demonstrably outweigh the acknowledged benefits of the proposal. Therefore, development of this site for housing remains unacceptable at this time, even if water neutrality and flooding were to be demonstrated enabling the application of the 'tilted balance'. However, as water neutrality has not been demonstrated and flooding issues have not been resolved, the tilted balance at paragraph 11d is in any case disengaged.
- 6.274 Following the dis-engagement of the tilted balance, the remainder of the application must now be assessed on a 'flat' balance, but with an acknowledgement of the increased weight that must be afforded to the Council's 5-year housing land supply position, and the consequential diminished weight that must be afforded to Policies 4 and 26 of the HDPF. Whilst the site is not allocated for development in the adopted local plan, given the Council's inability to demonstrate a full 5-years supply of housing land, with a significant shortfall at 2.9 years supply, the benefits that an additional 800 houses (including a policy compliant level of affordable units) carries significant weight in favour of the proposal.
- 6.275 The proposed new sports and leisure facility, together with Horsham Football Club, would result in a new centre and dedicated areas for a multitude of sports as well as offering new homes for a sports charity, Horsham Hockey Club and the Golf College. This clearly would have benefits for the surrounding area, Horsham Town and the District as a whole and is also considered to be of significant weight in favour of the proposal.
- 6.276 Other benefits that the proposal offers including landscape enhancements, biodiversity net gain, pedestrian links to the existing PROW network, surface improvements to the existing PROW networks, SuDS systems, public open space, open space provision, a local centre, employment provision, community assets and play areas. These are judged as providing moderate weight in favour of the proposal.
- 6.278 However, the identified harm to the wider rural landscape and settlement coalescence that the proposal is judged to result in carries significant weight against the proposal. The applicant has also failed to demonstrate that the scheme is acceptable in relation to active travel. The scheme also lacks sufficient information in relation to flooding.
- 6.279 In addition, the application does not suitably or sustainably accommodate for education requirements of the future occupiers of the development. The scheme would also result in a detrimental impact on the amenity of the future residents of the development, in terms of noise impact. These issues also carry weight against the grant of outline planning permission.

- 6.280 The failure by the applicant to provide information to demonstrate that the proposal will not have an impact on the scarce Horsham Stone mineral resource is contrary to Policy M9 (iii) of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan which also carries weight against the proposal. Finally, whilst the application proposes a policy compliant level of affordable housing, this has not been secured in a legal agreement along with other requirements, including the health care contribution, therefore these obligations cannot be guaranteed, contrary to Policies 16 and 39 of the HDPF.
- 6.281 As a whole, it is acknowledged that the need for additional housing (including affordable housing) in the Horsham District is pressing, and that the provision of up to 800 homes and the sports offer carry significant weight in favour of the proposal. However, the pursuit of housing supply and the provision of sports and leisure facilities results in significant harm when assessed against the current development plan and NPPF when read as a whole.
- 6.282 This, coupled with the failure of the applicant to demonstrate that the development will be appropriate in terms of active travel, amenity impact for future occupiers of the development and existing residents, education provision, the failure to secure affordable housing and other requirements in a legal agreement, and to demonstrate that the development will not inappropriately sterilise the site from minerals extraction, leads to the conclusion that on balance, the proposed development is not in accordance with the development plan or NPPF when read as a whole, and as a result must be refused. The failure of the applicant to propose satisfactory mitigation in terms of water neutrality to protect the integrity of habitat sites in the Arun Valley also contributes to the conclusion that the proposal must be refused. The precise reasons for the Council's refusal are provided below.

#### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

- 6.283 Horsham District Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which took effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017. **This development constitutes CIL liable development.** In the case of outline applications the CIL charge will be calculated at the relevant reserved matters stage.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

- 1 The proposed development is located beyond a defined built-up area boundary, involving a site not allocated for development within the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) or the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031). The proposed development, further, is not considered to represent an essential form of development to a countryside location, with the proposed development deemed contrary to the overarching spatial strategy of the development plan outlined at Policies 2, 3 and 4 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and countryside protection policy contained within Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), together with the recommendations of the Council's Facilitating Appropriate Development (2022) document. The scheme is also contrary to the core principles of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (Policy SNP1) in that it results in a settlement beyond the built area boundary (SNP1.1b), detracts from Southwater village as a single centre settlement (SNP1.1a) and results in coalescence between the settlements of Southwater, Tower Hill and Horsham contrary to Policy 27 of the HDPF and Policy SNP1.3a of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. Notwithstanding the absence of a five-year land housing supply and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023 at paragraph 11(d)), there are deemed to be no material considerations which would outweigh conflict with development plan policies in these regards.



- 2 Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate with a sufficient degree of certainty that the proposed development would not contribute to an existing adverse effect upon the integrity of the internationally designated Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar sites by way of increased water abstraction, contrary to Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 179 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).
- 3 Insufficient information has been provided in respect of access arrangements and the proposed site levels to fully understand the landscape impact of the proposals and ascertain whether the landscape impacts are capable of being mitigated to an acceptable degree. Notwithstanding this, based on the submitted information the provision of development in this location, at the scale proposed, would significantly diminish the rural and tranquil character of this particular part of the landscape, creating a discordant and uncharacteristically urbanised environment harming the character and visual amenity of the countryside. The development is, therefore, contrary to the paragraph 180 of the NPPF, Policy SNP17 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031) and Policies 25 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
- 4 The application has failed to demonstrate that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users. The proposed routes for active travel to a range of key amenities are not suitable or attractive for general everyday use in terms of safety and personal security. Moreover, the necessary active travel infrastructure to support a sustainable form of development in this location is not proposed nor considered deliverable at the current time, such that the development will have a high reliance on motorised vehicles even for short journeys. The supporting off-site infrastructure to serve this development does not conform with the design standards in LTN 1/20 and Inclusive Mobility, and the proposed development is therefore contrary to the national policy requirement to promote sustainable transport as set out in NPPF paragraphs 108, 109, 114, 115 and 119 and Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
- 5 The proposed development is subject to medium and high risk surface water flooding, as indicated on maps held by the Environmental Agency, and as such the development may be at direct risk of flooding, and may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. In the absence of a sequential test the proposed development is considered contrary to Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and paragraphs 165, 168 and 173 of the NPPF (December 2023). In addition, the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy are not in accordance with the NPPF, PPG Flood risk and coastal change or WSCC LLFA SuDS Policies or Policies 35 and 38 Horsham District Planning Framework.
- 6 Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the amenity of the future occupants of the development would not be detrimentally impacted by noise disturbance from Worthing Road and the A24 contrary to and Policies 32 and 33 of Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
- 7 The proposal does not include sufficient provision for the secondary educational needs of the future occupants of this development and is unsustainably located in relation to primary schools in the area. The development therefore fails to satisfactorily address the educational need it would generate in a sustainable manner contrary to Policy 39 of Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).
- 8 The site is within an area identified for Minerals Safeguarding for Horsham Stone. Insufficient information has been presented to demonstrate that the proposed

development would not result in sterilisation of these mineral resources on site, contrary to Policy M9 (iii) of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018).

- 9 The proposed development has not been accompanied by a completed s106 Legal Agreement, thereby does not secure the 35% of units required to be provided as affordable housing units or other obligations required to make the development acceptable. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies 16 and 39 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), as it has not been demonstrated how the infrastructure needs of the development would be met.

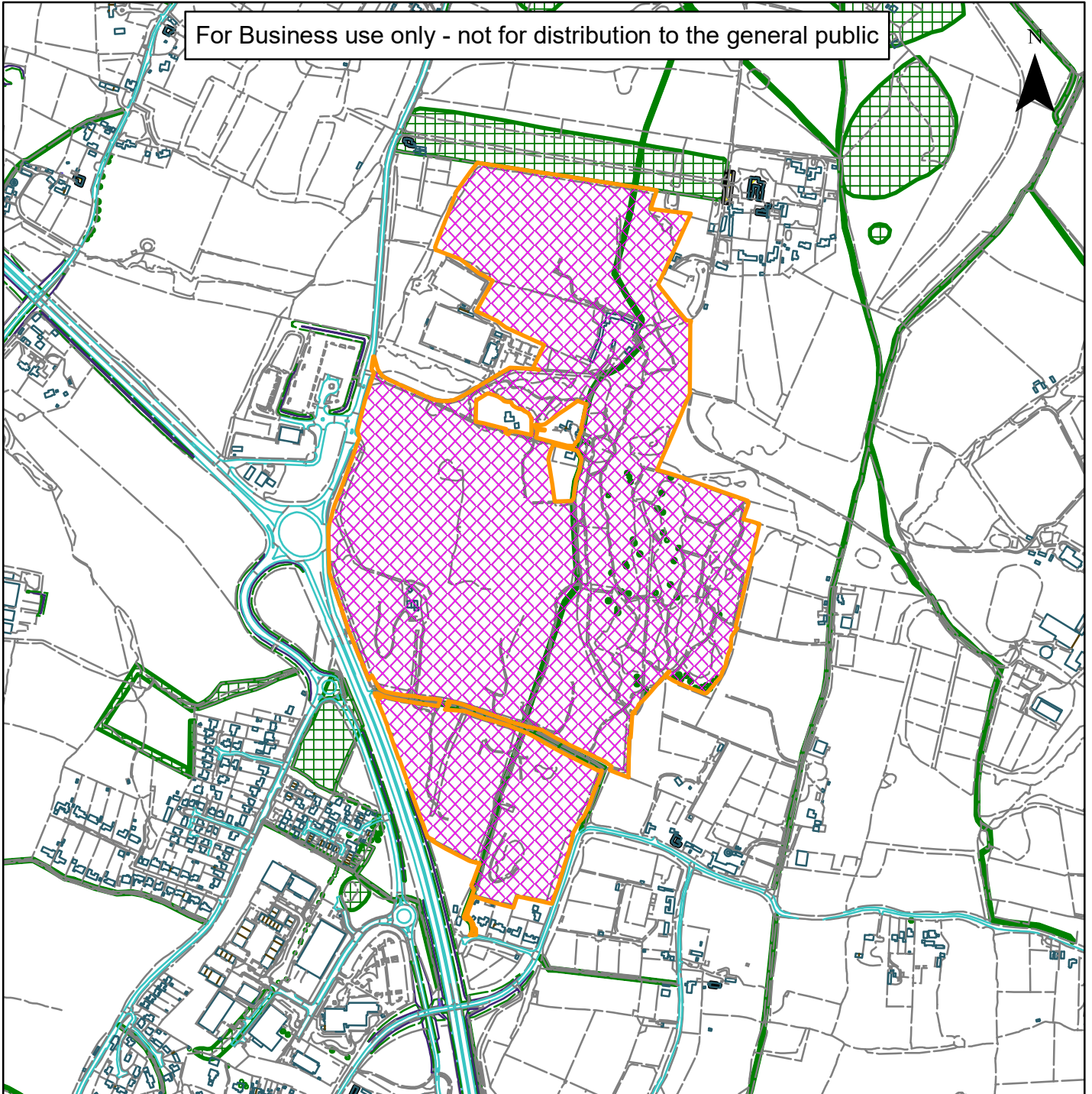
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## Horsham District Council

Horsham Golf Park, Denne Park, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0AX

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Department	
Comments	
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