

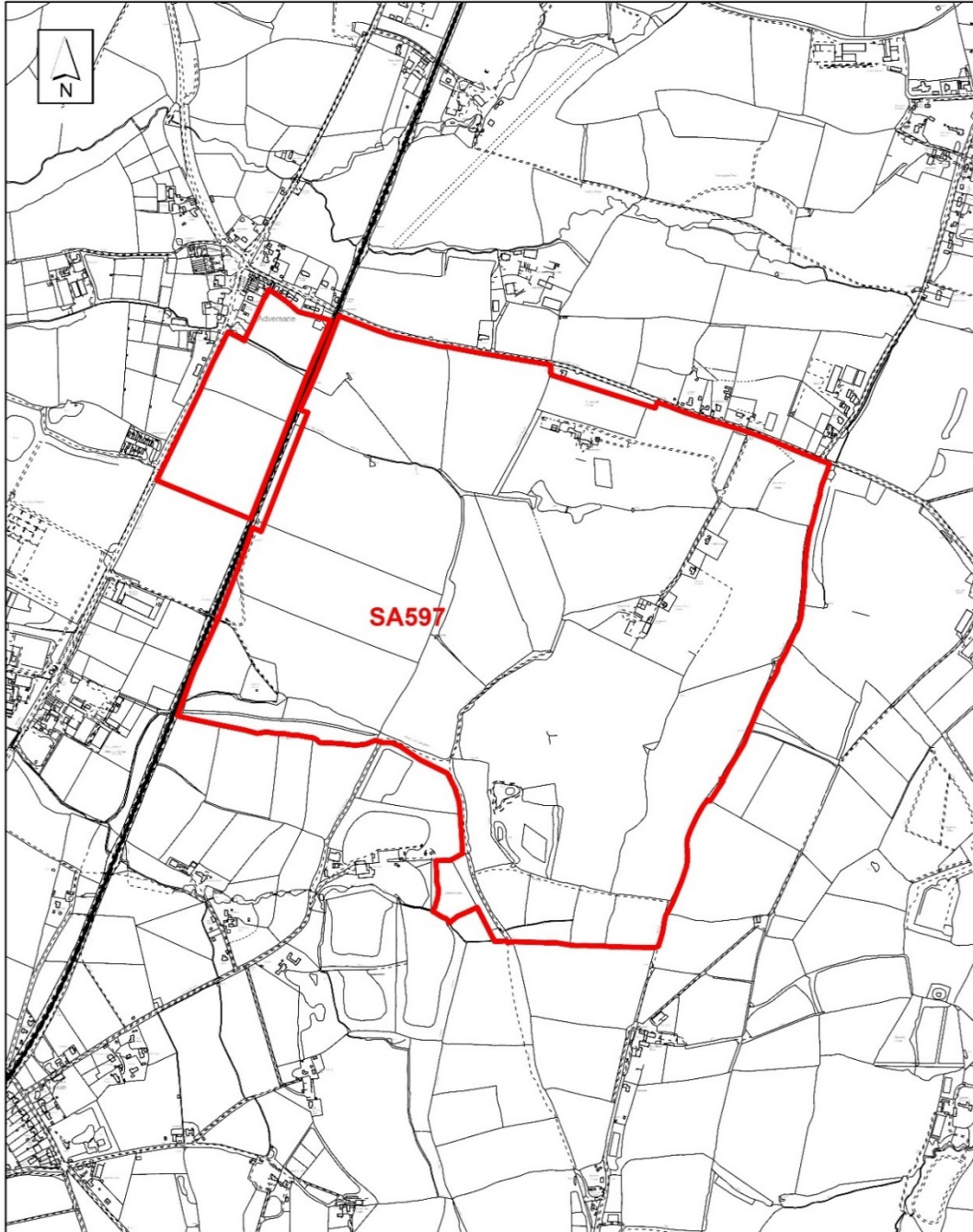
# Strategic site assessments

Promoted sites only

**Site Name: Land at Adversane  
(Kingswood)**

**SA597**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL.  
Barbara Childs : Director of Place

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**Local Plan Review 2023  
Land at Adversane**

Reference No :

Date: 15 November 2023

Drawing No :

Scale : 1:12,000 at A4

Revisions :

**Site Area:**

**Approx 150 hectares**

<p><b>Site Description:</b></p>	<p>The site is currently greenfield and comprises primarily pasture and arable land interspersed with hedgerows and some smaller areas of woodland. The landscape is gently undulating. The site is more enclosed to the east of the site and is open in nature on the west of the proposed site close to the A29. The existing settlement of Adversane is located close to the north west corner of the site. Brinsbury College is located to the southwest.</p>
<p><b>Summary of Proposal:</b></p>	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <p>The site has been proposed as a strategic scale allocation to deliver around 2,850 homes. The promoters have indicated that they envisage the site to be fully delivered by 2040, meaning that the majority of development would occur during the plan period. A range of different types and sizes would be provided with the promoters suggesting that retirement units and self-build plots could be delivered.</p> <p>The site promoters indicate the delivery of 35% affordable housing and have identified where 15 gypsy and traveller pitches could be delivered. The promoters have also indicated an extension to the site is possible beyond the plan period that would enable the delivery of a further 1,150 homes.</p> <p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>Land west of the A29 already had permission for employment development which would form the basis of an employment centre within the development. A renewed scheme has been sought independent of the promotion of the site through the Local Plan. This would link to the education and existing employment at / around Brinsbury college and would continue to draw on these links. Other employment would be generated from other uses on site such as education and retail.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>The proposed development aims to provide day to day facilities together with employment to minimise the need for travel, with the provision of pedestrian and cycle networks. In terms of travel outside the village, although land is to be safeguarded for a new railway station, a railway station is not proposed at this point in time. Bus services are proposed to Billingshurst and Horsham to provide access to the rail network. A range of road upgrades are proposed, this includes a new bridge over the railway removing the need to traverse the level crossing enabling its closure (part of the re-routing of the B2133). Other transport upgrades are proposed offsite including at Five Oaks and the Washington roundabout.</p> <p><u>Education and Community</u></p> <p>The proposal includes the provision of two primary schools and one secondary school being provided on site. In addition new retail would be provided on a new high street and in local centres across the site. The proposal also includes open space, community facilities, a library, a hotel, and the potential for health care provision should this be required by the NHS Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG).</p>

	<p><u>Net zero carbon</u></p> <p>The promoters indicate development would be net zero carbon ready by 2025 and will seek to introduce renewable energy technology throughout the site and exclude gas boilers and gas mains from the development. The promoters also identify the potential for localised on-site renewable energy production as well as the opportunity for the installation of combined heat and power at Kingswood Works.</p>
<p><b>Site Assessment against Criteria</b></p>	
<p><i>Environmental considerations</i></p>	
<p><b>Landscape:</b></p>	
<p>Although attractive, the landscape in the area has not been designated as being of landscape importance. Much of the site is also tranquil in nature. Nevertheless, it is recognised that a development of this scale will have significant changes on the settlement pattern and the wider rural character in this area.</p> <p>The landscape in the area is not designated and the Council's Landscape Capacity Assessment indicates that the majority of the site has a moderate capacity to accommodate strategic scale development without adverse impacts subject to suitable design and mitigation measures.</p> <p>There is considered to be less ability to accommodate development in the far north western corner of the site, adjacent to the existing hamlet of Adversane. Similarly, development within the south west corner of the site, on additional land submitted to be considered for development is not considered to be able to accommodate development on landscape grounds.</p> <p>The site has potential to impact on the setting of the South Downs National Park and care would need to be taken to mitigate against any harmful views into and out of the South Downs National Park and reduce the appearance of coalescence with nearby settlements. The promoters have provided evidence of some work in relation to these matters. A full landscape and visual impact assessment would be required in the event that an application were to be submitted.</p> <p>Overall, due to the scale of development and potential impact on the landscape, unfavourable impacts are concluded. However it is recognised that the masterplanning framework partially avoids locating development in the most sensitive land parcels, and there is good prospect of mitigating the more significant landscape impacts.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity:</b></p>	
<p>The site contains a number of biodiversity assets, such as areas of ancient woodland, which are located on the northern edge of the site and in the south west of the site. These would be retained as part of the proposals for green infrastructure on the site.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>

<p>Initial ecological survey work has been undertaken which has identified the presence of protected species on the site. This includes the presence of bat species including Barbastelle bats (the site lies within a bat sustenance zone for the internationally protected Mens woodland), birds and badgers. The ecological appraisal also recognises that the Knepp Estate is relatively close to the site and there is also the potential for foraging bats (Barbastelle and Bechstein) to use this site. The site is also close to the Mens woodland which is identified as being of international importance, and there is therefore the potential for development in this location to impact upon the integrity of this site through acid deposition and/or impacts from transport emissions, particularly in the short to medium term. Development in this location would require a detailed Habitats Regulation Assessment.</p> <p>Initial calculations based on an indicative masterplan would suggest that a biodiversity net gain of 15% could be provided on site – above that required by emerging national policy. The promoters indicate a commitment to further increasing biodiversity net gain as development plans for the site evolve.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there are significant issues with regards biodiversity that need to be addressed in the event that this land is allocated for development. This includes the impact of a new population in an area that does have importance for biodiversity. Subject to further development of the masterplan, it is considered that there is reasonable prospect of the impacts being mitigated. Given the uncertainties an unfavourable impact is assessed at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:</b></p>	
<p>The north-western part of the site lies adjacent to the Conservation Area that contains the hamlet of Adversane. The currently rural setting informs the significance of this designation. The proposed development has the potential to impact on the significance of this site. There are also 10 Grade 2 listed buildings of which built development is concluded as having a clearly significant impact on one of the properties.</p> <p>Any development will need to take account of the quantum of development in and around the conservation area, heights of development / views, the rural setting and the impact of increased traffic on the A29. Development will need to demonstrate how the rural character and green routes can be retained through the development. However the presence of the A29 does provide some separation of the site from the existing conservation area.</p> <p>The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area for prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval remains. There is potential for archaeological remains from all eras to be found on and around the site. The promoters have undertaken work to investigate the presence of archaeological features. It found that it was unlikely that any features found would need to be preserved in-situ but that further work would be needed to support the submission of a planning application.</p> <p>Given the sensitivities of the adjoining conservation area and the potential</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>

<p>impact on a number of listed buildings an unfavourable impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):</b></p>	
<p>The site is also located in a minerals safeguarding area for brick clay and building stone. These designations cover large parts of the district and are not a significant constraint to the site coming forward.</p> <p>The site is close to the A29 and B2133. There are some limited noise impacts from these roads and the railway which bisects the site north south, but the eastern section of the site is currently very tranquil. The site promoter has however undertaken preliminary noise assessments which indicate that the site has the ability to accommodate development without significant adverse impacts</p> <p>The site is located away from any existing air quality management areas. Preliminary air quality assessments have been submitted which indicate that the site has the ability to accommodate development without significant adverse impacts, although more detail is required in relation to ecological impacts as set out in the biodiversity section above.</p> <p>Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the 'Arun Valley Sites'). The promoters indicate a desire to achieve water neutrality on the site albeit details have not been submitted as to how this would be achieved. Any allocation would therefore need to be in conformity with the wider Strategic Solution which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality. There are no watercourses within the site. In terms of foul water drainage it will be necessary as a minimum to provide an upgrade to the existing sewage treatment facilities and the sewage network. Further feedback should be sought from southern water as to the type and nature of waste water treatment.</p> <p>Overall, a neutral impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Flooding / Drainage:</b></p>	
<p>The site is located in Flood Zone 1, with a low risk of tidal and fluvial flooding – there are no major water courses on the site. The site is also assessed as being at low risk of flooding from sewer, groundwater, and artificial sources. The site promoters have undertaken a detailed initial flood risk assessment. The majority of flood flow routes through the site originate within the site itself, and the proposed drainage strategy would lead to restricted flows leaving the site, improving the current situation.</p> <p>A range of flood attenuation measures are proposed which take account of climate change and allow for a 40% increase in rainfall intensities due to climate change and would ensure that the rate of run off / attenuation remains</p>	<p>Favourable</p>

<p>as for a greenfield site. A number of large-scale SuDS, including detention basins, ponds, and swales, provide the bulk of the attenuation requirement.</p> <p>Given the limited existing flood risk, and proposed enhancement a small favourable impact is concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoters indicate a commitment to be net zero carbon ready by 2025 and will seek to introduce renewable energy technology throughout the site and exclude gas boilers and gas mains from the development. The promoters also identify the potential for localised on-site renewable energy production as well as the opportunity for the installation of combined heat and power at Kingswood Works.</p> <p>The promoters also indicate that Electric Vehicle charging points would be provided per every house together with an e-bike. By having a compact, dense development with a number of services and facilities accessible within walking distance of almost all residents, the idea of trip internalisation is promoted. It is thought that this may reduce the use of private vehicles/ increase the amount of trips made by sustainable modes. However it is expected that some travel outside the new development will take place and this cannot be relied up solely to reduce climate change impacts. It is recognised that improvements to public transport are proposed to help offset this impact.</p> <p>Overall, a favourable impact is concluded at this stage</p>	<p>Favourable</p>
<p><b>Social considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Housing:</b></p>	
<p>In total a development of around 2,850 homes is proposed. This would have the potential to deliver a large portion of the Council's housing requirement, albeit some of the housing provision would be provided beyond the plan period.</p> <p>A range of different types and sizes would be provided with the promoters suggesting that retirement units and self-build plots could be delivered. The promoters indicate a commitment to providing a policy compliant 35% of affordable housing with the mix reflecting local need identified in the SHMA. The promoters indicate that the homes would be delivered on a tenure-blind basis.</p> <p>15 gypsy and traveller pitches would be provided, helping to meet unmet needs.</p> <p>At this stage very positive impacts are concluded.</p>	<p>Very Positive</p>
<p><b>Education:</b></p>	
<p>The proposal would seek to meet education needs within the site, with two primary schools catering for two forms of entry (FE) to be provided. A 6FE secondary school would also be provided. SEN needs would be met within</p>	<p>Very Positive</p>

<p>the proposed schools.</p> <p>Discussions with West Sussex County Council indicates if the site were allocated, there would be a need to provide the secondary school at an early stage to help meet the needs of the site, as well as wider needs for secondary education in the wider area. The primary schooling offer would meet the needs of the development. There is also the potential for this site to help ensure the delivery of wider education needs across the District, given that the nearby secondary school at the Weald is approaching capacity.</p> <p>The site is also linked with Brinsbury College which provides post-16 education, together with vocational links with the existing businesses. There is therefore opportunity for this to be expanded, and the college has expressed this aspiration. A very positive impact is therefore concluded at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Health:</b></p>	
<p>Part of the concept for the proposed development is to prioritise active ways of travel (including walking and cycling) over car borne travel in particular (for example through innovative street and parking design), and encourage 'local living' whereby many trips can be made within the neighbourhood.</p> <p>The promoters would seek to deliver a health centre as part of the proposed development, within the centre of the settlement. This would have the potential to meet some wider needs as well as that from within the settlement. However, in common with other strategic site proposals, the extent and form of future health provision would necessarily be informed through further discussions with the NHS Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG) and discussions with existing providers.</p> <p>Overall, it is recognised that the promoter has a clear commitment to promotion of healthy lifestyles and provision of local healthcare on site. There is however uncertainty over the NHS Integrated Care Board supporting on-site facilities, and in the short term as a minimum there is likely to be a need to travel to Billingshurst GP practice. At this stage the impact is concluded as favourable.</p>	Favourable
<p><b>Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:</b></p>	
<p>A range of different facilities are proposed to be provided. This would include leisure facilities (gym, spa, pool) provided as part of a proposed hotel, a library and community hall. The promoters also seek the provision of allotments, accessible natural green space, as well as sports playing fields and different types of equipped play space. The current masterplan shows a slight deficit against some open space requirements and further work would be necessary to address this. It is not envisaged that this could not be resolved.</p> <p>Whilst the provision of these features will help deliver community facilities, the precise role they will play in delivering a cohesive community is less clearly expressed and this together with the more limited provision of open</p>	Neutral

<p>space than some proposed new settlements leads to a neutral impact at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Transport:</b></p>	
<p><u>Walking and cycling</u></p> <p>The site promoters envisage active travel forming a large proportion of the trips generated by the development, with a compact settlement including employment and other facilities, and the creation of walking and cycling routes provided both within and beyond the settlement as evidence to support this. It is stated 80% of residents would be within a 5 minute walk from the village centre.</p> <p>The promoter states junctions will be designed for cyclists with clear signage of pedestrian and cycle routes. Other features include cycle parking including facilities for non-standard cycles, safe routes to school and e-bikes for all homes. There is however a lack of certainty as to how pedestrian and cycle routes beyond the site can be clearly delivered at this stage.</p> <p><u>Public Transport</u></p> <p>The site has a railway line which passes through the site roughly north / south. This route (the Arun valley line) which links London to the south coast. The nearest station to the site is in Billingshurst roughly 4km by road from the centre of the site. Whilst the promoters seek to safeguard land to allow for the creation of a railway station for the new settlement, there is no prospect of this being deliverable within the plan period, due to the need to upgrade the line to the north before additional stations can be provided.</p> <p>The site promoter states that a bus service would be introduced, including to Billingshurst, which would allow for access to the current rail network. The vision ensures that bus stops would be within 400m of all residents.</p> <p><u>Road Transport</u></p> <p>The site promoter has undertaken extensive surveys to identify key impacts on the road network and necessary upgrades. Mitigation measures with a cost estimated at £40million have been costed into the proposals. The site is located on the A29 which provides a north south link to the coast and towards Horsham and Crawley on the eastern side of the District. The B2133 provides south eastern link to the A24 which is the main north south route through the District.</p> <p>A new road would be created from a new roundabout on the A29 that would link to the B2133 in the north-eastern part of the site. This would form the central thoroughfare of the new settlement and would involve the creation of a bridge over the existing railway line. This re-routing would allow the current B2133/railway line level crossing to be shut, providing safety benefits as well as a more consistent flow of traffic. Network Rail have indicated support for this outcome and have agreed, in principle, the location of the bridge.</p> <p>Transport work submitted by the site promoters and reviewed by WSCC identify that a number of road junctions in and around the site would be over</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>



<p>capacity and would require mitigation. This includes proposed junction upgrades at Five Oaks (A29/A264), Washington (A24/A283) and Pulborough (A29/A283). There remain uncertainties as to the extent that the proposed upgrades at Pulborough will provide the necessary mitigation that meets WSCC requirements.</p> <p>Whilst it is clear that much detailed consideration of transport impacts has taken place, there remain concerns that the rates of trip internalisation are overly ambitious, given that residents are likely to need to access employment opportunities and other services outside of the development, while trips will also be generated by the employment and retail offer encouraging non-residents to travel into the development. As such, concern is raised that private vehicle usage will be higher than predicted and this is shared by West Sussex County Council (WSCC), as Highways Authority. This together with the uncertainties of road mitigation lead to a conclusion of unfavourable impacts at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Other infrastructure:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoters identify the importance of superfast broadband and have made enquiries to telecoms providers with positive feedback received.</p> <p>Local upgrades to the electricity network are needed to enable the delivery of early development phases and further provision may be needed to meet the needs of the whole site. SSE have indicated capacity is limited in respect of the electricity supply in the west of the District which may require, once all short-term fixes have been assigned, a major capital scheme for reinforcement works that would take several years to complete. This may have an impact on housing delivery rates until greater certainty is provided on this matter.</p> <p>Water and sewerage upgrades would be needed to ensure that there is no adverse impacts on service to existing communities and the promoters would be expected to work with statutory bodies to achieve this. While a gas connection is available, the promoters wish to avoid the use of gas within the development in line with their aspirations to achieve zero carbon.</p> <p>Taking account of the potential need to upgrade the electricity supply and the uncertainties around this an unfavourable impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b><i>Economic considerations</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Economy:</b></p>	
<p>The promoters seek to achieve the Council's aspiration for one job per home. Although not wholly met they have identified where space for around 2,450 jobs would be provided in a mix of different buildings and sectors. This includes the development of Kingswood Works, an office/industrial area to be located adjacent to the A29 on the west of the site. This area already has an unimplemented permission for such uses (but would need to be amended in order to bring in access for the rest of the site).</p>	<p>Favourable</p>

<p>Jobs would be created in other premises, including in schools and other civic buildings, hotel and leisure facilities, as well as in mixed use office and retail buildings located within the centre of the settlement. An allowance has been made by the promoters for 300 jobs to be provided by live/work units or home-working but further details are not known at this stage. A number of jobs would also be provided during the construction phases of development.</p> <p>Delivery of this site would provide additional employment land and jobs in the District and it is considered the promoters have a clear vision to achieve this. Overall favourable impacts are concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Retail:</b></p>	
<p>Retail would be concentrated along the High Street, with small amounts provided in three smaller centres. The retail elements would be walkable for the majority of residents, reducing the need to travel by private vehicle. The site promoter has stated that the retail offer would build organically during each development phase of the scheme.</p> <p>Residents would have to travel outside of the settlement to access a greater range of retail provision. Retail impact analysis undertaken by the promoters indicate that the scheme could provide additional trade for retail in Billingshurst (or other secondary and local centres) rather than it being a negative impact.</p> <p>Overall, favourable impacts are concluded.</p>	Favourable
<p><b>Further considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Deliverability and Viability:</b></p>	
<p>The land is in the ownership of three landholders with agreements in place for Our Place to promote the site for development. Land ownership is therefore not considered to be a constraint to development.</p> <p>The promoter has indicated that around 2,500 homes could be delivered within the plan period, albeit it would be possible (depending on market demand) to increase the delivery pace. It is proposed that Our Place would be the master developer but that there would be capacity for other developers to assist in delivering the site. Whilst in the longer term, it is considered a sustainable new community would be delivered, this will (as for any new settlement) take time to emerge. There would be reliance on existing community facilities to some degree, particularly in the early phases of any development.</p> <p>The promoters have submitted viability information which indicates that the scheme would be viable with 35% provision of affordable housing.</p> <p>The promoters have undertaken market absorption work which suggests that the quantum of development sought can be accommodated in the local</p>	Neutral

<p>housing market, taking into account the potential for development in Billingshurst. Work undertaken by the Council's own consultants questions how realistic it is for the local housing market to absorb delivery of housing across a number of strategic sites in this area at the same time, and that consecutive build out periods may be more realistic, potentially lowering the level of housing which could be accommodated in the plan period. The Council would therefore have to work with site promoters to ensure that delivery would not be adversely impacted if multiple allocations were recommended.</p> <p>At this stage a neutral impact is concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Development Quality:</b></p>	
<p>The vision of the site promoters is to create a sustainable new settlement that will grow over a 20 - 25 year period and provide residents with social infrastructure and job opportunities.</p> <p>The promoters wish to create a 'design exemplar' taking into account the Sussex vernacular. Development would be relatively dense, with the indicative layout showing the retention of key landscape features and biodiversity assets. A number of design and landscape plans have been provided to the Council, with detailed consideration of this issue.</p> <p>The promoters wish to establish what they term the 'Kingswood Legacy Trust' in order to secure the ownership of land and key buildings for long-term community benefit and to enable facilities and business to be successful. At this stage limited evidence has been provided regarding engagement with existing communities other than a local website. The promoters indicate a desire to work with residents of the new settlement, particularly in relation to the creation of the Kingswood Legacy Trust. Overall however, the proposed development quality is considered to be favourable.</p>	<p>Favourable</p>
<p><b>Site Assessment Summary &amp; Recommendation</b></p>	
<p>Allocation of this site would have benefits in bringing forward a significant level of residential accommodation that would help in meeting identified housing needs including a range of housing types and sizes. Evidence indicates that 35% affordable housing can be provided. The development would also seek to deliver substantial amounts of employment uses including on land which has already gained planning permission for business development. The site is relatively well located on the A29, but is relatively distant from the main employment settlements of Horsham and Crawley, which is the key focus of housing demand and economic growth. The site is also relatively distant from the south coast, albeit the B2133 provides a road connection to the south of the district along with the A29.</p> <p>The development would deliver of a range of community, retail, health and recreation facilities, which would help meet the everyday needs of residents. The delivery of primary and secondary education provision would help to address needs created by the development as well as needs for the wider area. Whilst some of this provision would be delivered early on to help the formation of a new community, the nature of the development as a relatively small new settlement will mean it will inevitably take some time to achieve a 'critical mass' with reliance on external services and facilities to a greater or lesser extent during the plan period.</p>	

There is also a clear commitment to delivering a zero carbon and energy efficient development. It is however considered that new residents would still need to travel beyond the site for some of their needs. Whilst the site promoter states that high levels of internalisation could be achieved, this does not reflect current travel patterns in similarly sized settlements in the District, and the extent to which this can be achieved is therefore uncertain.

The proposals indicate that they would deliver public open spaces, as well as formal recreation areas would support healthy lifestyles. The compact nature of the site would help to support active modes of travel and reduce the need for internal trips within the settlement to be made by private vehicles. However the level of open space is proposed is more limited than other comparable sized strategic allocations, and there is less clarity on how open spaces would be provided compared with other elements of the development proposal.

Although attractive, the landscape in the area has not been designated as being of landscape importance. Much of the site is also tranquil in nature. Nevertheless, it is recognised that a development of this scale will have significant changes on the settlement pattern and the wider rural character in this area. It is recognised that the masterplanning framework partially avoids locating development in the most sensitive land parcels, and there is good prospect of mitigating the more significant landscape impacts. There are limited risks from flooding with potential enhancements identified.

Development in this location would need to address the impact of development on the nearby Mens woodland, which is of international importance for nature conservation. This includes consideration of both loss of feeding grounds and the transport impacts on air quality. It is however recognised that the promoters have indicated that a 15% biodiversity net gain can be delivered on site through a range of different measures.

In terms of built heritage, this site is close to Adversane Conservation Area. Any development would need to address the impacts on the nearby Conservation Area.

The development proposals seek to promote walking and cycling and enhancements to public transport. While it is noted that land would be safeguarded for a railway station, there is no certainty this can be delivered due to the need to upgrade the line to the north before additional stations can be provided on this line.

There may also be potential for new bus services and links to Billingshurst railway station, and opportunity for new bus services to significantly reduce private car trips. However, the exploration of these opportunities appears to be limited at this stage.

A new road would be created from a new roundabout on the A29 that would link to the B2133 in the north-eastern part of the site. This would form the central thoroughfare of the new settlement and would involve the creation of a bridge over the existing railway line. This re-routing would allow the current B2133/railway line level crossing to be shut, providing safety benefits as well as a more consistent flow of traffic. Network Rail have indicated support for this outcome and have agreed, in principle, the location of the bridge.

Whilst there is a focus on securing sustainable transport solutions, as set out above it considered that the promoter's views about trip internalisation are too optimistic and residents would still be likely to travel using private vehicles to access a wider range of services and employment opportunities. Transport modelling has indicated that a number of road junctions would be

overcapacity (including at Five Oaks, Pulborough and at Washington). The site promoters have provided detail of potential mitigation measures. However further detailed modelling would be required to understand the precise cumulative impacts together with other sites identified for development. At this stage there therefore remains some uncertainty as to the extent to which these will be effective.

Overall, evidence provided to the Council to date indicates that this site would be able to deliver homes in the plan period, and that the proposals are viable. Whilst the site promoters indicate that 2,500 homes could come forward in the plan period, this is considered to be optimistic taking account of the lead-in times for strategic scale development such as the provision of a new railway bridge to facilitate delivery of the full scheme. The Council's own Housing Delivery study indicates that if both East of Billingshurst and Adversane were allocated, the level of homes the housing market could accommodate in this part of the District would further reduce the number of homes this site could deliver during the plan period.

**Officer Recommendation:**

This site has a number of positive qualities that would help contribute to meeting identified housing and other development needs subject to mitigation of transport, landscape, biodiversity and heritage impacts. However, this site is geographically less well connected to the settlements of Horsham, Crawley and the south coast and the site therefore performs less well in terms of how it can meet District and wider sub regional requirements.

The site is detached from any existing established settlement and would be a village-size settlement with more limited opportunity for self-containment. It scores less well in the Sustainability Appraisal than settlement extension sites, reflecting the high level of challenge there would be in achieving sustainable travel habits and access to facilities, particularly in the early phases of development. Given the degree to which water neutrality has prevented, and will continue to limit, any significant housing growth, the additional growth that this site would yield cannot at this time be supported, given there are more sustainable alternatives.

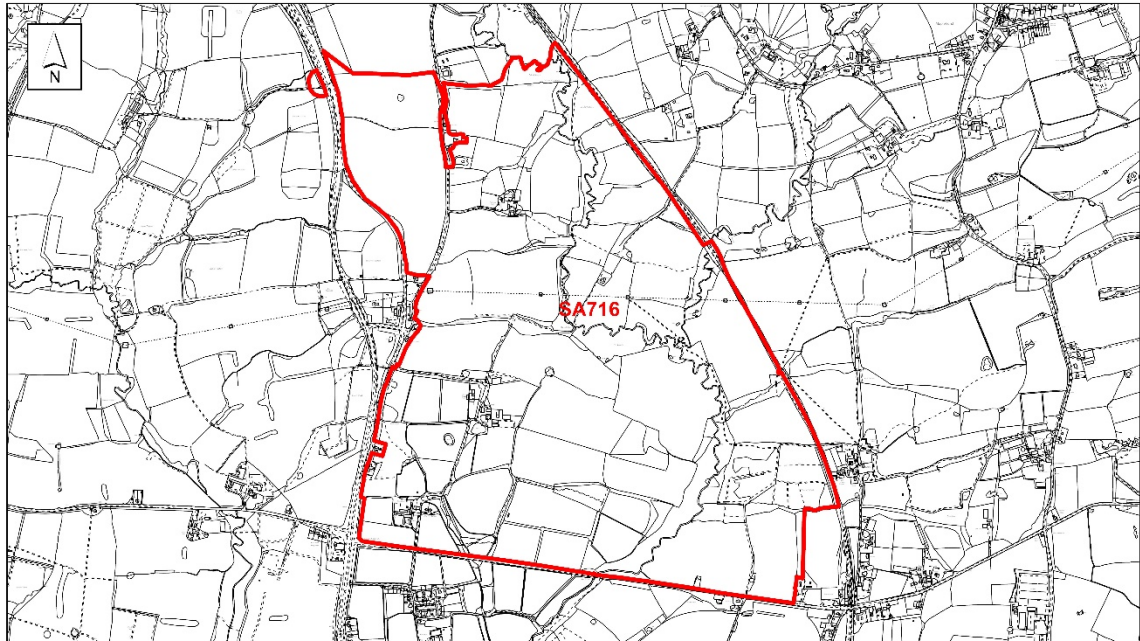
In light of the officer recommendation to allocate Land East of Billingshurst, and evidence that the two sites combined would represent an unachievable development trajectory in the sub-market area, the level of housing this site would contribute to meeting housing needs over the plan period would be lower than suggested by the site promoters. This would therefore impact on the Council's ability to meet housing needs, which are already constrained as a consequence of the need for the new local plan to be water neutral.

For the reasons set out, the site not recommended for allocation.

**Site Name: Land at Buck Barn**

**SA716**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs - Director of Place

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**Local Plan Review 2023  
Land at Buck Barn**

Reference No :	Date : 15 November 2023	1:15,000 at A4
Drawing No :	Drawn :	Checked :
		Revisions :

**Site Area:**

**Approx. 245 hectares**

**Site Description:**

The site primarily comprises arable and pasture fields bounded by hedgerows and mature trees. Some isolated mature trees are present within some of the fields. The northern section of the site slopes down towards a mature belt of trees, which bisects the site. The western boundary of the site is the A24. The north-western part of the site is bound by the A24 to the west. The southern boundary of the site adjoins the A272 east of the Buck Barn crossroads junction with the A24. The Downs Link (a strategic recreation route between Guildford and Shoreham-by-Sea) adjoins the site to the east. Although adjacent to the busy road network, the area is predominantly rural in character although there are some urban influences including power lines that run east to west through the site.

**Summary of Proposal:**

Housing

The site is proposed for a development of around 3,100 homes. The site promoter has indicated that the development could provide 35% affordable housing and elderly care provision. Potential to deliver accommodation for 15 Gypsies and Traveller pitches has also been identified by this promoter.

	<p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>The promoter has indicated that 30,000 sqm of employment floorspace (4,000m<sup>2</sup> of B2, 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of B8 and 6,000m<sup>2</sup> of E employment use classes) could be provided.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>Access to the site would be obtained from the A272 and the promoters have indicated that they would provide enhancements to the A24; this could include a major upgrade to the Buck Barn crossroads to create a ‘hamburger’ roundabout or ‘through-about’, and a new junction at or near the B2135 Steyning Road to allow traffic to safely access the northbound carriageway of the A24. It is proposed to enhance and extend bus services to Southwater, Horsham, Crawley and Brighton.</p> <p><u>Education &amp; Community</u></p> <p>Two new primary schools and a secondary school would be provided as part of the development. They could if required provide healthcare facilities and are a member of “Healthy New Towns Network,” an organisation committed to prioritising health and wellbeing as an integral part of sustainable new settlements. The site would also provide new community facilities, a retail centre and a family pub-restaurant.</p> <p>The development would also provide open space and sports pitches, including a central ‘village green’, as well as enhancements to the Downs Link.</p> <p><u>Environment</u></p> <p>The site promoters have stated that they could provide biodiversity net gain of at least 20%, and that woodland and hedgerows would be retained wherever possible. Further enhancements would be provided with upgrades to the watercourse to provide water meadows.</p> <p><u>Net Zero Carbon</u></p> <p>The promoter of the site has indicated that Electric Vehicle charging points would be provided for all dwellings, and that all buildings would be built to a high standard following fabric-first approach, battery storage system / energy centre, and will achieve zero-carbon and energy positive technology.</p>
<b>Site Assessment against Criteria</b>	
<b><i>Environmental considerations</i></b>	
<b>Landscape:</b>	
Although attractive, the landscape in the area has not been designated as	Unfavourable

being of landscape importance. Nevertheless, it is recognised that a development of this scale will have significant changes on the settlement pattern and the wider rural character in this area.

The land falls within both the Low Weald and High Weald Fringes landscape character areas. The area overall has a strongly rural landscape character albeit there are some urban influences in the area including pylons carrying high voltage power lines, and some scattered farmsteads.

The Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, 2021) indicates that some parts of the site have no/low capacity for development, whilst other parcels have a moderate to high capacity. This reflects that the site contains some sensitive areas, particularly to the north. The site is close to some listed buildings and the design of any development would need to take account of the setting of these buildings to minimise any potential harm to their setting.

The proposals do not intend to remove the power lines across the site, leading to potential implications for the layout of any scheme.

The masterplan submitted to the Council demonstrates that most areas assessed as having no or low landscape capacity for development are proposed as undeveloped green infrastructure. However there are some areas to the north where development is proposed in the most sensitive landscape areas and would therefore potentially have an adverse impact on the integrity of landscape character.

Overall, due to the scale of development and potential impact on the landscape, unfavourable impacts are concluded. However it is recognised that the masterplanning framework partially avoids locating development in the most sensitive land parcels, and there is good prospect of mitigating the more significant landscape impacts.

**Biodiversity:**

The site has a number of ecological sensitivities. There is an area of ancient woodland on the western edge of the site (alongside the A24), and most of the 'Downs Link, Nutham Wood & Greatsteeds Farm Meadow' Local Wildlife Site falls within the site boundaries – this land is designated as 'semi natural woodland, plantation wood, streams and neutral meadow with high wildlife and recreational value'. A baseline (primarily desktop) ecological assessment has identified the possible presence of a number of protected species on or close to the site.

The site is also close to the Knepp Estate, albeit separated by the A24. This land is an area that has been part of a rewilding project and has seen significant biodiversity gains in recent years. It is now recognised as an important location for biodiversity and nature conservation. It also supports rare Barbastelle and Bechstein bat species.

It is understood that an assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metrics conducted on behalf of the site promoters indicated that a net gain of

Unfavourable



approximately 16% can be achieved on the site, and have most recently pointed to a corporate commitment to achieve at least 20% net gain on the site. As well as requiring the protection and enhancement of existing habitats, this depends on a number of proactive measures being woven into the masterplan, including the creation of significant areas of new woodland and the addition of around 4.2km of new hedgerows, potentially located alongside new roads within the development. A new wetlands area is proposed as part of the water neutrality scheme ('Wealdcross Lakes'), and it is suggested that the developer would partner with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. The site promoters have stated that they would construct a 'green bridge' to provide a land bridge to the Knepp estate for wildlife, but further detail is required on the detail as to how this could be delivered and how effective this could be.

Overall, it is considered that there are significant issues with regards biodiversity that need to be addressed in the event that this land is allocated for development including the impact of new residents in an area that does have importance for biodiversity. It is recognised that many designated nature reserves have public access, which does not preclude the ability for this to be managed. However, this is balanced against the degree of willingness by the promoter to fully understand these sensitivities and promotion of a scheme that actively seeks to protect and enhance these assets. In particular, it is important that the integrity of ancient woodlands is protected, bearing in mind recreational pressures and the potential for fragmentation due to new or upgraded thoroughfares. Subject to further development of the masterplan, it is considered that there is reasonable to good prospect of the impacts being mitigated. Given the uncertainties an unfavourable impact is assessed at this stage.

**Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:**

There are fourteen statutorily listed Grade II buildings within 250m of the site and twenty six statutorily listed Grade II buildings are situated within 1 km of the site boundary. Because of their proximity to the site, the setting of some of these buildings may be affected by development of the site. Tuckmans Farmhouse, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century house, would be especially affected as it is surrounded on all sides by the proposed development, and was historically associated with the surrounding fields. The emerging masterplan would need to ensure that the setting of these listed buildings were protected and enhanced.

The site is not in an Archaeological Notification Area. Due to there being a number of post medieval and modern farmsteads within the site, there is widespread potential for archaeological finds or features across the site.

Other heritage assets close to the site include the Medieval Moated Site in Grinstead Park (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and Knepp Castle Registered Park and Garden located 400m south west of the site. Both are separated from the proposed site by the A272 / A24 and direct impacts are therefore less likely.

Development in this location would change the overall settlement character

Unfavourable

<p>and pattern of the District. Overall, there are some historical/cultural sensitivities which would need to be addressed appropriately should development proposals come forward. The most significant of these, Tuckman’s Farm, is currently proposed to form part of a ‘village square’ and be a community focal point in the norther part of the proposed development – the resulting impact would need very careful consideration. It is considered that whilst there would be some unfavourable impacts, these could be balanced out through opportunities to increase public understanding and access to points of interest. An unfavourable impact rating is concluded, pending further mitigation of the potential impacts.</p>	
<p><b>Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):</b></p>	
<p>A geo-environmental survey has been carried out on behalf of the site promoter. This has concluded that there is a generally low to very low risk to human health as a result of contaminants on the site.</p> <p>The site is also located in a minerals safeguarding area for brick clay and building stone. These designations cover large parts of the district and are not a significant constraint to the site coming forward.</p> <p>The site is relatively close to Cowfold, with road access to this settlement from the proposed site via the A272. The centre of Cowfold has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area due to poor air quality that has predominantly arisen because of high traffic volumes in this area. There is potential for additional traffic generated by this proposal to have an adverse impact on the air quality of this area. It is proposed to address this challenge through a comprehensive transport assessment and strategy – more information is set out in the climate section, but would include increasing the use of electric vehicles and mitigation measures to limit congestion within Cowfold village centre.</p> <p>Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the ‘Arun Valley Sites’). The promoters have presented an on-site scheme to achieve water neutrality, involving on-site storage of exceptional event stormwater in lakes, and passing this through an onsite water treatment plant to provide an independent source of drinking water. It would also involve extensive greywater recycling. It is not yet known whether the proposed scheme would be in conformity with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality nor, given the scale and complexity of the infrastructure proposed, whether it is deliverable, although Natural England has indicated that it may be supportive of the scheme, subject to Environment Agency permissions. As part of the water neutrality scheme, an on-site Waste Water Treatment Plant would be provided.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there is potential for the AQMA at Cowfold to be impacted. Whilst this will likely reduce over time with increased reliance on electric vehicles, in advance of final agreed mitigation, the impacts are assessed as unfavourable.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>

<b>Flooding / Drainage:</b>	
<p>The land contains some watercourses, although no land at risk from flooding is proposed for development, with all development being proposed in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). A scoping exercise carried out on behalf of the site promoter has highlighted the need to address surface water issues through sustainable drainage systems (SuDs), and with respect to fluvial flood risk, to ensure generous buffers when locating development close to flood zones and watercourses.</p> <p>Given that the emerging masterplan limits development to Flood Zone 1, and on the basis of good prospect of a comprehensive SuDs strategy being implemented, a neutral rating is concluded.</p>	Neutral
<b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b>	
<p>The site promoter has set out a strong vision to achieve sustainable construction and has stated that all homes would be net zero carbon emissions over their lifetime, and would be carbon neutral in production. It is proposed to take a 'fabric first approach', which looks at how design and materials contribute to the energy performance of completed buildings, and to consider the potential for incorporating sustainable features such as air-source or ground-source heat pumps, grey water recycling, solar panels, communal boiler systems and combined heating systems. There is also potential to incorporate a communal photovoltaic battery storage park to maximise resilience and efficiency of renewable energy generated on-site.</p> <p>In terms of personal travel, the current proposal is to provide every home with an electric vehicle (EV) charging point. It is also proposed to provide financial incentives to new residents for EV purchase on moving to the development. It is also proposed to make financial contributions to delivering EV/Hydrogen buses to serve the development and wider area. A key masterplan concept is to design streets, parking and movement networks to encourage use of active (zero carbon) travel modes over the car for short local journeys, and to maximise the convenience of bus travel for longer journeys.</p> <p>Overall, there are promising indications that a development with high sustainability credentials would be delivered. A favourable impacts rating is concluded.</p>	Favourable
<b>Social considerations</b>	
<b>Housing:</b>	
<p>A strategic scale development of this scale could deliver a very significant proportion of the Council's housing requirements. The site promoters state they will provide a policy compliant housing mix and level of affordable housing, provide housing for retired people, and will include at least one elderly care form of accommodation. However a detailed breakdown has yet to be provided. The site promoters have also committed to land being provided for self-build housing, and has included in the emerging</p>	Very Positive

<p>masterplan a Gypsy and Traveller site for 15 pitches.</p> <p>Overall, there are strong prospects that should the site be allocated, a significant amount of housing which addresses the needs of the housing market area would be delivered. A very positive impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Education:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoter is proposing to provide two primary schools (1- and 2-form entry respectively, total capacity 800 pupils), and a secondary school (6-form entry, capacity 1,320 students). The site promoters have indicated that they could build the education facilities if required. Early years provision would also be made by way of two nursery schools, and special educational needs (SEND) could be provided on-site.</p> <p>Proposed primary and secondary provision exceeds WSCC requirements from this site alone and could therefore meet other education needs in the district. At this stage the proposed nursery provision is only around half of what would be required for a development of this size and additional land would need to be allocated to meet the necessary requirements.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there are strong prospects of educational facilities being provided that also benefitting existing as well as the new community should the site be allocated.</p>	<p>Very Positive</p>
<p><b>Health:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoters are one of twelve organisations that are members of the Healthy New Towns Network – a collaboration between Public Health England, housing developers and housing associations seeking to prioritise health and wellbeing in new settlement and strategic urban extension developments. Part of the concept for the proposed development is to prioritise active ways of travel (including walking and cycling) over car borne travel in particular (for example through innovative street and parking design). The proposals also seek to encourage ‘local living’ whereby many trips can be made within the neighbourhood.</p> <p>The site promoters indicate that their proposals include space for the provision of healthcare facilities that could include a surgery as well as a pharmacy. However, in common with other strategic site proposals, the extent and form of future health provision would necessarily be informed through further discussions with the NHS Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG) and discussions with existing providers. It is currently understood that the preferred NHS Integrated Care Board solution to meet additional health care needs would be an expansion of the Southwater GP practice. At this stage it is considered that if the site is allocated for development land should be safeguarded for health care provision should needs / NHS Integrated Care Board requirements change over time.</p> <p>Overall, it is recognised that the promoter has a clear commitment to promotion of healthy lifestyles and provision of local healthcare on site.</p>	<p>Favourable</p>

<p>There is however uncertainty over the NHS Integrated Care Board supporting on-site facilities, and in the short term there is likely to be a need to travel to Southwater GP practice. The impacts are concluded as favourable.</p>	
<p><b>Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoters state one of their core principles is to create a sense of place by introducing and enhancing the ability to use the green space around them. It has set out specific provisions of outdoor and indoor recreational facilities and spaces. These are four areas of allotments; a country park for informal recreation and nature exploration; a central village green/cricket pitch/football pitch; further football pitches in the northern part of the site; multicourts (MUGAs) for outdoor sports; four playgrounds, and two skate park/ball court/bike track areas. A village hall, further neighbourhood hall and indoor sports hall are proposed. Around 50% of the site area is proposed as green infrastructure including a linear park following the river and a country park area alongside the Downs Link strategic cycle route.</p> <p>A community hub is also proposed to be provided in partnership with the Plunkett Foundation, to accommodate a community shop, community café, and 'We Work' community workspaces. Other hub features have been indicated as light-touch laboratory space, gym, private nursery, healthcare provision/pharmacy, pub/hotel and library.</p> <p>The emerging masterplan also proposes a pedestrian/cycle 'river corridor', woodland walk paths, and enhancement of existing public rights of way, including improved connections from the site to the Downs Link strategic leisure route.</p> <p>Overall, there is considered to be strong prospects for significant community provision and benefits, and a very favourable rating is concluded.</p>	<p>Very Positive</p>
<p><b>Transport:</b></p>	
<p><u>Walking and Cycling</u></p> <p>The site promoter states that one of the key principles of the masterplan is sustainable travel. The development proposal seeks to encourage walking and cycling and makes it difficult for car-borne road users to move around within the development. The concept is for streets to be designed so that cycle and pedestrian routes have clear priority over vehicular roads by means of segregated paths and shared surfaces. A further option is for some parts of the development to provide residential parking zones away from homes rather than allow residents to drive up to and park at their houses, whilst providing sustainable transport options, such as mobility hubs including cycle parking/hire, adjacent to homes. The preference of the promoter is to limit access to and from the site to the south, at Buck Barn junction, to buses, emergency vehicles and non-motorised traffic only. The access for most other traffic would be via a new site access to the north. Direct connectivity to the adjacent Downs Link cycle way could be readily achieved.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

### Public transport

The site does not have direct access to a railway station. The promoters are however proposing good quality bus services to the major employment centres of Horsham, Crawley, Worthing and Brighton, with interchange opportunities for accessing Gatwick Airport. It is suggested that road space changes, and improvements to junctions on main roads to improve bus priority, could secure the attractiveness and feasibility of such services. A 'Wealdcross transport app' is proposed to provide access to and information on public transport, as well as for electric vehicle car club and cycle hire schemes.

### Road transport

The site promoters recognise that the development will give rise to some additional vehicle journeys. In road transport terms, the site is well located on the A24 which is the main north-south route through the district with a dual carriageway connection to Crawley and to Worthing in the south.

The site promoters have proposed significant changes to provide access to the site as well as improving traffic flow on the A24. The Buck Barn junction (A24/A272) would be converted from a light-controlled crossroads to a 'hamburger' style roundabout (or 'through-about') which it is argued would improve traffic flow on the A24 (north- and south-bound) compared with the existing situation. A new roundabout would be created 600m south of the Mill Straight roundabout which would provide the main access into the development. Safety improvements would be made to the B2135 Steyning Road junction with the A24 just south of the development. It should be noted that WSCC is seeking to bring forward upgrades to the A24 without development, and there is therefore potential for these enhancements to have a wider benefit.

There is the potential impact on Cowfold village centre towards the end of the Plan period, which is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared as a result of traffic congestion at peak travel times. There is therefore the potential for new development to generate additional traffic flows through the village without mitigation. A range of measures have been explored. These included looking at increasing capacity on the A24 route to 'draw' traffic away from the A272; restrict the southern access to the site to bus and emergency vehicle access only; 'gating' traffic through Cowfold to relocate traffic queues to outside the village, or prioritising traffic flow on the A272 through Cowfold through changing the road layout in the village. The recommendation from the Horsham Strategic Transport Study was to reduce the attractiveness of the route to the A23 via Cowfold by introducing speed restrictions and physical speed reducing measures on the A281 north of Cowfold and the B3110 at Lower Beeding.

Overall, the assessment against the transport criterion is balanced between the site promotor's forward-thinking approach to sustainable travel on the one hand (albeit the take-up of such opportunities is uncertain), and the significant challenge of how to realistically and effectively achieve required mitigation measures at Cowfold, taking account of the creation of a new settlement, on the other. A neutral impact is concluded.

<b>Other infrastructure:</b>	
<p>The site promoter has submitted a Utilities Assessment, which includes analysis of the capacity to support the development. HDC has also consulted the relevant bodies. It is also stated that it is anticipated superfast broadband will be provided by Openreach in accordance with Openreach's current policies. Extensive infrastructure to support water neutrality is also proposed.</p> <p>Overall, there are likely to be neutral impacts on other infrastructure.</p>	Neutral
<b>Economic considerations</b>	
<b>Economy:</b>	
<p>The proposal is for a residential-led mixed use development that includes various commercial and non-residential uses, and flexible workspace, as well as new homes. Proposals include 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment space (offices/research &amp; development, light industrial and storage), which the promoter indicates would provide around 1,245 jobs, as well as 3,300 m<sup>2</sup> of retail space, two pubs/restaurants, a community hub with library, and provision of three schools.</p> <p>The site promoters have indicated that there is the potential to achieve the aspiration of one job per home from both the new employment land and design of homes that takes into account increases in flexible home working and the opportunities presented by the employment and community uses on the site.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be favourable impacts arising from the development of this site.</p>	Favourable
<b>Retail:</b>	
<p>The emerging masterplan for the site envisages a modest sized food store (2,500 m<sup>2</sup>) and some smaller, traditional shop units concentrated in the village and neighbourhood centres. The promoters have emphasised the desire to make adequate provision to discourage new residents making trips outside the site to meet their day-to-day shopping needs.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that the proposals for retail are proportionate to the size of population proposed for the new development, whilst not being of a scale that is likely to undermine existing centres in other nearby settlements. A favourable impacts rating is concluded.</p>	Favourable
<b>Further considerations</b>	
<b>Deliverability and Viability:</b>	
<p>The site promoters have confirmed that they have agreed options on all land required to deliver the development. Whilst in the longer term, it is considered a sustainable new community could be delivered, this would (as</p>	Neutral

for any new settlement) take time to emerge. There would be reliance on existing community facilities to some degree, particularly in the early phases of any development.

The site promoter is a locally-based, medium-sized house builder. It is currently constructing a new community at Pease Pottage, near Crawley. This development is well progressed, and provides evidence that key infrastructure can be delivered in the early phases of development (in the case of Pease Pottage, this has included significant highways upgrade and a new primary school). However the site promoter has no direct experience of delivering much larger schemes or a new settlement.

The Pease Pottage development has been delivering around 110 units per annum, however due to its proposed use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) on future builds, the promoter has indicated that 300 units per annum could be built-out at Buck Barn should the proposal go forward (195 per year for private sale and 105 per year as affordable).

The Housing Delivery Study has concluded that, considering the scale of the scheme and the complexities of delivering a new settlement, a peak build out rate of 200 units per annum is more likely. It is considered that during the plan period development of 1,500 homes is more realistic.

In respect of viability, the site promoters state that there is sufficient viability to deliver the scheme as currently envisaged, including all highways and infrastructure, and a policy compliant level of affordable housing. Viability information has been provided and there are limited 'abnormals' on the site.

Overall, a neutral rating is concluded for this criterion at this stage. Whilst it is clear the land is available for development, this is balanced against the level of delivery expected during the plan period, given that large scale developments can take many years to establish, together with the more limited experience of the site promoter in delivering developments of this scale.

**Development Quality:**

The site promoters have provided an ambitious vision for a new garden village built around the core principles of healthy living, active travel, and connection with green spaces. There is a strong commitment to low carbon living, including in construction technologies and supported by necessary transport mitigation measures and enhancements. This is a strong and clear vision.

The emerging masterplan is reasonably well-developed, which demonstrated that a reasonable rationale has been applied to proposed layout and design concepts. The site promoter, which itself provides a more traditional architectural style, has a subsidiary, Alphium Homes, which provides contemporary homes and architecture. This indicates a variety of styles would likely come forward. Care would be needed with regards non-traditional street layouts to support the active personal travel concept.

Very Positive



The promoter has undertaken public consultation at the early stages of masterplanning, and attended parish council meetings. In addition, the promoter has highlighted its plans to work in partnership with a charity that partners with local communities who run community businesses and steward local woodlands. The promoter has also highlighted its strong legacy role on its developments. Overall impacts are assessed as Very Positive.

### **Site Assessment Summary & Recommendation**

Allocation of this site would have benefits in bringing forward a significant level of residential accommodation that would help in meeting identified housing needs including a range of housing types and sizes. Evidence indicates that 35% affordable housing can be provided. The development would also provide additional land for employment. Locationally the site is situated centrally within the District on A24 and A272. The A24 is the only dual carriageway in the District and provides road links to Horsham, Crawley and the south coast.

The development would deliver of a range of community, retail, health and recreation facilities, which would help meet the everyday needs of residents. This would include a new secondary school and two new primary schools which would help to address needs created by the development as well as needs for the wider area. There is also a clear commitment to delivering a zero carbon and energy efficient development. It is however considered that new residents would still need to travel beyond the site for some of their needs. This has been considered by the site promoter in promoting enhanced bus services from the site to nearby settlements. Whilst in the longer term, it is considered a sustainable new community would be delivered, this will (as for any new settlement) take time to emerge. There would be reliance on existing community facilities to some degree, particularly in the early phases of any development.

Although attractive, the landscape in the area has not been designated as being of landscape importance. The site at Buck Barn is rural in character but with some obvious urban influences, namely the A24 and A272 primary roads, and high voltage power lines carried by pylons through the site. Nevertheless, it is recognised that a development of this scale will have significant changes on the settlement pattern and the wider rural character in this area. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate development is variable across the site, but it is considered there is good prospect of mitigating the more significant landscape impacts. There are limited risks from flooding on the proposed development area.

Although further away from sites designated for their international biodiversity importance, the site does have a number of ecological sensitivities. The site contains an area of ancient woodland, and separately, a local wildlife site. The site is also close to the Knepp Estate which is renowned for its rewilding initiative and the delivery of significant biodiversity net gains. This land however does not directly adjoin the site – separated by the A24 and A272. It is recognised that the promoters have indicated that a 20% biodiversity net gain can be delivered on site through a range of different measures. Any development would however need to be carefully designed to avoid key areas with importance for biodiversity and to maximise biodiversity net gain.

In terms of built heritage, the setting of existing listed buildings and particularly Tuckman's Farm would need to be taken into account as part of any design and layout of the scheme, to minimise unfavourable impacts.

The development proposals seeks to promote walking and cycling, and enhancements to public

transport. The site does not have direct access to a railway station. The promoters are however proposing good quality bus services to the major employment centres of Horsham, Crawley, Worthing and Brighton, with interchange opportunities for accessing Gatwick Airport. It is suggested that road space changes, and improvements to junctions on main roads to improve bus priority, could secure the attractiveness and feasibility of such services.

The site promoters recognise that development will give rise to some additional vehicle journeys. The site promoters have proposed significant changes to provide access to the site as well as improving traffic flow on the A24. This includes upgrades to the Buck Barn and Steyning Road junctions and a new roundabout south of Mill Straight providing access to the new development. WSCC has identified a need to bring forward upgrades to the A24 without development, and there is therefore potential for these enhancements to have a wider benefit to District residents.

There is the potential impact on Cowfold village centre, which is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared as a result of traffic congestion at peak travel times. There is therefore the potential for new development to generate additional traffic flows through the village without mitigation. The site promoter has identified a number of potential means to mitigate these impacts, albeit the Horsham Strategic Transport Study has indicated limitations to the scope to mitigate which would be based around physical deterrents well beyond the site. Impacts on the Cowfold AQMA are not however identified as a 'showstopper'.

The site promoter is locally based in Horsham District and has experience of delivering large scale urban extensions. Evidence provided to the Council to date indicates that this site would be able to deliver several thousand homes in the plan period, and that the proposals are viable. Whilst the site promoters indicate that peak delivery of 300 homes per year can be achieved, this is considered to be optimistic taking account of the lead-in times for strategic scale development such as the provision of transport upgrades. The Council's own Housing Delivery study indicates that 1,500 homes is more realistic.

**Officer Recommendation:**

This site would help contribute to meeting identified housing and other development needs subject to mitigation of transport, landscape, biodiversity and heritage impacts. It is considered that the central location of the site within the District and within the north Horsham District market sub-area may provide good opportunity for homes to be delivered that meet the needs of the District as well as being directly connected to the road to the South coast by the A24. The proposals consider the impact of increased traffic generation with proposals for public transport enhancements and opportunities to bring forward wider transport upgrades to the A24.

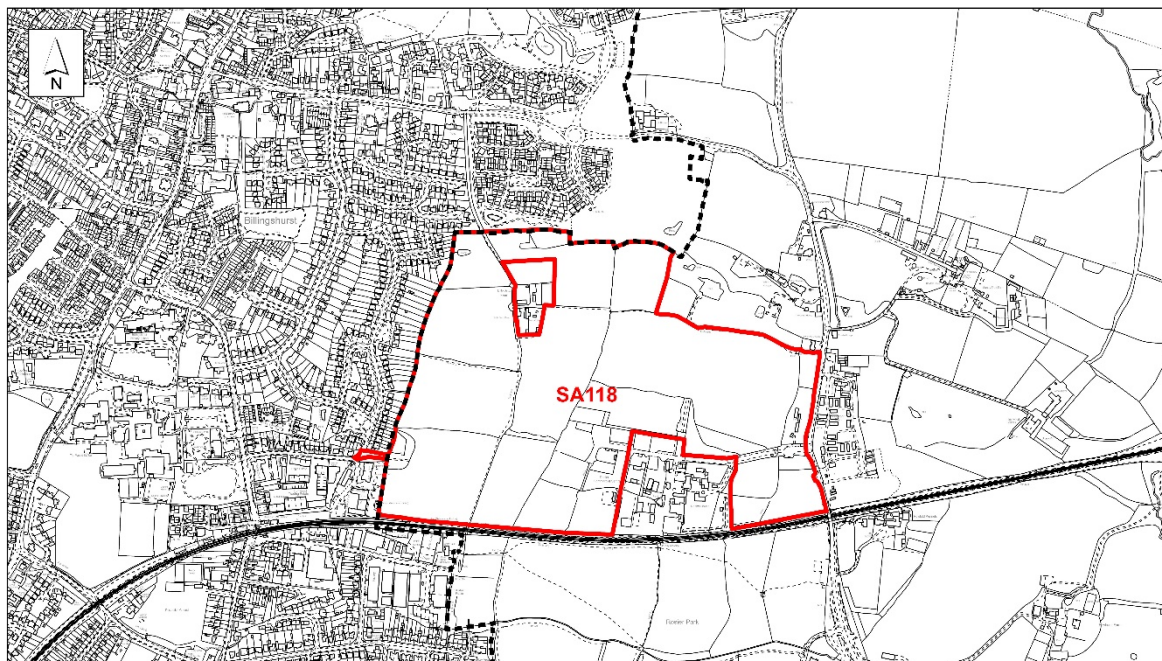
The site is detached from any existing established settlement, and would be a village-size settlement with more limited opportunity for self-containment. It scores less well in the Sustainability Appraisal than settlement extension sites, reflecting the high level of challenge there would be in achieving sustainable travel habits and access to facilities, particularly in the early phases of development. An ambitious scheme to achieve water neutrality is proposed, however prospects for its delivery are uncertain. Given the degree to which water neutrality has prevented, and will continue to limit, significant housing growth across the District, the additional growth that this site would yield cannot at this time be supported, given there are more sustainable alternatives.

For the reasons set out, the site is not recommended for allocation.

**Site Name: Land East of Billingshurst  
(Little Daux)**

**SA118**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**  
Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs : Director of Place

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<b>Local Plan Review 2023 Land East of Billingshurst</b>			
Reference No :	Date : 15 November 2023	1:8,000 at A4	
Drawing No :	Drawn :	Checked :	Revisions :

**Site Area:** 34.3 hectares

**Site Description:** The site lies within the countryside to the east of the village of Billingshurst. The site comprises agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows and trees, which contains a number of paths used by residents of Billingshurst for informal recreation. A tree belt largely screens the site from residential properties to the west which lie within the built form of Billingshurst. The site's southern boundary is defined by the railway line except where it wraps around Rosier Business Park. The site is bounded to the east by the A272. To the north is a new residential neighbourhood of around 475 homes, known as Amblehurst Green, and Wilden's Meadow Local Wildlife Site. The northern part of the site encircles a small group of existing dwellings.

**Summary of Proposal:** Housing  
The site is proposed for around 600-650 dwellings as an urban extension of Billingshurst. A range of densities, housing types, sizes and tenures are proposed (35% affordable currently anticipated, compliant with policy) Provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be provided subject to a proven need.

	<p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>The site adjoins the existing Rosier business park. Some additional employment or commercial floorspace near this site is proposed.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>Access to the site would be obtained from the A272 and the promoters have indicated that they would enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the existing village centre and the train station. A new additional station car park is also being offered subject to need and stewardship.</p> <p><u>Education and Community</u></p> <p>Proposals for the site include 2.2 hectares of serviced land for a primary school, 1 form entry expandable to 2 form entry with SEND and early years. The intent (subject to appropriate agreement between landowners and WSCC including transport links) is to relocate a proposed school on land in the north of the area currently set aside for this purpose, which is a location having more level ground within the proposed allocation site. Also proposed is a community hub area offering facilities such as retail, café, hall, co-working space, community bike club and an Ambulance Community Response Post (ACRP).</p> <p><u>Environment</u></p> <p>A high proportion, up to 50%, of the site will be accessible natural greenspace / amenity greenspace potentially including a trim trail, several parks with equipped play, allotment, picnic tables, outdoor gym and enhancements to Wilden's Meadow Local Wildlife Site and retention of the existing framework of trees and hedgerows. The site promoter indicates 10% or more biodiversity net gain could be achieved.</p> <p><u>Net Zero Carbon</u></p> <p>The promoter is only able to commit to complying with building regulations, consistent with the national approach to low carbon homes. They will take a fabric first approach and seek to develop a strategy to optimise electric vehicle charging points for households and visitor spaces.</p>
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**Site Assessment against Criteria**

***Environmental considerations***

**Landscape:**

The site adjoins the eastern boundary of Billingshurst and is located south of the recent eastern extension of Billingshurst mostly to the north of the A272 which delivered around 475 homes. A key positive is that the site would form a natural extension to the settlement within the defined physical boundary of the A272 to the east. The site does not lie within or near a protected landscape.

Neutral

The site undulates with gentle to medium slopes but also includes large areas of relative flat land. In general, notwithstanding a dip toward the north-western corner, the site slopes down from north to south. The site's agricultural fields are predominantly surrounded by hedgerows with mature trees. A number of mature trees also fall within some of the fields. A known Ancient / Veteran tree lies within Rosier Business Park which lies within the southern border of the allocation site, others may exist within the site.

The site falls within Landscape Character Area 48 in the Landscape Capacity Study 2021 and is considered to have moderate capacity for medium and large scale housing and low / moderate capacity for large scale employment. A Landscape Consultant has informed the promoter's masterplan to help ensure development is capable of enhancing the local landscape and retain sensitive landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows. This has also led to the removal of the field north of the Local Wildlife Site from the development site.

A neutral impact is therefore concluded at this stage.

**Biodiversity:**

The majority of the site is unconstrained in terms of protected habitat. Most of the site is dominated by arable land together with species of poor semi-improved grassland which is assessed as being of low ecological and nature conservation value. There is however a Local Wildlife Site (H14 – Wilden's Meadow) adjacent to the development site, which contains ponds, and wraps around a traditional orchard. The site also contains scattered trees and hedgerows. The site is within the bat sustenance zone for the Mens woodland, and a limited presence of Barbastelle bats has been recorded on the site. An appropriate assessment would be required as part of any development in this location.

Common reptiles (slow-worm, common lizard and grass snake) are present on the site for which the promoter suggests some relocation and some enhancement of on-site habitat.

The promoters have undertaken both an ecological and a tree survey and there is potential to retain and enhance the Local Wildlife site and for on-site net biodiversity gain such as retention of hedgerows and trees with additional native planting and open on-site attenuation features (detention basins / SuDs). The available evidence concludes that 17% biodiversity net gain could be achieved on habitats and 12% on hedgerow features, but this would need to be updated to reflect any changes to the masterplan and delivery may require the inclusion of the field to the north of the Local Wildlife Site.

Whilst it is considered that it is likely that the ecological impacts of development in this location could be mitigated, the potential impact on Barbastelle bats and the Mens woodland cannot be fully ruled out at this stage and an unfavourable impact is concluded.

Unfavourable

<p><b>Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:</b></p>	
<p>The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA). According to County Council records the land adjoins a Late Iron Age and Roman settlement and field system, on the south side of the A272. Any development proposals would require further archaeological assessment to determine the potential of the site, and the results of the field assessment used to inform the design of any development.</p> <p>There are no listed buildings within the proposed developable area, but a Grade II Listed Building, Little Daux Farmhouse, is surrounded by the site and another, Rosier Farmhouse, lies within Rosier Business Park between the area to be developed and the railway. In addition to this, across the railway to the south lies the Grade II Great Daux Farmhouse so the impact on its setting would have to be taken into account especially if the pedestrian railway crossing were replaced with a footbridge. The site is also close to the Billingshurst conservation area, with potential for views to key historic buildings to be impacted. The promoters indicate the layout and design of buildings will take into account the listed buildings and their settings. In addition, any development would need to consider the impact of any development on the views to St Mary's Church, the interaction between the site and the conservation area, and the rural setting. The impact of increased traffic on the historic character of the conservation area would also require consideration. Given this range of potential impacts, an unfavourable impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):</b></p>	
<p>The site is located in a minerals safeguarding area for brick clay. This designation covers large parts of the district and is unlikely to be a significant constraint to the site coming forward.</p> <p>An intermediate pressure gas pipeline crosses the site north-south which has a 50m buffer that would need to be taken into account within the layout and design of any development. The site is considered relatively tranquil except for some road noise and the area near the railway line, which is affected by noise and vibration from passing trains. The site is not within a Source Protection Zone. SuDS are proposed which the promoter suggests will improve water quality within the ponds in/near the Local Wildlife Site and watercourse/drainage ditches. Air quality and land contamination have not, to date, been identified to be an issue in or near this site. Electric vehicle charging points are proposed.</p> <p>Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the 'Arun Valley Sites'). Any allocation would therefore need to be in conformity with the wider Strategic Solution which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality.</p> <p>At this stage a neutral impact is concluded.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<b>Flooding / Drainage:</b>	
<p>The site does not lie within an area identified as at risk of flooding (Flood zone 1). The promoters have undertaken a flood risk assessment which finds the majority of the site has negligible risk from most forms of flooding. Development will be located outside areas identified as at medium to high risk of surface water flooding. The promoter proposes a Sustainable Drainage approach, such as integrating swales into street verges, the retention and enhancement of the existing corridors for surface water conveyance, detention basins / attenuation ponds, and a 40% allowance for climate change is to be taken in respect of the surface water drainage network. The promoters note that soakaway drainage is unlikely to be feasible due to underlying geology. As the site would achieve the same runoff as greenfield conditions a neutral impact is concluded.</p>	Neutral
<b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b>	
<p>At present, the promoter is only able to commit to complying with building regulations, consistent with the national approach to low carbon homes. They will take a fabric first approach and seek to develop a strategy to optimise electric vehicle charging points for households and visitor spaces. The promoter will assess the suitability of low carbon technology and renewable energies on the site such as ground and air source heat pumps and photovoltaics given there are no existing heat distribution networks in the vicinity of the site. The promoter considers the site has ample opportunity for solar gain and is sustainably located adjacent the settlement of Billingshurst. Sustainable travel will be made attractive to use and a bike club is proposed and key green infrastructure is being retained. Measures to minimise water usage through low fittings and water recycling will be investigated. Non-domestic floorspace will seek to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' if not 'Excellent'.</p> <p>Whilst the site will conform with relevant standards, it is more limited than most other proposals in terms of these aspirations and there is not a clear commitment to zero carbon. Although any allocation would be required to conform to the Local Plan policies which make this a requirement, the lack of an active commitment to meeting the significant impacts leads to an unfavourable impact being concluded at this stage.</p>	Unfavourable
<b>Social considerations</b>	
<b>Housing:</b>	
<p>The site is promoted as a residential-led development extension to an existing large village/small town, and seeks to deliver 650 dwellings. This will be predominantly two storey with some three storey key buildings. A range of densities, housing types, sizes and tenures are proposed (35% affordable currently anticipated). It is however noted that the site promoter indicates that viability will be affected by tenure mix of the affordable housing especially if the split is more in favour of social or affordable rent. This raises some questions as to the level of commitment to delivering affordable housing which meets the District's overall requirements. It is also noted that the site promoters would provide a greater number of market dwellings earlier in the build owing to site start up and infrastructure costs.</p>	Favourable

They seek to make provision for Gypsy and Travellers if there is a proven need in this location, indicating this could impact the wider viability of the site. Given that there is a clear need for Gypsy and Traveller sites identified as part of the Council's evidence base this would remain a policy requirement. No provision is made for accommodation for older or disabled people according to the site assessment submission (although mention of the former has been verbally given). The site may offer an opportunity to deliver some self-build homes.

The site is of strategic scale and would help to meet housing needs. It would be necessary for land to be allocated for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the wider site and it is noted that an unequivocal commitment has not been given. The site does not make as significant a contribution to boosting housing as other promoted strategic-scale sites and there are also some outstanding concerns as to the timing and level of delivery of affordable homes. Taking these factors into account, a favourable impact is concluded at this stage, noting that requirements can be set in an allocation to require delivery to meet the identified needs for the District.

**Education:**

The promoters propose a 2.2 hectare serviced land centrally within the site for a primary school. The land offer is restricted in that the school is to be located within a 1.82 hectare plot with a 0.38 hectare reserve strip upon which housing would be sought if a school expansion to 2FE is not delivered in a timely manner. This would potentially resolve issues affecting the ability to deliver a second primary school in the village on the sloping land formerly secured and set aside for community use via the development to the north of the site. A contribution commensurate to the impact of the development is also offered, predicted to equate to 1 form entry (other funding sources would be required for expansion to 2FE as and when appropriate). It is known that the Weald Secondary school is reaching capacity, something which WSCC are reviewing the options for the best resolution.

The phasing proposed by the promoter delivers the community facilities including the school land towards the latter half of the build. The timeframe of the primary school is subject to further exploration to help ensure school places are available to meet the generated needs. The land offer adds complexity given the allocation would only generate demand for a 1FE primary school, however, 2FE primary schools are normally the smallest supported by the education authority.

Greater assurances over the contribution and also the delivery of the primary school within the site and access to secondary places would need to be obtained before securing any housing development on the site. However, it is considered these matters can be resolved and a favourable impact is therefore concluded.

Favourable



<b>Health:</b>	
<p>The proposed open space including the accessible pedestrian and cycle routes, trim trial etc will provide some health and wellbeing benefits, but consideration of healthy lifestyles is more limited than for some other proposals.</p> <p>No on-site health facility is proposed. The promoters indicate the existing health facilities within the village have capacity to meet the sites generated demand. However, if the position changes they are willing to explore how the proposal can assist. Further assurances over the capacity of existing facilities and if any contribution is necessary will therefore need to be obtained before securing any housing development on the site.</p> <p>Overall health needs of the new community are considered able to be met, and a neutral impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	Neutral
<b>Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:</b>	
<p>The promoters propose a community hub. A high proportion of the site will be open space comprising accessible natural greenspace, amenity space, parks, equipped play areas, allotments, outdoor gym, trim trail, SuDS, and connecting street infrastructure including retention and enhancement of existing trees, hedgerows and the existing Local Wildlife Site. In addition to school playing field provision, the site promoter has indicated there would also be the provision of a playing field on separate publicly accessible land. The adjacent village offers a leisure centre and other facilities, which development contributions have the potential to enhance. Greater assurances over the type and location of the space and facilities to be provided, along with the ongoing management and maintenance arrangements, would still be required to ensure the needs can be suitably met. It is anticipated that the necessary community facilities could be provided, and a neutral impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	Neutral
<b>Transport:</b>	
<p><u>Walking and Cycling</u></p> <p>The proposal seeks to promote a high level of accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. The promoters indicate their masterplan includes a movement and access network which adheres to Manual for Streets (MfS) design principles in promoting a hierarchy of different street types and the provision of direct links for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposal also seeks to provide footpath links to existing services and facilities including to the railway station and village centre, both of which lie between 0.5km and 1.5km from the proposed residential parcels. Network Rail have raised a concern relating to an increase in housing near an uncontrolled ground level crossing over the railway, and a diversion of the public right of way or provision of a footbridge or underpass have been suggested to address the increased risks. It is expected that land will be safeguarded to facilitate the provision of a bridge. This will need further exploration and could form a requirement within policy.</p>	Favourable

Public Transport

The closest regular bus service of reasonable frequency (service 100 – hourly during the daytime, Monday-Saturday) currently stops at the village centre and at the rail station, both between 0.5km and 1.5km walking distance from proposed residential parcels. However the masterplan enables the integration of bus services through the site if required. The train station would similarly be a 0.5km to 1.5km walk from proposed residential land parcels. A car park for the train station is proposed as an option within the south-western corner of the site, closest to the station, to facilitate increased use of rail travel. Network Rail have however indicated the need to ensure any development close to the railway line is safe, and this would need to be given further consideration as part of any development proposal.

Road Transport

Primary vehicular access would be off the A272 via the Amblehurst Green development (north of the site) and via a new roundabout north of the railway (east of the site). This would form a residential through route linking communities to the school and accessible to buses. A secondary access point via Brooker’s Road will be designed with a focus on maximising connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists and to prevent rat running. The promoters also propose a new priority-controlled T-junction on the A272 to the northeast of the site. The layout will ensure there is no or limited vehicular access connecting the A272 to Broomfield Drive to prevent rat running.

Development in this location may however require upgrades and investment to other junctions offsite. The promoters indicate a willingness to contribute towards upgrades identified as part of the wider Local Plan transport mitigation requirements. The promoters’ phasing schedule shows the delivery of the vehicular link to northern A272 (via Amblehurst Green) at a late stage after the delivery of 565 homes, which may need further justification.

There is a stated commitment to walking and cycling, and the site is close to existing services and facilities in Billingshurst, with proposals to enhance their accessibility. Further work is however required to understand more detail on public transport provision (buses), and the wider off site impacts in relation to transport.

Given the site’s proximity to a mainline rail station, and good opportunity to achieve high levels of walking and cycling for local trips to the nearby village centre and village facilities, a favourable impact is concluded.

**Other infrastructure:**

The promoters seek to provide future communications technology within the development. No reference is given to full fibre or what provision is to be made. SSE have indicated capacity is limited in respect of the electricity supply in the west of the District which may require, once all short-term fixes have been assigned, a major capital scheme for reinforcement works that would take several years to complete.

Unfavourable

<p>Taking account of the potential need to upgrade the electricity supply and the uncertainties around this an unfavourable impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	
<p><b><i>Economic considerations</i></b></p>	
<p>There are good transport connections to other settlements and centres of employment including Horsham, Crawley and London via rail. The site is primarily promoted for residential, but surrounds the existing Rosier Business Park. The promoters have stated that they could provide an expansion of the Business Park to provide additional employment land with uses that complement the existing mix of employment uses. They also propose a community hub more centrally within the site, or as agreed with the Council, which could include flexible commercial units / 'work from home' units. The provision of E, F.2, sui generis Use Classes are indicated (formerly B1 or A1-A5 Use Classes). The site is considered to be well located to other employment opportunities within the village of Billingshurst. Impacts are therefore assessed as favourable.</p>	<p>Favourable</p>
<p><b>Retail:</b></p>	
<p>The site lies relatively near the retail centre of Billingshurst. Development may help increase the viability of existing retail in the village. It is estimated the site is between 10 to 30 minutes walk from local shops (depending on the location within the site). Given the local nature of the retail offer (commensurate with a large village), and the semi-rural nature of the locality, there will be some reliance on private motor vehicles to access shops elsewhere. The site is primarily promoted for residential and there are no clear proposals for the provision of a local shop on-site or enhancements within Billingshurst village centre. A community shop and cafe is suggested as a potential use that could be included within the community hub area. Given the relative proximity to the existing services in Billingshurst, and the uncertainty around new provision a neutral impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b><i>Further considerations</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Deliverability and Viability:</b></p>	
<p>The main promoter comprises both Crest and Bellway, who are established national housebuilders with a track record of delivery, including within Horsham District (Bellway are part of the consortium of three developers that provided homes to the north and has control of the field north of the site that is currently safeguarded for primary school use). Crest and Bellway have some of the land in freehold ownership, the rest has the necessary legal agreements in place to deliver this scheme during the plan period. The promoter estimates delivery of 100 dwellings a year (50 by each developer, Crest &amp; Bellway). HDC's independent assessment endorses the ability of this site to deliver 650 within the plan period.</p> <p>The promoter has not provided a detailed viability assessment. They have however assessed a range of broad viability factors to obtain site values once developed based on the industry's standard calculation. Viability will</p>	<p>Favourable</p>

be affected by tenure mix of the affordable housing especially if the split is more in favour of social or affordable rent. They also seek a greater number of market dwellings earlier in the build owing to site start up and infrastructure costs. Overall however, the Council's emerging evidence also indicates that development on the site is considered to be viable.

Given the clear deliverability and evidence that the site is viable, a favourable impact is concluded.

**Development Quality:**

The proposed development would be an extension to the settlement of Billingshurst and is relatively well located in terms of access to existing services and facilities and an already established community. Integration with the existing community will be assisted by the provision of the land for a new primary school, the proposed community hub, employment and the station car park within the development, and future occupants will also be drawn to the wider services and facilities within the existing village. This will be assisted by the provision of the proposed open space, and pedestrian and cycle routes within the scheme.

Bellway and Crest have approached the masterplan comprehensively as one development and are working up a Collaboration Agreement in order to deliver the scheme in respect of the land in their control (which excludes the currently safeguarded school site). A landscape led approach is adopted where existing hedgerows and trees will largely be retained and enhanced, and public rights of way respected. The presence of the Listed Buildings have been noted together with the sensitivity of their settings. The promoter advises that their design principles help ensure new housing is designed to sit within the existing well established landscape framework, interpret and reflect local distinctiveness, and respect and complement the overall character of Billingshurst. It will take appropriate cues from this part of West Sussex to reinforce the identity of Billingshurst but also to establish it as 'a place' in its own right.

The promoter is not proposing to hold an ongoing stewardship role but is open to promoting the opportunity for community ownership of the community and retail uses on the site within the community hub area. This can initially be offered to the Parish Council or can be managed jointly by a community trust.

The promoter's masterplan has been influenced by local community aspirations that have been expressed in respect of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and discussions. The promoter says they commit to working with HDC and the partnership of organisations in Billingshurst including the Parish Council, Community Partnership and Chamber of Commerce should their site be allocated.

Overall impacts are assessed as favourable.

Favourable

## Site Assessment Summary & Recommendation

Allocation of this site would have benefits in bringing forward a significant level of residential accommodation that would help in meeting identified housing needs including a range of housing types and sizes. Evidence indicates that 35% affordable housing can be provided, although the site promoter has indicated an intention to deliver the majority of the affordable housing within the later phases of the build out.

The promoter has indicated that this site could provide a site for a primary school, community hub and some employment close to the existing Rosier business park. As currently presented, the site is unlikely to deliver development that goes beyond existing technologies and the requirements of highways and building regulations in respect of helping the District towards becoming zero carbon. The phasing of the community facilities is also proposed within the latter half of the build out which is not fully reflective of the Council's objectives. Any development would need to demonstrate the ability to deliver the facilities in a timely manner in order to cultivate a sense of place and patterns of use as occupation occurs and should be incorporated into the requirements of any allocation.

The site is well related to the eastern edge of Billingshurst. The site would provide a logical urban extension linked to the extant urban extension recently built out to the north of the A272. The site promoters have indicated that they have taken a landscape-led approach to the design and layout which seeks to retain sensitive landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows.

Most of the site is not directly affected by nature conservation designations, and most of the site has been assessed as being of low conservation value. The promoters indicate the Local Wildlife Site Wilden's Meadow would be retained and enhanced. Development in this location would need to address the impact of development on the nearby Mens woodland, which is of international importance for nature conservation. This includes consideration of both loss of bat feeding grounds and the transport impacts on air quality. The site promoters have indicated that 17% biodiversity net gain could be achieved on habitats and 12% on hedgerow features but this is subject to change as the development layout progresses.

There are no listed buildings within the proposed developable area, but a Grade II Listed Building, Little Daux Farmhouse, is surrounded by the site and another, Rosier Farmhouse, lies within Rosier Business Park between the developable area and the railway. In addition to this, across the railway to the south lies the Grade II Great Daux Farmhouse. The site is also close to the Billingshurst conservation area, with potential for views to key historic buildings to be impacted. The impact on this nearby heritage would need to be considered as part of the design and layout of any scheme.

The proposal is relatively close to the village centre and rail station and seeks to promote a high level of accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposal seeks to provide high quality footpath and cycle links to these existing services and facilities. Following feedback from Network Rail, the promoter is exploring the provision of a bridge to avoid a significant diversion of the public right of way in order to remove an uncontrolled ground level crossing over the railway adjacent to this allocation.

Primary vehicular access will be off the A272 via the Amblehurst Green development and a new roundabout north of the railway. The proposed layout has been designed to restrict motor vehicle access connecting the A272 to Broomfield Drive to prevent rat running. The developer indicates a willingness to contribute towards upgrades identified as part of the wider Local Plan transport mitigation requirements.

The site has been assessed as deliverable and viable.

**Officer Recommendation:**

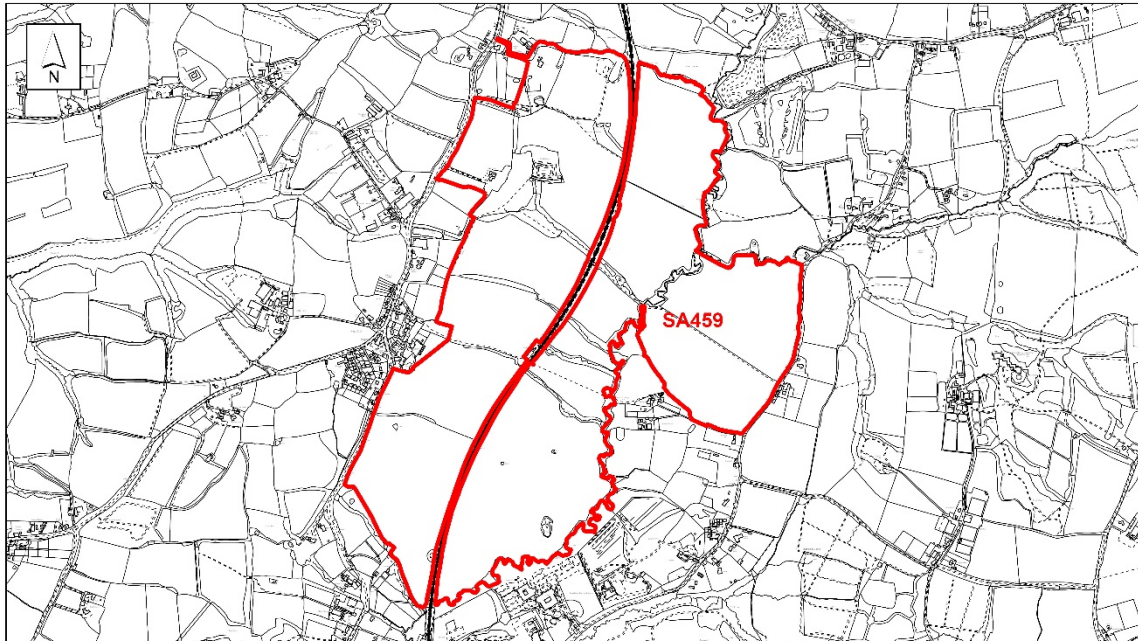
On balance this site is considered suitable for allocation, taking into account the conclusion of the sustainability appraisal. This indicates that urban extensions perform relatively well in delivering sustainable development, together with the existing track record of delivery by the promoters in this location. There are also clear links and a strong relationship with the existing settlement of Billingshurst and proximity to existing public transport links to larger settlements including Horsham and Crawley. There are no identified 'showstoppers' for this site, although some issues still need to be resolved, including in relation to the siting of the school and affordable housing mix and phasing. In addition, solutions to address electricity capacity and the safety of an unmanned pedestrian railway crossing given the proposed increase in residents in close proximity are also required. Development would be expected to secure Local Wildlife Site enhancements and biodiversity net gain. As with all strategic allocations, the site will need to contribute towards meeting identified Gypsy and Traveller needs in the District.

The site is recommended for allocation in the Horsham District Local Plan.

**Site Name: Land at Kingsfold, Warnham (Brookvale Garden Village)**

**SA459**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs - Director of Place

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**Local Plan Review 2023  
Land at Kingsfold**

Reference No :	Date : 15 November 2023	1:14,000 at A4
Drawing No :	Drawn :	Checked :
		Revisions :

**Site Area:**

158ha

**Site Description:**

The landscape is predominantly agricultural and rural in character. The Sutton and Mole Valley railway line divides the site centrally into eastern and western parcels. There are tree belts and wooded areas (including designated Areas of Ancient Woodland) that divide the western and eastern parcels of land into smaller fields. Boldings Brook passes through the eastern part of the site and is surrounded by mature vegetation.

The western parcel inclines from the lower land level of the railway line upwards to the A24 Dorking Road in the west. The existing hamlet of Kingsfold is located on a small portion of the western boundary. To the east of the railway line, the land is relatively flat until it meets Boldings Brook, where it inclines eastwards to meet Langhurst Wood Road and Friday Street. The land in the south eastern part of the site is relatively flat and well screened by existing trees and hedgerows.

**Summary of Proposal:**

**Housing**

The proposal has evolved significantly during the preparation of the Local Plan. The proposal currently seeks to deliver around 2,150 dwellings in a new settlement, formed of individual conurbations, adjacent to the existing settlement of Kingsfold and the A24. Development is proposed both east and west of the railway line. It has been indicated that the site could deliver 35% affordable housing together with a care home to meet the needs of

	<p>the elderly population. It is not clear that the proposal seeks to deliver Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.</p> <p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>The promoter has indicated that a new 7.5 hectare business campus would be created, building upon the success of the Broadland Business Campus to the immediate south east of the site.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>The site promoter states that a new railway station would be delivered in phase 6 of the development (years 11-12), and a new bridge crossing the railway line in proposed. The scheme promotes active travel, including cycle and pedestrian connectivity within the site and beyond, and also aims to connect to nearby towns and villages via new bus routes. The promoter also indicates that, subject to ongoing consultation with the community, safety improvements to the existing A24 through Kingsfold could be brought forward as part of the scheme, as could an A24 relief road as part of the wider scheme..</p> <p><u>Education and Community</u></p> <p>Promoters of this site have indicated that a new 3FE primary school would be delivered. No secondary school has been identified. The promoter has stated that primary health care facilities would be provided, with discussions with local GPs and the Primary Care Network ongoing.</p> <p>It is proposed that open space and sports pitches would be provided together with a Local Centre with large supermarket, a village hall and a pub and smaller local retail centres within each of the conurbations.</p> <p><u>Environment</u></p> <p>The site promoters have stated that the scheme could deliver between 10% and 20% biodiversity net gain. They would seek to protect the existing ancient woodland and retain 50% of the site for green and blue infrastructure. A new country park would be created, with habitats restored and areas rewilded.</p> <p><u>Net Zero Carbon</u></p> <p>The promoter has indicated that electric vehicle charging points would be provided and has made a commitment to energy efficiency and sourcing energy from non-renewable sources, including schemes such as district heating, solar power and ground source heat pumps.</p>
<b>Site Assessment against Criteria</b>	
<b><i>Environmental considerations</i></b>	
<b>Landscape:</b>	
The site does not lie within or near a protected landscape. The landscape is rural with much of the land in agricultural use. The Sutton and Mole Valley	<b>Very unfavourable</b>



Railway line divides the site into eastern and western parcels. There are tree belts and wooded areas (including designated Areas of Ancient Woodland) that divide the western and eastern parcels of land into smaller fields. Boldings Brook is sited in the eastern part of the site, surrounded by mature vegetation.

The Landscape Capacity Assessments (2021) found the majority of the site to have no/low capacity for residential development, with only small parcels to the east and west of the site assessed as having low-moderate capacity. The assessment of the site for employment development found the whole site to have no/low capacity. Although some parts of the site are relatively well contained in the landscape, other areas are more exposed: from particular vantage points along Friday Street and the easternmost area of the site, there are far reaching views over the whole site towards the A24 in the distance. Previous iterations of the indicative masterplan have attempted to direct development to areas where the promoters have identified capacity exists. Given recent changes in the promotion of the site, and updates to the scheme, it is unclear how the most recent proposal and layout attempts to address the significant landscape constraints of the site.

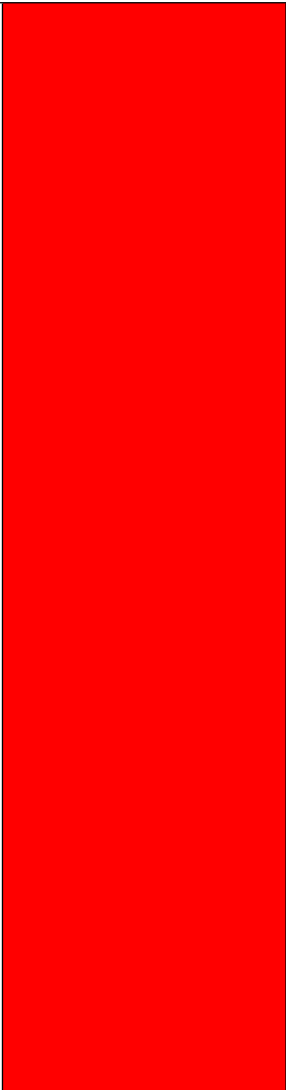
The Council recognises that its Landscape Capacity Assessment is at the strategic level and that finer grain work is necessary to identify the capacity of a large site such as this. Notwithstanding this, at this stage there are fundamental concerns regarding the location of development in landscape terms, particularly given the topography of the site and the site's constraints. A development of this scale would have very significant changes on the settlement pattern creating a linear urban form alongside the A24, potentially extending the urban form north from Horsham to the Surrey border. It would alter the very rural character of the area and therefore a very unfavourable rating for landscape is concluded.

**Biodiversity**

The site does not contain a SAC, SPA or SSSI. A Traditional Orchard (a Priority Habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan) is sited in the eastern parcel of the site, east of the residential dwellings Blackfriars and Blackfriars Cottage.

There are four Areas of Ancient Woodland contained within the site; Skense Copse and Warnham Mead Row to the south west of the site, Old Barn Gill straddles the railway line in the centre of the site, Boldings Copse lies partially within the site along the eastern boundary and North Wood also lies partially within the site, along the northern boundary. The Furze Field Area of Ancient Woodland is not contained within the site but adjoins the northern boundary.

The Brookhurst Wood and Gill and Morris's Wood Local Wildlife Site (formerly SNCI) lies approximately 250m to the south east and just beyond this, lies the Warnham Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). No detailed ecological work has been submitted by the new site promoters. However the promoters have largely taken into account the environmental characteristics of the site within their submitted material, and indicate that



Unfavourable

over 50% of the site would be kept as green and blue infrastructure, that existing biodiversity assets would be retained and improved and that parts of the site would be subject to restoration through engagement and work with Wilder Horsham.

It is considered that the indicative proposals could result in some favourable ecological impacts. Overall, it is considered that there are issues with regards biodiversity that need to be addressed in the event that this land is allocated for development. Taking into account the preliminary nature of the work provided at the time of writing and the likelihood that the masterplan may continue to evolve an unfavourable impact is assessed at this stage.

**Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:**

In the north western part of the site there is an Archaeological Notification Area (Medieval Moated Site and possible deserted Medieval Village, Moat Copse, Warnham)/ This surrounds Moat Copse which is designated as an Archaeological Site. The Grade II listed Kingsfold Place lies approximately 55m to the west of the site, and adjacent to the site's eastern boundary lies the Grade II listed Cripplegate. To the north east of the site lies a cluster of Grade II listed buildings including Friday Farm, Howells and Little Benhams; Shiremark Farmhouse lies to the north west of the site. There are other listed buildings at a further distance from the site. The Grade II listed Kingsfold Place can clearly be seen from within the site, including from the eastern part of the site.

No detailed heritage work has been submitted to the Council by the new site promoters to date. It is recognised that further work is needed to understand the archaeology of the site to understand the impacts of development on archaeological remains, with the possibility that there are remains from the prehistoric period onwards. As such, harm cannot be ruled out at this point.

While at this stage, no substantial issues are identified that would prevent development from occurring, the potential for harm to heritage assets have been identified. As such, development at this site is assessed as being unfavourable against this criterion and that further work is required.

Unfavourable

**Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):**

The site lies within a Brick Clay (Weald Clay) Minerals Safeguarding Area. These designations cover large parts of the district and are not a significant constraint to the site coming forward. Contaminated land surveys have not been undertaken although the predominantly agricultural nature of the site means that the potential for contamination is low.

The site does not lie within or near an AQMA, however, the site promoter has suggested that improvements to rail infrastructure and bus services between Dorking and Horsham could improve air quality and emissions in the local area.

Gatwick Airport is located approximately 7.5km to the north east of the site and overflying aircraft does create some noise impacts within the site. It

Unfavourable

should be noted that there are proposals by Gatwick Airport to increase the capacity of the airport, including bringing the standby runway into full use. Although there is no planning permission in place, were this to be granted, development in Kingsfold would be particularly impacted and Gatwick Airport Ltd have highlighted that this site could be affected by potential noise impacts associated with future growth of the airport.

There are also noise impacts associated with the railway line and the proximity of the A24 (although any proposed road upgrades could potentially reduce the impacts as part of the development) and the potential for noise impacts on new residents as a result of any new through road bypassing the A24.

. It is advised that detailed design will be required regarding the design of safety improvements to the A24, and to any potential new through road bypassing the A24. Where development is proposed close to the railway line, additional surveys and studies will be required. Network Rail have advised that this site would be affected by whistleboards which sound between 06:00 and 24:00 and it is assumed that a railway station itself would have noise impacts, if delivered.

The site is not within a Source Protection Zone. The promoter does not consider that development of the site will have an adverse impact on water quality, although consideration will be given to any impacts and further surveys are programmed. The promoter suggests that careful ecological management could improve the biodiversity value of Boldings Brook and the Gills.

Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the 'Arun Valley Sites'). The site is on the very edge of the Sussex North Water Resource Zone, and abuts the Sutton and Easy Surrey WRZ. The promoters have indicated that they are in ongoing discussions with SES Water regarding the bulk transfer of water from the SES WRZ thus are not expecting to contribute to abstraction at Hardham. Further detail on this arrangement is outstanding at the time of writing. In lieu of further detail, or written confirmation of an arrangement with SES Water, any allocation would need to be in conformity with the wider Strategic Solution which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality.

Whilst the majority of environmental quality considerations associated with the site do not raise concern, the site is affected by numerous noise impacts, from a number of sources, namely aircraft, road and rail noise. Both air and rail transport have the potential to cause adverse noise impacts associated with this site. Given this, an unfavourable rating is concluded for environmental quality, albeit there may be potential for mitigation of these impacts.

<b>Flooding / Drainage:</b>	
<p>The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1, although the area of the site associated with Boldings Brook is in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Given this, an assessment of 'neutral' is at this stage concluded. No information relating to flood mitigation or adaptation has been submitted to the Council by the new site promoters at this stage.</p>	Neutral
<b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency</b>	
<p>A wide range of measures are set out, which include carbon reduction, the provision of electric vehicle charging points, renewable energy generation, waste minimisation, water efficiency, designing flexible buildings and enhancing biodiversity, among others. The promoters have also suggested that a number of aspirational targets could be included in the site allocation policy if the site were taken forward. The scheme is intended to align with the West Sussex 2030 Energy Strategy, with the intention that all homes will be 100% electric and that the scheme will also make sure of a district heating network through a Heat From Waste scheme.</p> <p>Given the details submitted to date and the promoter's apparent commitment to implementing energy efficient and low carbon measures the proposals have been rated as 'favourable' for meeting the challenge of climate change.</p>	Favourable
<b><i>Social considerations</i></b>	
<b>Housing:</b>	
<p>The site is being promoted as a mixed use garden village style development, providing 2,150 new homes. The site promoters indicate 35% of the housing delivered will be affordable.</p> <p>The masterplan accompanying the viability statement seems to suggest the majority of homes being built at 35 dwellings per hectare, with higher density development located towards the south of the site nearer the location of the proposed railway station. Live-work units in an 'innovation community' would also be provided.</p> <p>No details have been provided as to how gypsy and traveller needs would be met but around 15 pitches would be required in a site of this size. It is also stated the proposals will meet the needs of specific groups, including the elderly in extra care facilities.</p> <p>Overall, the site would help to provide a substantial contribution to housing needs. However due to the lack of certainty and commitment to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller needs, the assessment is concluded as favourable at this stage.</p>	Favourable

<b>Education:</b>	
<p>A 3FE primary school is proposed to be delivered as part of Phase 2 of the development. It is presumed that this would be to meet the entire needs of the new settlement but given that 345 homes are proposed in the first phase, it would appear that some children will have to be schooled elsewhere, at least in the first instance.</p> <p>No secondary school is proposed as part of the development and there is no evidence of discussion with WSCC about whether this would be acceptable. Given the population of the proposed settlement, it would seem likely to generate significant needs for such provision. Without direct provision it is likely that children of secondary age would go to nearby schools – the nearest of which is Horsham Bohunt School approximately 2.4km away – though given the expected growth at Mowbray (North Horsham), there are concerns about its capacity to accommodate an increase in enrolment. Pupils would most likely need to travel by bus (or private motor vehicle) to Bohunt School, given the poor connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Until more information is forthcoming, it is assumed that the development will add greater strain on secondary education schools in the area, and despite the provision of a primary school is assessed to have an unfavourable impact on this criterion.</p>	Unfavourable
<b>Health:</b>	
<p>The promoters are promoting a 'primary preventative healthcare environment' concept which seems to equate to 15 minute neighbourhood principles – where everyday facilities can be accessed within a short distance within local centres. This would lend itself to healthy lifestyles, as would the provision of open space and leisure facilities.</p> <p>A GP surgery and pharmacy is proposed in stage 2 of the development albeit no detailed information has been provided to support its delivery. However, in common with other strategic site proposals, the extent and form of future health provision would necessarily be informed through further discussions with the NHS Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG) and discussions with existing providers.</p> <p>Overall, it is recognised that the promoter has a clear commitment to healthy lifestyles and provision of local healthcare on site. There is however uncertainty over the NHS Integrated Care Board supporting on-site facilities, and in the short term as a minimum there is likely to be a need to travel to travel to GPs around 3km away in Surrey and Horsham. At this stage the impacts is concluded as favourable.</p>	Favourable
<b>Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities</b>	
<p>Limited information has been submitted in relation to the leisure and community facilities that the site would provide, with the promoter indicating further community engagement is required in order to establish</p>	Neutral

what the most appropriate facilities will be. New country parks and sports provision are proposed and would be welcomed. Although it is likely that leisure provision could be provided to meet requirements, given the large nature of the site, very little information has been received which sets out what is proposed and what would benefit potential residents as well as those further afield. Given the uncertain nature of the proposals, it is therefore assessed as neutral against this criterion.

**Transport:**

Walking and Cycling

The site promoters state that walking and cycling routes would be enhanced including by improving the existing crossing points by diverting and enhancing existing PRoWs to link parts of the site. This may help to remove unsafe crossings over the railway line in accordance with Network Rail's nationwide strategy. However, at this stage limited detail on the discussions with network rail have been provided to the Council.

Horsham is not within easy walking distance of the site given the distance to facilities in Horsham and a lack of any safe or direct pedestrian routes (noting also the lack of any safe crossing points on the A264 or A24). Cycling is promoted and the site promoters have advanced ideas to create green travel corridors, suitable for cycling, that would also connect to longer routes to Horsham and beyond.

Whilst the scheme offers some services and facilities, residents would still be reliant on other settlements – particularly Horsham town. The A24 is a busy and fast stretch of road with no footways and the more rural roads of Langhurst Wood Road and Friday Street, similarly provide no footways. The promoters have identified such issues and continue to investigate whether measures, such as segregated paths/cycle lanes could be introduced but it is not known at this point whether this is achievable.

It is considered that residents in such a location would be reliant on their private motor vehicles to meet a number of their day-to-day needs, and will increase pressure on the existing road network. Hence the proposal does not meet wider aspirations for promoting sustainable travel before the private vehicle.

Public Transport

The promoters have indicated that they would seek to deliver a railway station on the Sutton and Mole Valley railway line within the Garden Village. They have indicated that this would be delivered around 11-12 years into the development of the site and that it would help to increase the frequency of services to Horsham and London. However, there is no evidence that provides any certainty that a railway station would be delivered if the site were allocated and/or that service frequency would be improved. It is also noted that the Council's correspondence with Network Rail indicates that they don't believe a development of this size at this location would justify a new railway station and highlight that this line is an unattractive one to London. As such, the Council is not currently of the view that there is a realistic prospect of delivery of such improvements in the plan period.

Unfavourable

Existing bus stops for Metrobus route 93 run alongside the site, that currently provide an hourly service to Horsham and Dorking. The promoters consider a new bus service which runs along the primary road through the new development would be delivered as part of the scheme.

Road Transport

The proposals suggest a 'relief road' for Kingsfold village could be considered as part of the wider scheme, and would connect the various parcels of development together, and downgrade the A24 in this location to discourage traffic through the existing settlement of Kingsfold. Although this in principle seems an attractive proposition, it is not considered necessary to solve any pressing highway capacity issue as no such issue has been identified at the strategic level. The proximity of this site with the Surrey border may also have the potential for greater impacts in this area than many proposals for new development in the District.

Overall, transport impacts are assessed as unfavourable. Whilst the potential for road and rail upgrades are recognised, the rail proposals in particular will be challenging to achieve and there is no clear prospect that either will come forward in the plan period. The proposed road upgrade does little to resolve existing congestion issues elsewhere in the district and does not fully improve the road between the A264 and Capel in Surrey. Despite efforts to encourage active travel, it is considered highly likely that residents would be reliant on private vehicles for higher order services and employment opportunities.

**Other infrastructure:**

The site promoters have confirmed that future communications technology will be provided as part of the proposals.

The impact is therefore assessed as neutral.

Neutral

***Economic considerations***

**Economy:**

Emerging master plan proposals propose an extension to the Broadlands Business Campus of 11 hectares (75,000 sq m or 800,000 sq ft) to compliment and further the existing offer. Although up-to-date information has not been supplied, previously this was estimated to provide 3000 jobs.

According to supporting information, the extension would provide an uplift in terms of both quality and quantity of employment space. The promoters place emphasis on the location of the site within the Gatwick Diamond and highlight that there is scope to enhance the offering in the commercial property market. Information received suggests that this part of the proposal would come forward in the Phase 5 (Years 9-10) of development.

The latest masterplan also shows an employment hub, though no significant

Favourable

<p>detail is provided. It is expected that this would also create jobs.</p> <p>The proposals are considered to result in a significant amount of employment space, co-located with an existing business campus with its valued businesses making an important contribution to the District's economy. From an economic perspective, this would appear to have a positive impact on this criterion, albeit there are already allocations being proposed in other locations around the district that would in combination go beyond the assessed employment need in the District. The site is assessed as 'favourable'.</p>	
<p><b>Retail</b></p>	
<p>The promoter indicates that as well as a main local centre, three smaller local centres would be created in different parts of the new settlement. No other supporting information on what type of retail facilities will be delivered has been submitted, with the applicant stating that further engagement with the community will shape the provision.</p> <p>Kingsfold does not currently offer any retail facilities and therefore, aside from what can be provided through the local shops on site, residents would likely be reliant on Horsham Town or places further afield to meet their full range of retail needs. Horsham town centre is some 6km in distance from the site and aside from vehicular access, more sustainable transport options are not considered that strong in this location – despite what is being proposed. Overall, an unfavourable rating for retail has been concluded.</p>	Unfavourable
<p><b>Further considerations</b></p>	
<p>No recent viability information has been submitted to support the most recent iteration of the development proposal to date. The Council has significant doubts that the proposal would justify nor be able to fund the delivery of the railway station. Thus, in the unlikely event that a railway station is delivered – other infrastructure or affordable housing could be sacrificed.</p> <p>The vision document identifies the development of the site in eight phases over around a 14-year period. The speed of delivery seems very ambitious and in the Council's experience of strategic sites, strategic developments are unlikely to build out as quickly as indicated. A slower than anticipated rate of delivery would leave overall housing supply in deficit. This would have a knock on impact on infrastructure delivery thus reducing the benefits of the proposal and/or delay the positive impacts of the proposal. No formal evidence of land ownership or option agreements have been submitted to the Council to support this vision statement.</p> <p>Community ownership or land value capture has not been proposed by the promoters. Given the uncertainty of delivery and viability an unfavourable rating for deliverability and viability has been concluded for the site.</p>	Unfavourable



<p><b>Development Quality:</b></p>	
<p>The promoters advocate a new garden village, comprising five conurbations, adjacent to the existing settlement of Kingsfold. It is suggested that this would equate to around 2,150 homes and a business campus that could deliver around 3,000 jobs, with complementary facilities (retail, leisure, health, education, open space, etc.) to support a new community. Whilst in the longer term, it is considered a sustainable new community would be delivered, this will (as for any new settlement) take time to emerge. There would be reliance on existing community facilities in nearby settlements to some degree, particularly in the early phases of any development.</p> <p>The latest masterplan and vision suggest that the site layout has been informed by landscape work, with areas identified as having capacity in the main being where development is sought.' However, there is little explanation of how the scheme will look or will fit in with the wider surroundings. Three small and one large local centres would be created for everyday needs but inevitably residents would be reliant on higher order settlements for additional needs. Internal vehicular and pedestrian/cycle links are proposed to link up the site, in an attempt to overcome the severance issue that the railway line presents.</p> <p>At this stage in the proposals, the promoters have indicated that long term management of the site will be discussed during the planning application process and discussions are ongoing with WSCC with regards transport and highways aspects. Further information is necessary to support the proposed railway station and railway improvements.</p> <p>It is unclear what other consultation has been undertaken relating to the most recent scheme, however the promoters indicate that they intend to engage positively and productively with local people in an open manner, providing opportunities for local people to speak directly to the team.</p> <p>No detailed information has been provided on the design of the residential elements, however there are indications on characteristics of the development more broadly, such as looking to the local village character of Warnham to inform the development pattern and massing, and the architecture and materials. nor is there a suggestion of design codes or styles that the promoters wish to introduce.</p> <p>There is limited information to judge the quality of the proposal at this stage, with it being unclear as to how the majority of the built form would be designed. An unfavourable impact is, overall, concluded.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Site Assessment Summary &amp; Recommendation</b></p>	
<p>Allocation of this site would have benefits in bringing forward a significant level of residential accommodation that would help in meeting identified housing needs including a range of housing types and sizes. The site is however situated in the very north of the District, and whilst relatively close to Horsham is not well connected with the town. The promoters have a highly ambitious development rate, which, if not achieved, may make some elements of their proposal unviable.</p>	

One of the main advantages of the proposals is the potential delivery of an extension to the Broadlands Business Campus of 75,000 sq m and 3,000 jobs, potentially of high quality, particularly given the co-location with the existing employment provision at Broadlands, albeit there are alternative sites under consideration to meet the District's future employment needs. It is understood access to this area of land would need to be obtained through the current business park in Langhurstwood Road. No evidence of any agreement has been provided to the Council.

The scheme proposes a number of community benefits, including a country park, re-wilding of agricultural land, a new primary school, extra care/sheltered accommodation for the elderly and retail facilities. Whilst welcome, future residents would still be heavily reliant on other settlements, particularly Horsham, but also Warnham and potentially settlements further north, into Surrey for main retail facilities, as well as secondary school and sixth form provision.

The presence of the railway line through the centre of the site would create a severance issue, which the promoters have yet to directly address. The majority of the development would be focussed in the southern portion of the site, with the highest density development focused around the proposed railway station.

The site is in a location that has a strong rural character and, despite contrary views of the promoter, development of this site is considered to not only result in significant landscape harm, but could also harm the setting of a number of listed buildings and land of archaeological interest. There are significant existing environmental assets on the site, which are predominantly proposed to be retained and improved. The proximity of the railway line raises the potential for adverse noise impacts, and there is potential for further adverse noise impacts associated with the proposed relief road and the proximity to Gatwick and associated flight paths. It is likely that these noise impacts could be mitigated through appropriate positioning of properties and noise insulation measures.

The promoters indicate that a railway station would be provided and that the development could improve frequency on the line. There appears to be no reliable evidence to support the feasibility of this proposal, and the promoter has not submitted viability information to demonstrate that the most recent scheme could be delivered. In any event, the railway line does not provide a quick service into central London and passengers would need to connect at Horsham to services to other parts of Horsham District, Gatwick and the coast. Connectivity to the site is considered to be relatively poor and, given its location, it is considered likely that private vehicles will be the dominant form of transport to travel outside of the site, despite the claims of the promoters. The potential provision of internal links and the creation of safe crossing points would allow internal movements and promote healthy lifestyles should local attractors (local centres, leisure facilities, health services, etc) be provided.

**Officer Recommendation:**

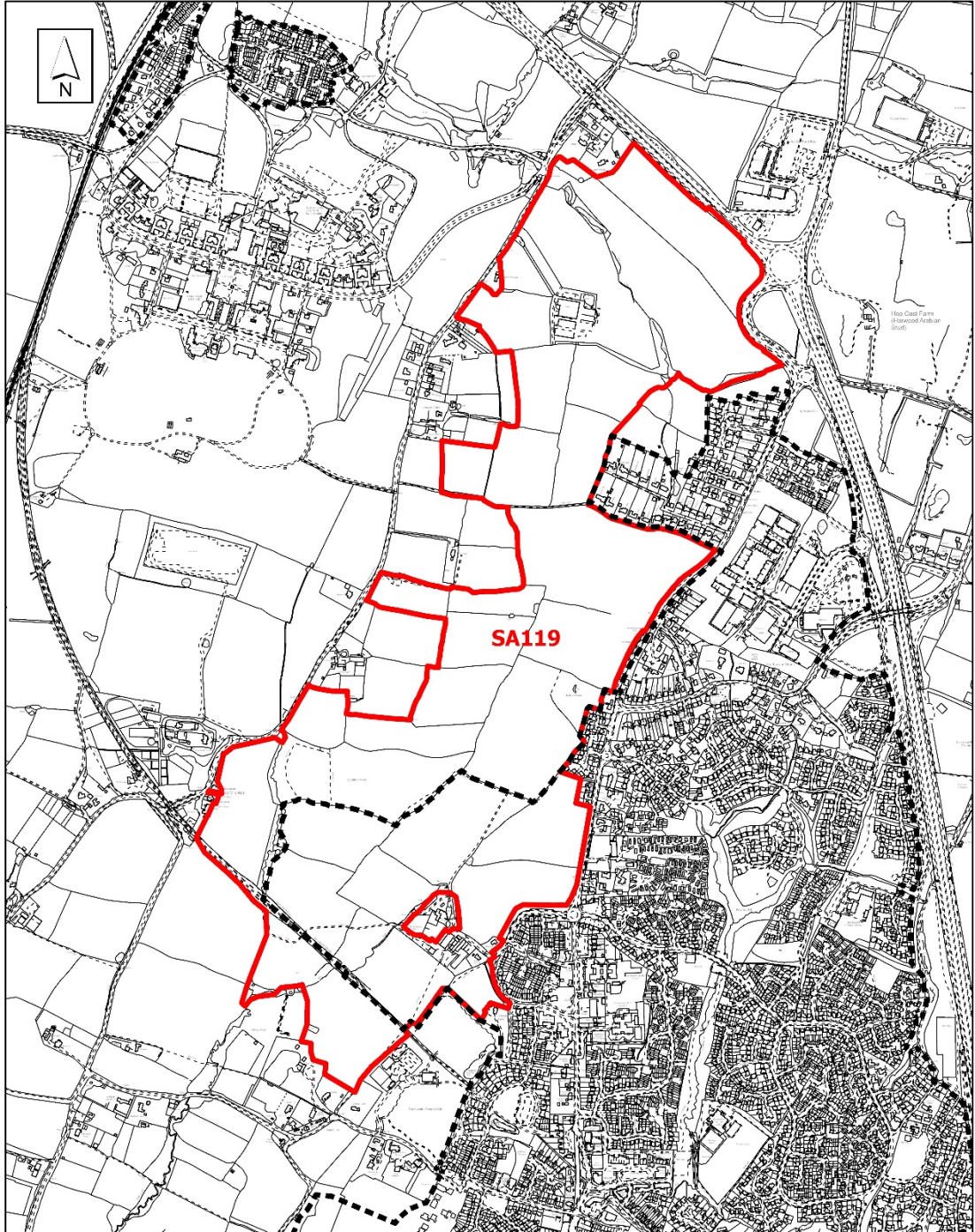
This site is not considered suitable for strategic development due to a combination of factors, including landscape impacts and lack of certainty as to the deliverability and viability of the scheme. Furthermore, the site is detached from any existing established settlement, and would be a village-size settlement with more limited opportunity for self-containment. It scores less well in the Sustainability Appraisal than settlement extension sites, reflecting the high level of challenge there would be in achieving sustainable travel habits and access to facilities, particularly in the early phases of development.

For the reasons set out, the site is not recommended for allocation.

**Site Name: Land North West of Southwater**

**SA119**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs : Director of Place

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**Local Plan Review 2023  
Land North West of Southwater**

Reference No :

Date: 15 November 2023

Drawing No :

Scale : 1:12,000 at A4

Revisions :

<b>Site Area:</b>	113 ha
<b>Site Description:</b>	<p>The site is located to the west / northwest of Southwater. It comprises arable and pasture land, interspersed by hedgerows, larger areas of woodland, and a number of Public Rights of Way, stretching from east to west across the site. It contains three Areas of Ancient Woodland (Courtland Wood, Two Mile Ash Gill and Smiths Copse). To the north the site is constrained by the A24. To the east there are more urban influences where the site adjoins Worthing Road, Southwater and the previously-permitted development site known as “Broadacres”. However, the site’s western boundary (Two Mile Ash road) and southern boundary (Church Lane, straddling the Downslink (a disused railway line converted to a cycle route, which runs from Guildford to Shoreham) are considerably more rural in character. There are also a number of statutorily listed buildings located within/ immediately adjacent to the development site.</p> <p><u>“Broadacres” Development</u></p> <p>Land to the immediate south and south -east of the development site is known as “Broadacres”. It is a Strategic Allocation within the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) adopted in 2015 and planning permission for 594 dwellings (DC/14/0590/OUT) and associated community facilities. This development was permitted on 25 June 2015, has commenced and is approximately half-complete.</p> <p><u>Neighbourhood Plan</u></p> <p>The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan was made on 24 June 2021. Land West of Southwater, as identified on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map, is allocated for the provision of 422-450 new residential units, consisting of a minimum of 350 C3 dwellings and a minimum of 72 units falling within Use Class C2. The site is required to provide a minimum of 8 hectares of public open space. The neighbourhood plan residential allocation extends from the north-west boundary of the existing Strategic Site “Broadacres” and extends north and west, across the development site, up to Courtland Wood. The plan also identifies a parcel of land south of New Road which is safeguarded for the provision of a future secondary school. The Neighbourhood Plan also includes Policy SNP18 - A Treed Landscape, which seeks, for major development, the provision of 1 new tree per 40 sqm of floorspace created.</p>
<b>Summary of Proposal:</b>	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <p>The site (Land North West of Southwater) is being promoted as an urban extension to Land West of Southwater for the delivery of up to 1,000 dwellings. This would be split between 650 market dwellings (65%) and 350 affordable dwellings (35%). The site promoters are proposing space for 5 Gypsy &amp; Traveller pitches.</p> <p>In terms of housing mix, the site promoter has indicated that they will be providing a mix of bedroom sizes and a mix of rented, shared ownership, and discounted market homes; housing for older people; including Extra</p>

Care, Custom and self-build plots.

#### Employment

The site promoter is seeking to provide an employment hub in the north of the site, providing approximately 3 hectares of employment space.

#### Education

The site promoter will be providing: a nursery; a 1 form entry (expandable to 2 form entry) primary school; and a 6 form entry (expandable to 8 form entry) secondary school. The secondary school would be provided in Phase 1 and the nursery and primary school would be delivered in Phase 2.

#### New Community Hub/ Neighbourhood Facility

The site promoter would provide a neighbourhood hub, providing shops, amenities and co-working space. This could have a range of uses including complementary retail to Lintot Square and community facilities. The site promoter is also proposing a new facility for the Southwater Scouts and other local groups.

#### Creative District (Orchard Barns)

The developer is seeking to provide enhancements to the ancillary buildings that lie adjacent (to the immediate east of) Great House Farm. These will be renovated to create new commercial and community spaces.

#### New Sports Facilities

The site promoter is proposing a cricket pitch and 2 junior football pitches for Southwater Sports Club.

#### Public Open Space

The developers are proposing landscape features enhanced and a net gain in biodiversity (greater than 10%). They propose restoration of ancient woodland at Courtland Wood, Smith's Copse and Tow Mile Ash Gill; provision of approximately 40 acres of open space for public use, and allotments and an orchard for local food production.

#### Sustainability

The site promoters propose a fabric first approach to construction of homes. Other proposed measures are the use of low carbon technology, such as air source heat pumps rather than gas boilers; use of photovoltaic panels on site; electric vehicle charging facilities and secure cycle storage for every home, and water efficiency measures to achieve average usage of 85 litres/ person/ day (down from Building Regulations of 110 litres/ person/day).

	<p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>The site promoters propose a car park and cycle storage at Christ's Hospital station. Key highways mitigation measures proposed are signalisation of the Hop Oast roundabout to provide a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists; a link road to Hop Oast; a link road to Two Mile Ash Road, and a new spine road running north-south through the site. They also propose new walking and cycling routes within the site; improved walking and cycling routes to Southwater, Horsham, and Christ's Hospital Station, including the enhancement of public rights of way such as the Downs Link, and investment in Metrobus Service 98 to Horsham. The promoters state they will explore options with Metrobus for a bus link to Christ's Hospital Station.</p>
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**Site Assessment against Criteria**

***Environmental considerations***

**Landscape:**

The main landscape constraints on site relate to the three areas of Ancient Woodland within the site (Courtland Wood, Two Mile Ash Gill and Smith's Copse) and the Public Rights of Way network within the central and southern part of the site, including the Downs Link Way. The westernmost section of the site is particularly rural in character and there are currently very limited urban influences in this location.

The Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, 2021) identifies this land as falling within Zone 2 South Horsham-Southwater. The Study indicates that the site falls within three different landscape character areas: 27- Two Mile Ash and Environs; 28 Land West of Southwater; and 29 Land NW of Southwater. Area 27 is identified as having no/low capacity for large-scale housing and large-scale employment uses. This reflects the fact that the site contains some sensitive areas (including ancient woodland and listed buildings). The design of any development on this site would need to take account of these constraints to minimise any potential harm to the ancient woodland and listed buildings.

The developer, through their revised Masterplan, has sought to mitigate previously identified adverse landscape impacts. They have reduced the number of homes on site from 1,500 in an earlier scheme (withdrawn application DC/22/1916/OUT) to 1,000 dwellings. This includes removing housing from the western side of Great House Farm; removing development from the western edge of the site close to Two Mile Ash Road and also removing housing from the field south of the Great House Farm and being replaced by grass sports pitches.

In addition to removing the housing parcels, the developer is proposing to replace the sports facilities that were previously proposed south of the Downs Link with informal green space, and to remove the sports pitches that were previously proposed south of Church Lane.

Neutral

<p>In terms of trees, the site promoter has said that 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.</p> <p>The changes made by the developer to remove 500 dwellings from the previous application, in sensitive areas of the site, Have resulted in the previous rating of “Unfavourable” being upgraded to “neutral”.</p>	
<p><b>Biodiversity:</b></p>	
<p>The site contains a number of biodiversity assets, such as areas of ancient woodland (Courtland Wood, Two Mile Ash Gill and Smith’s Copse), which are located on the western and eastern edges of the site. These would be retained as part of the proposals for green infrastructure on the site.</p> <p>Initial ecological survey work has been undertaken which has identified the presence of protected species on the site. The survey work has identified that additional mitigation measures are required in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of individuals and populations of protected and notable species including bats, badgers, birds, reptiles, Great Crested Newts and invertebrates.</li> <li>• Protection of habitats within and adjacent to the site, including ancient woodland (2 of which are designated as non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites), ancient and veteran trees, hedgerows and water bodies.</li> <li>• Protection of off-site designated areas in the wider area, in particular the Arun Valley SPA, SAC and Ramsar from adverse effects of water abstraction.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, it is noted that the development site lies within the 12km wider conservation area of the Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for woodlands, which feature Barbastelle maternity roosts.</p> <p>The site promoter has indicated that they will be providing a biodiversity net gain of more than 10%.</p> <p>Subject to further development of the masterplan, it is considered that there is a reasonable prospect of the impacts being mitigated, and the additional “Linear habitats” requirements being provided. Therefore, a rating of “Neutral” is given.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

**Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:**

A “Built Heritage Baseline Assessment” has been produced for the site. It identifies that there are 24 listed buildings within a 500m study radius of the site, one of which is Grade II\* (Great House Farmhouse) and 23 of which are Grade II. There are also two Grade II\* listed buildings located just outside of the study area to the northwest at Christ’s Hospital School. There are ten Parish Heritage Assets within the Study area, which have been identified via the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and area treated as non-designated heritage assets. Three inter-connected barns at Great House Farm (Barns A, B and C), located within the site, are additionally regarded as non-designated heritage assets.

Any development on site will need to take account of these buildings, together with consideration of the heights of development, topography, views, the rural setting and the impact of increased traffic on local roads. Development will need to demonstrate how the rural character and green routes can be retained through the development.

Great House Farmhouse is surrounded by the site on all sides, although itself remains outside of the proposed development boundary. It is proposed that the Barns (Orchard Barns) to the immediate east will be removed and replaced with commercial and community spaces. Orchards and allotments will be included as part of this redevelopment.

The most recent Masterplan for the site removes a parcel of residential development that was proposed to the south of Great House Farmhouse, as well as removing hockey pitches that were proposed to the immediate south of the Downs Link. It is understood that Great House Farmhouse will remain as a single residence. If so, it will require a proportionate size of grounds surrounding it to retain its original character. This building must continue to be appreciated in its historic rural setting. Any nearby development must not dilute this setting and for this reason, the housing parcel shown to the south of the ancillary buildings should not be developed.

The site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area for prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval remains. There is potential for archaeological remains from all eras to be found on and around the site. The promoters have undertaken work to investigate the presence of archaeological features. It concludes that there was a “moderate to high potential for deposits of earlier prehistoric, Iron Age to Romano-British and post-medieval date within the Site” and a “low to moderate” potential for deposits of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Saxon and medieval date, based on discoveries within the main site. The significance of such finds are likely to be of “local or regional” significance.

The Archaeological Assessment concludes that further archaeological mitigation measures are likely to be required and that a targeted evaluation in the areas of the site directly impacted by the proposed development should be carried out. It is suggested that any such evaluation could follow

Neutral



outline consent secured by an appropriately worded archaeological planning condition.

Given the removal of housing to the immediate south of Great House Farmhouse and the proposed hockey pitches to the south of the Downs Link, a rating of “neutral” is given.

**Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):**

The promoters have produced a Ground Conditions and Contamination Assessment states that a Phase 1 Desk Study and Phase 2 Preliminary intrusive investigation has been undertaken on the site. The investigation targeted areas where contamination may be present. No contamination was found during this limited investigation, and it is considered unlikely that there is widespread contamination across the site, particularly in the development area. It continues that “further hotspots of contamination may be possible on the site and a more detailed investigation should be undertaken to better characterise the site before works proceed on site”.

It is agreed that further exploratory works should be carried out, given that the main development site has a history of infilling in the northern section, and a railway line that ran through the site to the south. In addition, the car parking land to the north-west, which forms part of the application site, was in use adjacent to a railway station and is understood to have a history of infilling.

The site is also located in a minerals safeguarding area for brick clay and building stone. These designations cover large parts of the district and are not a significant constraint to the site coming forward; nevertheless a Minerals Resources Assessment has been prepared. The site is not located in an Air Quality Management Area, however an Air Quality Emissions Mitigation Plan has been prepared. There are no significant noise issues. In terms of water quality, the site is not located in a source protection zone.

Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the ‘Arun Valley Sites’). Any allocation would therefore need to be in conformity with the wider strategic offsetting scheme which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality. The annual water consumption for the residential part of the Proposed Development is calculated as 85 litres per person per day. This is in line with the Council’s water neutrality strategy. The promoter’s Water Reduction Strategy sets out that the site promoter will reduce water consumption as much as possible on site, in light of the guidance from Horsham District Council and based on the Position Statement on water neutrality issued by Natural England on 14 September 2021. Proposals to achieve on-site water reduction include installing water-efficient fixtures and appliances in new

Neutral

housing and commercial development; trying to instill a “water-saving culture” among future occupants; and exploring on-site opportunities on existing properties to off-set water usage. For water demand that cannot be offset on-site, the site promoter will provide a developer contribution based on a tariff payment mechanism, once that is set up by the local authorities within the North West Sussex Water Supply Zone.

The promoters have also prepared an Agricultural Land Assessment Plan.

Overall, a neutral rating is given, however, this is dependent on further exploratory work being carried out by the Promoter on the parts of the site identified by Horsham District Council, the Environment Agency and Natural England as potentially contaminated, to establish that no development occurs on contaminated land.

**Flooding / Drainage:**

The site is located in Flood Zone 1, with a low risk of tidal and fluvial flooding. There are no main rivers in proximity to the site. The site is not located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.

The site promoters have undertaken a detailed initial flood risk assessment. In terms of groundwater flooding, the site is, however, partially located within an area designated as High Groundwater Vulnerability and partially located within unproductive strata. A Preliminary Ground Appraisal for the site states that the water recorded in the monitoring wells is “most likely an accumulation of perched water seepages or surface water run-off rather than a groundwater table”.

In terms of surface water flooding, the Environment Agency’s surface water flood risk mapping shows the majority of the site as having very low or low surface water flood risk. There are also multiple areas of medium and high surface water risk (high is defined as flooding every 30 years), adjacent to the ordinary watercourse, south west of the site. Further assessment shows the depth of High-risk flooding ranging from 300mm-900mm which has been deemed not significant if suitable mitigation methods are applied.

In terms of sewer flooding, the report states that given there are only a limited number of localised foul sewers crossing the north west part of the site, sewer flood risk is considered low.

In terms of reservoir flooding, the EA mapping “Flood risk from reservoirs” the site has not been identified as within the extent of flooding from reservoirs and the probability of flooding is considered as negligible.

The Surface Water Drainage Strategy demonstrates that the surface water drainage provision for the site will be designed to accommodate surface

Neutral

<p>water run-off for all events up to and including the 100 year return period plus 45% climate change allowance. A number of large-scale SuDS, including detention basins, ponds, and swales, provide the bulk of the attenuation requirement.</p> <p>Given the limited existing flood risk and proposed enhancements a neutral impact is concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b></p>	
<p>A Climate Change Assessment (WSP Consultants), Water Reduction Strategy (Hodkinson) and a Sustainability Strategy (Hodkinson) have been prepared by the site promoter.</p> <p>The Climate Change Assessment concludes that the whole life embodied emissions of the Proposed Development are anticipated to align with the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) 2025 target. The significance of the embodied carbon emissions is likely to have minor adverse effects on climate without mitigation. The Report concludes that mitigation measures to reduce the carbon emissions from building materials; transport of materials to and from the site; construction activities; maintenance and repair; and end of life of the buildings will have to be considered in the next stage of the project.</p> <p>A Sustainability Strategy has identified a number of measures: achieving a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating for all commercial units; a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through energy efficiency measures, consideration of overheating and alternative technologies; facilities to be provided for domestic and construction-related waste, and where practical, new building materials will be sourced locally to reduce transportation pollution and support the local economy.</p> <p>Taking account of these proposed measures, a neutral assessment is given.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Social considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Housing:</b></p>	
<p>The site is being promoted as an urban extension to Land West of Southwater for the delivery of up to 1,000 dwellings. This is reduction of 500 dwellings from the application DC/22/1916/OUT for 1,500 dwellings, which was withdrawn on 22 February 2023. The areas where the housing has been removed are discussed above.</p> <p>The 1,000 dwellings would include 35% affordable housing and Extra Care housing. It would be split between 650 market dwellings (65%) and 350 affordable dwellings (35%).</p>	<p>Favourable</p>

The site promoter is also proposing a mix of rented, shared ownership, and discounted market homes; housing for older people, including Extra Care; custom and self-build plots.

The site promoter has also confirmed that a parcel of land could be provided to accommodate 4 or 5 gypsy & traveller pitches in the northern portion of the site, adjacent to the proposed employment site.

The provision of 35% affordable housing is in line with the Council's emerging local plan policy. The Council would expect the mix of housing to be in line with that set out in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019).

It is considered that there are some risks with the proposed delivery rate of housing on site and would urge the developer to be as flexible as possible to ensure that the site is built out as quickly as possible.

Taking into account the reduction in numbers from 1,500 to 1,000 in a number of sensitive locations, the provision of housing is assessed as favourable.

**Education:**

The site promoter is proposing land for a 1 form entry (FE) primary school, expandable to 2FE with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) facilities and a nursery, and A 6FE secondary school, expandable to 8FE with SEND facilities.

In terms of location, the promoter is seeking to locate the secondary school in the northern central portion of the site. There is a proposed expansion area to the southwest of the secondary school. The site promoter is also proposing locating the primary school on the eastern side of the development site, to the south of New Road.

West Sussex County Council have advised the site promoter on timescales for the delivery of the secondary and primary schools. The provision of a school site is positive as it will benefit existing communities as a need for additional secondary school places has been identified in the District.

Within the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, land is already safeguarded for the provision of a new secondary school (from the 450 homes allocated). This is on land on the eastern side of the development site, to the south of New Road, and is favoured by the local community in terms of providing maximum accessibility and benefit to the settlement. With regards to the proposed splitting of the primary and secondary schools by the site promoter, the Council would prefer to see the primary and secondary schools located on the safeguarded land site, as set out in the Southwater

Favourable

<p>Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>This proposal would meet its own and wider educational needs for the District. The proposed location is not in accordance with the Made Neighbourhood Plan and is not policy compliant. The overall impact is assessed as “Favourable”.</p>	
<p><b>Health:</b></p>	
<p>At this stage the NHS Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG) have not indicated that new health care provision would be required as part of any new development in this location. The centre of the proposed site is located approximately 1.25km from the existing Village Surgery in Southwater which is understood to have capacity to accommodate the new development proposed on this site. Notwithstanding this, the site promoter has confirmed that they will engage with the health providers (Horsham and Mid Sussex NHS Integrated Care Board) to determine to what extent improvements are required to medical facilities in Southwater to provide adequate capacity to serve the residents of the proposed development.</p> <p>While site promoters are not by law required to provide new medical facilities for a new development, the fact that the proposal here is for a potential upgrade of existing facilities means that this aspect of the scheme scores a neutral rating.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:</b></p>	
<p>As part of the Broadacres development to the south of this site (being brought forward by the same site promoter), new community sports pitches and a pavilion have been provided. The site promoter remains committed to the creation of a strong, sustainable and self-sufficient neighbourhood at Southwater, with additional community facilities.</p> <p>It is proposed that the development would include a neighbourhood hub providing shops, amenities and co-working space; flexible community facilities within Orchard Barns; allotments and an orchard for local food production, and approximately 40 acres of public open space for community use.</p> <p>A new local community hub is proposed in the central part of the site, which would provide uses such as leisure, sports and retail, while complementing Lintot Square. In addition, a new community building would also be delivered, providing a facility for use by local groups such as the Southwater Scouts.</p> <p>The site promoter is also proposing to provide flexible community facilities at Orchard Barns, to the southeast of Great House Farmhouse, through the adaptation and redevelopment of a group of barns. The Site Promoter has re-named the area as “Orchard Barns” to reflect the history of the area. Its</p>	<p>Favourable</p>

redevelopment will include landscaped orchards and allotments.

In terms of sports and play provision, in addition to facilities already provided as part of the Broadwater development, the site promoter is seeking to provide a cricket pitch and 2 junior football pitches.

In terms of open space provision, the site promoter is proposing a total of 40ha of open space.

Overall, the majority of these provisions, particularly for play and open space are positive. In addition, the removal of the hockey provision, which was in a very sensitive location, is viewed positively. Overall, a rating of “favourable” is given.

**Transport:**

Walking and cycling

The site promoter’s Transport Assessment includes a “Walking and Cycling Strategy”. The site promoters see active travel forming a large proportion of the trips generated by the development, with a compact settlement including employment and other facilities, including 2 schools, and the delivery of new and enhanced routes within the site, as well as improvements to existing off-site routes.

The promoter is proposing that a connection to National Cycle Route 223 (the ‘Downs Link’) is provided, which operates through the Site, while a contribution towards improvements to the Downs Link would also be secured as part of the proposed development.

The proposed spine road through the Site would be provided with comprehensive, high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure to Local Transport Note 1/20 standards and would connect to adjoining walking and cycling routes within the Site and to off-site areas. In particular, this includes a connection to a proposed new signal-controlled, at-grade pedestrian and cyclist crossing facility over the A24 at the Hop Oast roundabout.

There would also be improvements to the existing Public Rights of Way.

A number of key off-site walking and cycling routes to destinations such as Horsham and Christ’s Hospital will also be enhanced by way of infrastructure improvements that will be delivered as part of the proposed development, or by way of a contribution to WSCC towards the delivery of these schemes.

Favourable

### Public Transport

The promoter's Transport Assessment also includes a Public Transport Strategy. This includes examination of a new bus service to Christ's Hospital and enhancement of bus services to Horsham town centre. It concludes that the most optimum solution for maximising the accessibility credentials of the site by public transport is through a contribution to enhancements to the existing 98 service to Horsham, including increases to the frequency of the service – to every 15 minutes initially and then to every 12 minutes from year three – along with the potential for re-routing of services through the northern part of the site. Funding would also be made available for an improved evening and Sunday service.

### Road Transport

In terms of the development site itself, it will be served by four primary points of access. The proposals will introduce a new vehicular access point onto the north of Worthing Road, adjacent to Hop Oast roundabout. This will form the northernmost primary access point onto the primary road, which will act as the spine for the development, running north to south. A second primary access point will connect the development to Chessall Avenue at the south and a further primary access is proposed along Worthing Road opposite Netherton Close. A fourth primary access point is proposed on the eastern side of Station Road at Christ's Hospital Station to serve the new parking area, if required.

Non- Motorised Uses-only accesses are to be provided at the existing Public Rights of Way access points would be provided through the upgrade of the existing gated field access at Two Mile Ash Road (immediately south of junction with Christ's Hospital Road)

In terms of impacts upon the wider road network and mitigation, the promoter is proposing improvements to the A24 Worthing Road/ Hop Oast Roundabout. In line with West Sussex County Council's A24 Corridor Enhancement Study, the Hop Oast roundabout would be fully signalised in order to allow for safe crossing of pedestrians and cyclists across the A24 and to increase capacity of the junction for motorised vehicles. Further dialogue will need to be undertaken with West Sussex County Council on this scheme.

### Christ's Hospital Links

The site promoter has investigated the area of the Site that is located to the east of Station Road (at Christ's Hospital railway station) and whether it could function as a potential new car park and bus turning area serving Christ's Hospital railway station. This area could also accommodate additional cycle storage facilities.

Overall, the site promoter has sought sustainable transport solutions to cater for a large new strategic development. This includes a significant commitment to reduce reliance on cars, and to enhance links to Horsham

<p>and the nearby railway station. It is also considered that transport impacts arising from the scheme on the wider road network can be mitigated. Overall the transport impact is assessed as favourable.</p>	
<p><b>Other infrastructure:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoter indicates that they have been in contact with utility providers and statutory undertakers to assess the capacity of local infrastructure and to identify any upgrades required to support the development. Upgrades are required to provide adequate capacity to the development (gas, electricity / water) but no unresolvable issues have been identified. The impact is therefore assessed as neutral.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b><i>Economic considerations</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Economy:</b></p>	
<p>The employment hub is located in the northern part of the main site which will provide space for employment needs such as office space, logistics, light industrial and storage space (Use Classes E, B2 and B8). The proposal is for up to 3 hectares of flexible employment space (Use Classes E/B2/B8).</p> <p>The primary employment area proposed to be located along the northern edge of the main site with independent vehicular and pedestrian access taken from the spine road. This larger site offers the flexibility for a combination of employment uses that may require larger land take. The secondary employment area is to be located directly southwest of the primary area. This smaller parcel offers an opportunity to provide land for small and medium sized businesses to grow and expand such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The promoter states that this strategy will help to provide a range of types and sizes of employment to help meet the varied need identified by HDC in the emerging Local Plan. It will also allow for a greater landscape buffer to Two Mile Ash Road.</p> <p>Overall, there are likely to be favourable impacts on the economy.</p>	<p>Favourable</p>
<p><b>Retail:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoters are proposing to provide a new local centre as part of the development to provide retail, services and co-working space. The mix of uses and scale of retail provision within this local centre would be designed to be complementary to the village centre at Lintot Square and not undermine the viability and attractiveness of this centre which has been identified as a particular concern amongst existing Southwater residents.</p> <p>A retail assessment has been submitted as part of the application. The promoter is proposing 1,500 sqm (gross) of new Use Class E floorspace (1,050 sqm net), which would be split: 700 sqm convenience (gross); 200 sqm comparison (gross); food and beverage 450 sqm (gross) and other services 150 sqm. This concludes that the new level of additional Use Class E floorspace can be accommodated without impacting provision at Lintot</p>	<p>Favourable</p>



<p>Square (the conclusion is that up to 2,343 sqm (gross) of additional Use Class E floorspace could be accommodated.</p> <p>A small level of additional and complementary retail provision is considered to be beneficial to the new development in particular and is assessed as a favourable impact. However, it would need to be certain that this did not conflict with the Lintot Square development and is instead complimentary.</p> <p>Given the above, an overall favourable impact is concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Further considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Deliverability and Viability:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoter has indicated that development on Land North West of Southwater could start in 2029/30 and that all 1000 dwellings would be complete by 2040/41. That would be an average build-out rate of 83 dwellings per annum. It is however noted that the developer in this location (Broadacres) has had relatively slow build out rates over the last 6 years (a total of approximately 300 dwellings have been built in 6 years, at an average of 50 dwellings per year</p> <p>The site promoter is also currently building out a site to the west of Horsham called Highwood, which still has approximately 350 dwellings to complete. This site is likely to be completed in 2028/29.</p> <p>The Council considers that development could commence on site in 2029/30, however the average build out rates are unlikely to exceed 70 dwellings per year- and that is on the basis that the developer has discussed delivering a wider range of products (more rented homes/ housing for older people, including Extra Care and custom and self-build plots). The Council considers that approximately 735 dwellings would be completed on site with the Plan period (i.e. by 2040).</p> <p>Given the concerns with the anticipated build-out rates, and queries over the alternative products being offered by the site promoter, it is considered appropriate to give a “neutral” rating to site deliverability.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Development Quality:</b></p>	
<p>The proposed development would be an extension to the settlement of Southwater and the site is well located in terms of access to existing services and facilities and an already established community.</p> <p>Taking account of the site promoter’s existing track record of high quality development in this location, development quality is assessed as very positive.</p>	<p>Very positive</p>

## **Site Assessment Summary & Recommendation**

The site promoter is proposing a development of 1,000 homes, offering 35% affordable housing, together with a wide range of education facilities (nursery, primary and secondary schools); local amenities (neighbourhood hub, Scout/ local group facilities, transformation of Great House Farmhouse area); an employment hub (with 3 ha of employment space); open space provision (approximately 40 acres) and restoration of ancient woodland; a sustainable approach to construction (Electric vehicle charging facilities; air source heat pumps; improved water efficiency); land for 4 to 5 Gypsy & Traveller pitches and a number of transport improvements (new spine road; signalization of Hop Past Roundabout; link road to Hop Oast; link road to Two Mile Ash Road; improved walking and cycling routes; and investment in Metrobus Services; car park and cycle storage at Christ's Hospital).

Allocation of this site would have benefits in bringing forward a significant level of residential accommodation that would help in meeting identified housing needs, including affordable housing, in the District. The site is located on the western edge of Southwater, which is one of the largest and most sustainable settlements in the District, offering a wide range of services, employment and good public transport and road links. Development would deliver homes in a key area of housing demand. The site is also close to the A24 which is the main north-south route through the District.

The promoter is currently building out an existing permission for 594 homes on land to the West of Southwater demonstrating that they have a track record of housing delivery in the District. This new site is well located against the existing settlement form of Southwater and would connect directly to the new development to the south which is already being built out.

The principle of up to 450 homes on a land parcel to the north of the Downs Link has now been established as part of the made Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

The main concerns are with the proposed location of the new education provision, which is split between the northern central section of the site (for secondary) and eastern centre of the site (for primary). The Council would like to see the secondary and primary schools provided to the south of New Road, in the area safeguarded for education within the made Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, the Council has concerns regarding the delivery timescales (and the products involved) put forward by the site promoter for the scheme as a whole.

### **Officer Recommendation:**

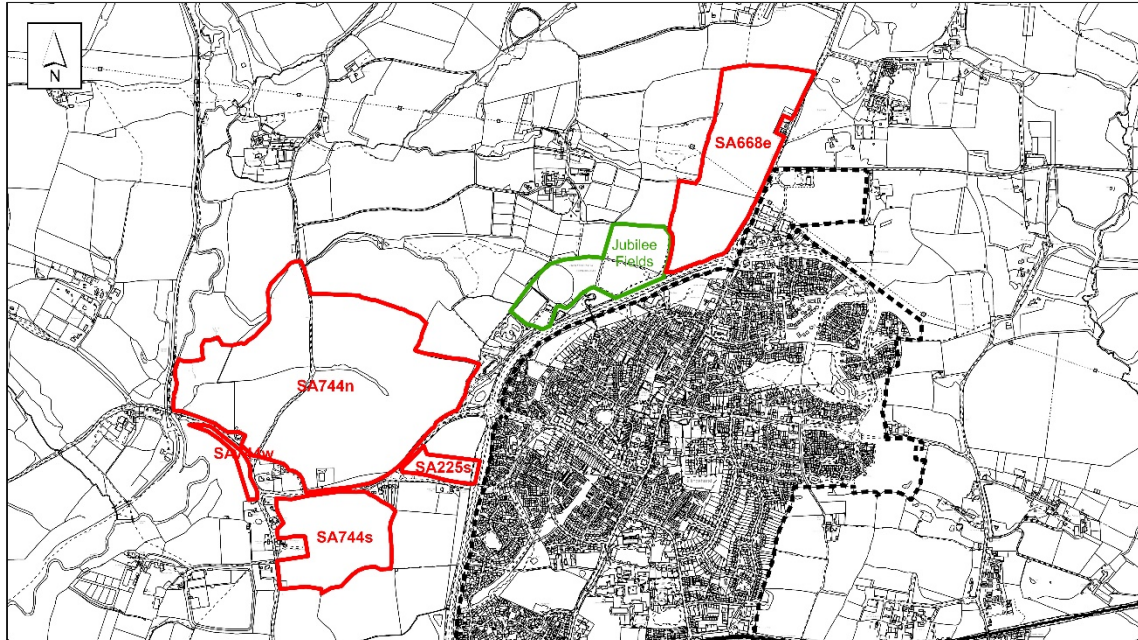
Overall, development in this location has been assessed as performing well against the criteria above and in the Council's sustainability appraisal. It is therefore considered that allocation of land for 1,000 dwellings in this location would be appropriate and deliverable (with circa 735 homes completed in the Plan period). The Council will expect to see education facilities provided, in line with the safeguarded site in the "made" Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, to the immediate south of New Road. It will also expect to see the site promoter putting forward a diverse range of housing types, so that there is genuine choice for potential new residents and also so that development is delivered at the rates that the site promoter claims can be achieved.

Subject to these matters, the site is recommended for allocation in the Horsham District Local Plan.

**Site Name: Land West of Billingshurst (Newbridge Park)**

**SA744 / SA668 / SA225**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs - Director of Place

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**Local Plan Review 2023  
Land West of Billingshurst**

Reference No :	Date : 15 November 2023	1:15,000 at A4
Drawing No :	Drawn :	Checked :
		Revisions :

**Site Area:**

88.5 hectares

**Site Description:**

The site lies within the countryside to the west of the village of Billingshurst. The site primarily comprises arable and pasture fields bounded by hedgerows and mature trees. Some isolated mature trees are present within some of the fields. The north eastern parcel (SA668) is relatively flat. The land north of the A29 undulates with a tree-lined valley running east to west through the middle. The land slopes down from the north east to the south and west with a medium slope. The site is separated from the rest of Billingshurst to the east by the A29, which adjoins the site. To the south, west and the north the site is countryside and is very rural in character.

**Summary of Proposal:**

Housing

The site as a whole is promoted for up to circa 1,000 dwellings. The development could provide 35% affordable housing and specific elderly care provision. Potential to deliver accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers has also been identified by this promoter.

Employment

Land adjacent to the site at Platt's roundabout has recently gained planning permission for a petrol filling station and some additional commercial units – these would provide employment opportunities and retail provision for

	<p>new residents. Other than an area of retail on the northern parcel SA668, no additional employment provision is proposed.</p> <p><u>Transport</u> Access to the site would be obtained from the A272 and the promoters have indicated that they would enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the existing village centre.</p> <p><u>Education and Community</u> Promoters of this site have all indicated that land would be provided for a new primary school and other forms of community provision, including health care. The promoters indicate that open space and a country park would be provided together with a new leisure centre and improved sports facilities at Jubilee Fields. Landscape-led design and garden suburb principles would be incorporated into the development.</p> <p><u>Environment</u> The promoters also indicate that they could achieve biodiversity net gain and outline measures such as hedgerow planting and woodland and wetland provision.</p> <p><u>Net Zero Carbon</u> The promoter has indicated that development would contribute to zero net carbon through a range of measures including electric vehicle charging points, solar panels, air source heat pumps, and a renewable energy subsidy. Building regulations and design would contribute to reduced carbon emissions.</p>
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**Site Assessment against Criteria**

***Environmental considerations***

**Landscape:**

Although not designated as being of landscape importance, the landscape in this area is attractive and undulating and is part rural in character. The Landscape Capacity Study, 2021 indicates that the site has some capacity for development but advises that the slopes facing west are particularly sensitive to visual impact. It is however recognised that the most sensitive landscape area is proposed as a new country park.

The presence of the Country Park, and the proposed sports pitches mean that the built form of the development would take place on two separate land parcels on SA744 and SA668. This would result in a dispersed and non-cohesive settlement form. In addition, the proposed masterplan shows the southern parcel of land would primarily deliver housing away from the A29 thus further from the existing settlement. This will therefore give rise to a development which lacks any clear relationship with the existing built form of Billingshurst and would appear a smaller scale rural development which is not of sufficient scale or cohesiveness to present as a settlement in its

Very unfavourable

<p>own right, yet which is separated from any existing settlement. This would have a significant negative effect on the local townscape and landscape. The impact is therefore assessed as very unfavourable.</p>	
<p><b>Biodiversity:</b></p>	
<p>There are no statutory designated areas located within the site itself, however the Upper Arun SSSI is located approximately 15m west of the site at its closest point. The site is also located close to the Mens which is designated as an SAC and is of international importance for the woodland and barbastelle bat colony. The Upper Arun SSSI and the Wey and Arun Canal, River Arun and adjacent meadows Local Wildlife Site is also relatively close to the site.</p> <p>The site promoters have undertaken an initial site assessment which recognises the location of the site as being in the core feeding area for the Barbastelle bats. The promoter proposes that inclusion of additional native species planting, enhanced habitats within the site and creation of dark corridors, will enhance the site for commuting and foraging bats and there will be no impact on the integrity of the Mens SAC. However, the full impact of development in this location would require further detailed ecological assessment if allocated. The study also concludes the proposals have the potential to impact the Upper Arun SSSI and the Wey and Arun Canal, River Arun and adjacent meadows Local Wildlife Site through run off pollution, dust from construction, noise and wind-blown litter. Measures to mitigate these impacts are possible, but at this stage limited detail as to how this would be delivered has been provided.</p> <p>The site promoter has indicated they could provide biodiversity net gains through the creation of a country park, re-provisioning woodland and areas of rewilding. An updated report indicates the potential for up to 30.5% net gains, but this figure is based on ecological appraisal work that was not conducted for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain, which did not allow for an accurate condition assessment of each habitat. Therefore whilst biodiversity net gains are clearly possible, this percentage must be treated with considerable uncertainty. Whilst the net gain is beneficial, the lack of detail as to how the impact on an internationally designated habitat site, the SSSIs and local wildlife sites would be mitigated lead to a conclusion of unfavourable impacts at this stage.</p>	Unfavourable
<p><b>Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:</b></p>	
<p>Within the development site there is one archaeological site. There are no scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered battlefields or registered parks and gardens. Within 1 km of development site boundary there are 49 listed buildings, and the Billingshurst Conservation Area. There is therefore potential for archaeological remains to be found across the development area.</p> <p>Although there are no listed buildings within the proposed development area, there are 8 listed buildings located along Lordings Road the settings of which have been identified as being as sensitive to change. New development is proposed to the east of these properties. No detailed</p>	Unfavourable

<p>assessment work has been undertaken to determine the precise impact on archaeology or listed buildings and the impact is therefore assessed as unfavourable at this stage.</p>	
<p><b>Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):</b></p>	
<p>The site is located in a minerals safeguarding area for brick clay and building stone. These designations cover large parts of the district and are not a significant constraint to the site coming forward.</p> <p>No geotechnical survey is available, but given the agricultural nature of the site it is considered that there is unlikely to be any significant land contamination that would prevent development in this location.</p> <p>Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the 'Arun Valley Sites'). Any allocation would therefore need to be in conformity with the wider Strategic Solution which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality. The site promoters have informally indicated that they consider their site would be water neutral, but no detailed evidence has been submitted to the council to assess.</p> <p>The site is not close to any Air Quality Management Areas. As identified in the ecological survey, there is however potential for the new development to generate pollution to the nearby water courses as a result of surface water flows. Overall, impacts are assessed as neutral.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Flooding / Drainage:</b></p>	
<p>The extreme westernmost part of the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the River Arun. The rest of the site is within Flood Zone 1. Whilst it is noted that no land within flood zones 2 or 3 would form part of the built development, limited information has been provided to the Council in relation to site drainage matters, including surface water run-off, which has been identified as being directly linked to the river Arun. Whilst it is likely that these risks can be mitigated, the lack of any detailed information on this matter leads to an unfavourable assessment at this stage. No detailed drainage or flood risk studies have been submitted to the Council and it is therefore unclear as to how development would be designed to mitigate this risk. Impacts are therefore assessed as unfavourable.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoter has provided some information to the Council as to how development would contribute to net zero carbon. This includes measures such as green infrastructure provision to help adapt to changing seasons. All dwellings will have an electric vehicle charge point. There is an aspiration for 'all-electric' energy strategy including the use of solar photo voltaic panels and air source heat pumps, and a trial of battery storage and smart</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<p>grid systems on individual homes. It is intended to provide a subsidy to all residents to purchase 100% renewable energy via a green tariff which will convert each dwelling to a full net zero home. Other measures include low energy design of buildings and seeking to encourage walking and cycling. Whilst these are positive measures, further detail as to how this could be achieved is required. In addition, the site is some distance from the main services and facilities in Billingshurst and the scale of the development is likely to generate additional trips by car to the existing village centre and beyond. At this stage a neutral impact is concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Social considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Housing:</b></p>	
<p>A total of approximately 1,000 homes is proposed. This site therefore has the potential to provide a meaningful contribution towards the Council's housing requirements. At this stage, it has been indicated that the level of affordable housing, which can be provided, would be around 35%, together with some specific elderly accommodation in the southern part of the site. A site to meet Gypsy and Traveller requirements has also been identified. No significant detail has been provided regarding the mix or size of homes which could be delivered.</p> <p>Whilst the contribution to housing stock would be significant, the location of the homes would not relate to the existing settlement of Billingshurst as they are south of Newbridge Road and east of Lordings Road to the south which does impact on housing provision forming part of a cohesive community. The Northern parcel is relatively separate from the southern parcels and from the existing settlement. The homes could therefore lack any cohesive community core. The impact on housing provision to meet the needs of the local community is assessed as favourable.</p>	<p>Favourable</p>
<p><b>Education:</b></p>	
<p>Promoters of this site have indicated that land would be provided for a new primary school next to the country park. Additional land may be required for SEND provision.</p> <p>The site would not provide new land for a secondary school. The Weald Secondary school in Billingshurst is reaching capacity and it is therefore unclear as to how the educational needs of the additional children on this site could be met. WSCC have indicated that the level of housing required to meet the Council's housing targets will require three new secondary schools over the plan period. If this site is allocated it will be dependent on other sites being available and able to deliver the secondary schools that are required. Given this uncertainty, impacts are assessed as unfavourable.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Health:</b></p>	
<p>The site promoter indicates that some land could be provided for additional health care if required, or a financial contribution to existing healthcare facilities. In common with other strategic site proposals, the extent and form of future health provision would necessarily be informed through further discussions with the NHS Integrated Care Board (formerly the CCG) and discussions with existing providers. At this stage it is understood that the</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<p>preferred NHS Integrated Care Board solution to meet additional health care needs would be an expansion of the existing GP practice.</p> <p>The site proposes a country park and a range of leisure facilities which will contribute to health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. As previously outlined, the development is located away from the existing built form of the Billingshurst. Although it is recognised that some enhancements to pedestrian facilities will be provided, the A29 is a significant 'hard' boundary and this is likely to limit the attractiveness of walking and cycling – this may therefore have an impact on the ability to effectively contribute to healthy lifestyles. A neutral impact is therefore concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:</b></p>	
<p>The site would provide a new country park between the western and northern parts of the main part of the site (SA744) north of the A272, including 40 allotments and a community orchard. A new leisure centre including a gym, indoor tennis court, padel court and a new 3G playing field on the parcel at Hilland Roundabout (SA688) would be provided to extend the offer at Jubilee Fields. It is noted that this has support within the existing community. A community hub is proposed in the Country Park. These facilities would provide benefits for the new and existing communities in Billingshurst. However, the scale of development is such that there would be continued reliance on existing community networks and the existing village centre facilities in Billingshurst and given the development form and relationship with the existing village, there may be limited ability for the development to achieve a cohesive community with a clear sense of place. A favourable impact is concluded at this stage.</p>	<p>Favourable</p>
<p><b>Transport:</b></p>	
<p><u>Walking and Cycling</u></p> <p>The site promoters have identified that new pedestrian and cycle access will be provided and have confirmed that walking and cycling would be prioritised as part of the new development and would include a community cycle hire scheme. Details as to potential walk and journey times have been submitted to the Council. There is also a commitment to provide enhanced pedestrian and cycle links between the new development and the existing settlement. However, these are at an early stage and there is little detail available setting out how they could be delivered.</p> <p>The site is not of a scale to deliver sufficient community services to prevent reliance on Billingshurst for day to day services and facilities. Although the existing village is close geographically, the A29 Billingshurst bypass, which has a 60 mph speed limit, does present a significant physical barrier in terms of accessing wider community facilities by sustainable measures. The proposed pedestrian and cycle crossing points are limited to two, serving the main southern residential development parcels: an existing non-motorised user bridge (Bridgeway 3668, Newbridge Road) crossing south of the A272/A29 Platt's roundabout, and improved at-grade crossing at the roundabout itself. Further crossing points would be available to the northern parcels and improved Jubilee Fields and new sports facilities via the existing footbridge crossing the northern A29 bypass (Footpath 1335), and at the new roundabout at Billingshurst Trade Park north of Billingshurst. Walk time</p>	<p>Very Unfavourable</p>



analysis by the promoter indicates that the village centre could be reached in 10 to 21 minutes' walk at an average speed of 5 km/h. Nevertheless, it is considered that the lack of permeability and integration due to the presence of the high speed A29, and the effective limitation for most future occupiers to just one fully segregated crossing point (Bridleway 3668) would do little to compel active travel to key village services.

#### Public Transport

In geographic terms, the land is not too distant from railway station. Existing bus stops enjoying a regular daily service (bus 100, hourly Monday-Saturday) are located in the village centre and railway station respectively, both up to a 20-25 minute walk for would-be future residents. Again, some limited information has been submitted to the Council as to how existing bus services could be enhanced to access the new development. Given the land is not located close to the existing bus 100 route, this may be difficult to achieve. A potential mobility hub and car clubs are suggested but no detail is provided as to how this could operate successfully. Access to the railway station would not appear convenient by walking or cycling and would also need to be significantly enhanced. Taking into account the presence of the A29 Billingshurst bypass and lack of direct ('straight-line') walking or cycling routes, the effective distance from the site to the railway station is considerable and may encourage additional car journeys to the station. The impact of this on the station car park will require further detailed investigation.

#### Road Transport

No detailed transport modelling has been undertaken in relation to this scheme. In addition to the likely additional local journeys into Billingshurst, the development would still generate traffic impacts on the wider road network, particularly if combined with other nearby development proposals. It is therefore unclear what specific highways mitigation measures would be required and how the site promoter would address these issues.

Due to the significant challenges regarding pedestrian and bicycle permeability mainly stemming from the presence of the A29 bypass, and limited information provided to the Council in relation to transport assessment and mitigation, a very unfavourable impact is concluded at this stage.

#### **Other infrastructure:**

It is proposed to set aside land next to the recycling centre to allow it to grow – it is understood this has some support from West Sussex County Council as the waste and recycling authority. No details have been provided in respect of future communication technology. The site promoters indicate that they can provide key utilities to the site.

SSE have indicated capacity is limited in respect of the electricity supply in the west of the District which may require, once all short-term fixes have been assigned, a major capital scheme for reinforcement works that would take several years to complete. Impacts are therefore assessed as unfavourable at this stage.

Unfavourable

<b>Economic considerations</b>	
<b>Economy:</b>	
Land at Platts roundabout, which forms the eastern entrance to the site has permission for a petrol filling station and convenience store with outline permission for 4,627sq.m of B class use employment space – this area is proposed as an employment / retail hub as part of the proposals. Some of this has commenced and a further outline application has been permitted. No new land is proposed as part of the scheme although the site promoters also indicate that co-working space could be provided as part of the employment land to facilitate increased working from home and smaller businesses. Billingshurst has a number of existing employment sites and new employment land is being constructed on land opposite the northern parcel of this site. There are therefore a number of opportunities to live and work locally. Overall, the impact is therefore assessed as neutral.	Neutral
<b>Retail:</b>	
Land at Platts roundabout, which forms the eastern entrance to the site has already development consent for the provision of additional commercial land – this area is proposed as an employment / retail hub as part of the proposals. This would help to meet local day to day retail needs but travel to central Billingshurst or beyond to access higher order retail services and facilities would still be necessary. This may help to enhance the vitality of the Billingshurst village centre. Overall impacts are assessed as neutral.	Neutral
<b>Further considerations</b>	
<b>Deliverability and Viability:</b>	
<p>This proposal is a standalone scheme within a single landownership. The northern part of site SA225 has permission for a petrol filling station and convenience store with outline permission for 4,627sq.m of B class use employment space. The southern part of SA225 has been conditionally sold to a care home developer. The site owner has recently entered into an agreement with a housing delivery partner.</p> <p>The promoter states that they intend to submit a hybrid planning application in outline for the whole development but with full permission for 300 units in the northern plot SA668 and the first phase of land in plot SA744, west of the recycling centre. They initially estimated that first phase completions should be achievable within 4 years. However, there is limited prospect of this arising given the impact of water neutrality. Large scale developments are also complex, and this build out timescale does not accord with the Council's experience of delivering this scale of development. The promoter anticipates that the site SA744 will then be sub-sold in 4 plots of 250 units each. The Council's evidence on housing delivery indicates that market capacity in this part of the District would make timely delivery of more than one strategic site in the area challenging.</p> <p>Viability information has been provided to the Council. This indicates that development could be delivered.</p>	Unfavourable

<p>More detail would be required to support any allocation for there to be sufficient certainty regarding delivery. This includes details around primary school provision/phasing and transport mitigation. Given the uncertainties, it is not considered that delivery of development at scale would be achieved until much later in the plan period once issues of concern have been resolved. The impact is therefore assessed as unfavourable.</p>	
<p><b>Development Quality:</b></p>	
<p>Although provisionally an extension to Billingshurst, this site is less well related to the existing settlement form than many other proposed urban extensions, given the A29 which currently forms a firm boundary to the existing developed area.</p> <p>The proposal is for an extension to Billingshurst of approximately 1,000 new homes forming a new community with a County Park, Community Hub and Primary School, and extensions to the nearby sports facilities. An indicative masterplan has been provided, but the proposals are still at a very early stage of development, and it is unclear as to how some aspects of the scheme would come forward. There is limited information on design, layout, and permeability. Additionally, the settlement form lacks cohesion with two dispersed land parcels, much of which does not have any clear relationship with the existing built form of Billingshurst.</p> <p>In the longer term it is understood that the landowner would continue to live on the site and assume a master builder role to retain a high degree of influence over the design and to ensure the legacy of the development is not reduced in any way. The promotion team and main development partner will also remain in place to ensure continuity. Some early community consultation has been undertaken.</p> <p>The development quality is currently assessed as unfavourable reflecting the relatively limited vision and information put forward on the site to date.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Site Assessment Summary &amp; Recommendation</b></p>	
<p>The allocation of this site would help to provide a meaningful contribution of homes, including affordable homes and elderly accommodation. Although close to Billingshurst which has a good range of services and facilities, the development of this site would lead to a dispersed new settlement form across two land parcels, limiting the ability of the new development to form a cohesive new community to a greater degree than would other proposed settlement extensions in the District. In addition, the land is separated from the existing built form of Billingshurst by the A29. Therefore the proposed housing developments would have a more limited relationship with the existing settlement and would not sit well with the existing settlement pattern. As well as making integration and interaction with the existing settlement challenging, this would also contribute to a negative impact on the local landscape character which is currently very rural in character.</p> <p>The site would provide community facilities including a primary school, a large new country park and significantly enhanced sports and leisure provision. However the site is not of a scale to deliver sufficient other community services, such as retail, to prevent some reliance on Billingshurst for</p>	

day-to-day services and facilities. There are uncertainties as to how secondary school provision arising from this development could be met given the scale of housing proposed, given the understanding that the Weald is approaching capacity.

The site is also located close to the Mens woodland which is designated as an SAC and is of international importance for woodland species and a barbastelle bat colony. The Upper Arun SSSI and the Wey and Arun Canal, River Arun and adjacent Local Wildlife Site is also relatively close to the site. The site promoter's evidence highlights that these could be adversely impacted. Whilst the site promoter indicates that biodiversity enhancements could be provided, there is very limited information to evidence that impacts could be satisfactorily mitigated. It is also unclear how the impact on heritage assets close to this site would be mitigated.

Although geographically close to Billingshurst, the A29 presents a significant physical barrier in terms of accessing wider community facilities by active travel (i.e. walking, wheeling and cycling), with poor permeability with the existing settlement resulting (only a single bridge crossing for non-motorised users would provide a direct link from the larger southern residential parcels to the rest of the village). Limited work has been undertaken and provided as to how existing bus services could access the new development, however there is low certainty as to whether this would be achieved. A potential mobility hub and car clubs are suggested but no detail is provided as to how this could operate successfully. Access to the railway station, particularly by active travel modes, is sub-optimal and would also need to be significantly enhanced.

No detailed transport modelling has been undertaken in relation to this scheme. In addition to the likely additional local journeys into Billingshurst, the proposed development would be expected to generate traffic impacts on the wider road network, particularly if combined with other nearby development proposals. It is therefore unclear what specific transport mitigation measures would be required and how the site promoter would mitigate these issues.

Viability evidence has been submitted by the promoter indicating the development as viable. However considerably more detail is required to support deliverability with regards any allocation. This includes details around school provision and transport mitigation. It is therefore not considered that significant levels of development would not come forward until much later in the plan period once these issues have been resolved. Market capacity would make the timely delivery of more than one strategic site in this area challenging.

**Officer Recommendation:**

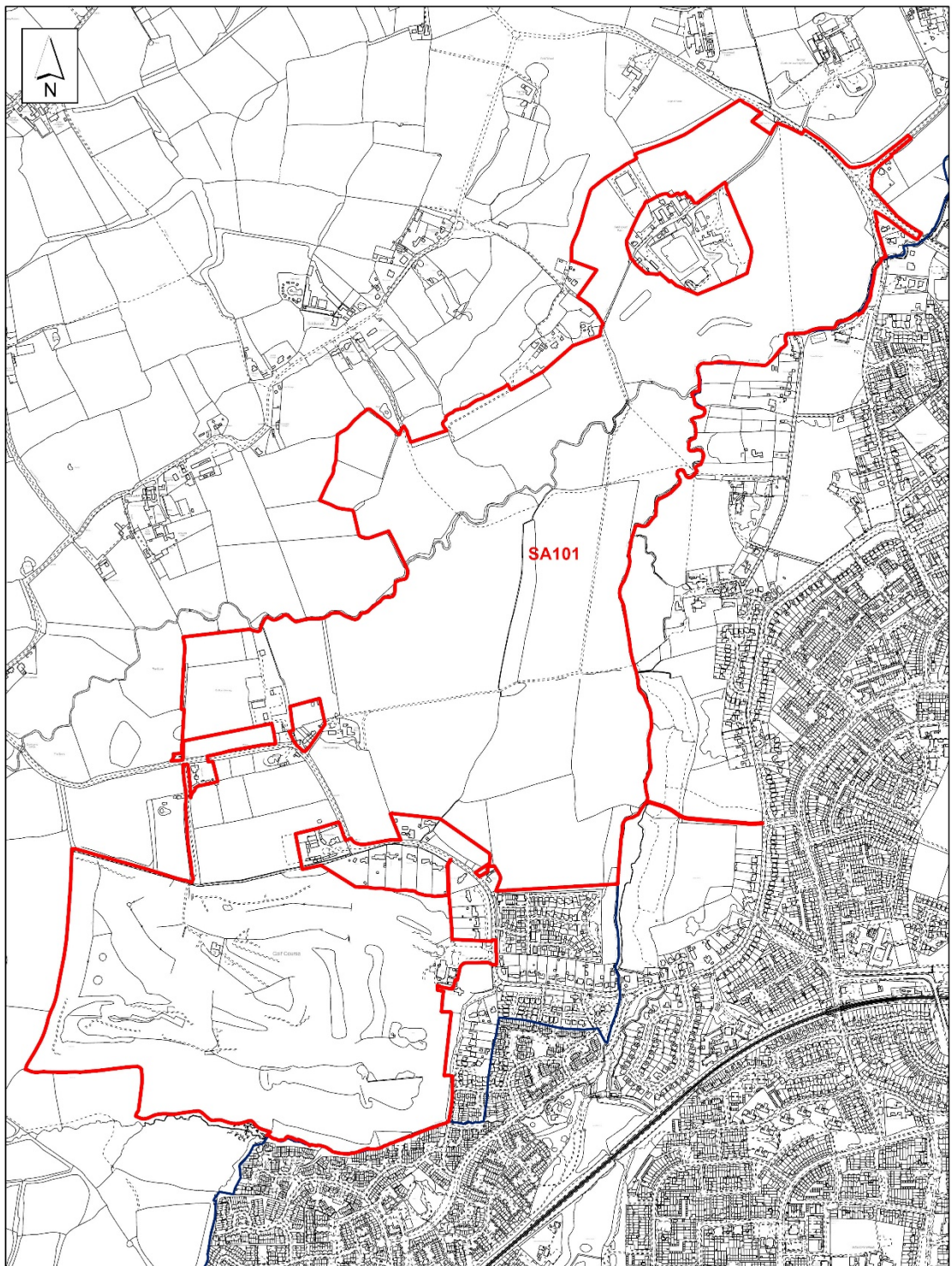
Whilst this site would help deliver housing to meet the required targets, it is not considered this scheme would deliver a cohesive neighbourhood that is well linked to the existing development in Billingshurst. Development would also have impacts on the landscape, biodiversity and heritage close to the site. To date limited information has been provided to the Council to help demonstrate how the environmental, community and transport impacts can be resolved.

For the reasons set out, the site is not recommended for allocation.

Site Name: Land West of Ifield

SA101

Site Map:



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs : Director of Place

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**Local Plan Review 2023  
West of Ifield**

Reference No :	Date : 27 September 2023	Scale : 1:8,000at A3
Drawing No :	Drawn : Mark Daly	Checked :
		Revisions :

<b>Site Area:</b>	170 hectares
<b>Site Description:</b>	<p>The site is being promoted by Homes England. Most of the site comprises arable and pasture fields bounded by hedgerows and mature trees. Ifield Golf Club course, consisting of fairways and woodland, makes up around a third of the site. It is located in the southern section of the site.</p> <p>Some isolated mature trees are present within some of the fields. To the east, the site adjoins the neighbourhood of Ifield in Crawley, and Gatwick Airport is to the north, both of which are key urban influences in this area. Although adjacent to the busy road network, and close to the urban influences, the area is predominantly rural in character including areas of Ancient Woodland.</p>
<b>Summary of Proposal:</b>	<p>The site is being promoted for approximately 3,000 homes. The site promoter indicates that it could form a standalone extension to Crawley but has also been promoted as the first phase of a wider expansion of the town potentially comprising 10,000 homes in total. <b>The assessed site is however for 3,000 homes and supporting uses within the red line shown.</b></p> <p><u>Housing</u></p> <p>A new community of 3,000 homes is proposed. This would include a minimum of 35% affordable housing. A range of housing types and tenures would be provided to respond to local needs. Potential to deliver accommodation for 15 Gypsy and Traveller pitches has also been identified by this promoter.</p> <p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>The site promoter indicates that as part of the masterplan for a new neighbourhood, the development will deliver workspaces for start-up, intermediate and grow-on businesses and co-working, and land for employment which complements the existing offer at Gatwick Airport, and in both Crawley Borough and Horsham District. There is an intention to provide an enterprise/innovation hub of a substantial scale as part of the 3,000 home scheme.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>Homes England is proposing that the garden town is a '15-minute neighbourhood' whereby all day-to-day services and facilities are within a 15 minute walk or cycle ride for all residents. Proposals would also seek to ensure that there is access to high levels of public transport including an expansion of the Crawley fastway system. It is proposed that this scheme would provide the first phase of a potential future western link road from the A264 to the A23 in the north.</p> <p><u>Education and Community</u></p> <p>The proposals will deliver a new primary school and would provide land for a secondary school, which will be delivered by the Department for Education (DfE) at the start of the first phase of any build programme. Schools would provide for special educational needs (SEND), and nursery / pre-school provision. A new neighbourhood centre would provide a hub</p>

	<p>for the community, to include retail space, community space and leisure venues. Open space and sports pitches would be provided.</p> <p><u>Environment</u></p> <p>The proposed development area contains land which is designated for its importance for biodiversity and landscape including a Local Wildlife site (Ifield brook Meadows), SSSI and ancient woodland. This land is not proposed for built development. The site promoters have committed to a landscape led scheme that would deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain, a network of generous green corridors and buffers, and mitigation measures to protect the local Bechstein Bat population. A target of 50% of the land being open space has been identified, including 85 hectares of publicly accessible open space.</p> <p><u>Net Zero Carbon</u></p> <p>The site promoters state that the development would reduce its carbon footprint and would ensure homes are designed to be zero carbon ready to meet government climate change targets. Opportunities for on-site energy generation would also be provided. The details of an energy and sustainability strategy are yet to be submitted.</p>
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**Site Assessment against Criteria**

***Environmental considerations***

**Landscape:**

The landscape west of Crawley, whilst visually attractive, has not been designated as being of national landscape importance. A High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is relatively close by located to the south of the A264.

The Landscape Capacity Study 2021 assesses the overall area as ranging from no/low to moderate-high capacity for development. The most sensitive area is the Mole Valley within the northern segment, however no built development is proposed in this part of the site. For the central and southern portions, landscape capacity is low to moderate reflecting, amongst other things, some urban intrusions on the landscape and loss of hedgerows, but also areas of greater tranquillity and a more rural, in places open, character with historic features such as Ifield Conservation Area. Ifield Golf Course, in the southern portion, has moderate capacity for housing development as it has suburban influences, is relatively enclosed, but also has higher land in the centre of the golf course which is more exposed to views from the surrounding countryside.

Evidence on landscape has been submitted to inform an emerging masterplan. Analysis has been undertaken of key views and character areas. Particular mitigations identified include protecting and enhancing Ifield Brook Meadows, enhancing the character of the River Mole corridor by creating a linear park, protecting key views – particularly from the high ridge of land on the southern part of the golf course – and providing landscape connectors to provide a reference of the past to future

Unfavourable

development.

Overall, strategic development at this scale will have an impact on what is currently a generally rural landscape and there are areas where the landscape is sensitive to development. Whilst it is recognised there is potential for mitigation, and landscape enhancement in areas where the landscape is already compromised, the overall impact is assessed as unfavourable.

**Biodiversity:**

Given its rural character, the site has a number of sensitive biodiversity assets. There is one ancient woodland located on the site, in the southern area of Ifield Brook Meadows Local Wildlife Site. A further three ancient woodlands are located adjacent to the site – to the south of Ifield Golf Course, north of the cattle fields, and one south of the Rover Mole to the east of the site boundary. Ifield Brook Meadows LWS runs along the eastern boundary of the site and represents an area of high Biodiversity. This site incorporates relatively herb rich meadows enclosed by thick hedges, Ifield Brook itself and some woodland. Ifield Brook, Ifield Mill Stream and Hyde Hill stream, and seven ponds provide further potentially species-rich habitats. A number of Bechstein bat roosts, including maternity roosts, have been identified close to the proposed development, with Hyde Hill Wood, the golf course and areas adjacent to and within Ifield Wood considered the areas of most importance for this species. Broadleaved woodlands, semi-improved grasslands and amenity grasslands across the site support high distinctiveness habitats. There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest some 650 metres south of the southern boundary.

The site promoter has committed to providing biodiversity net gain but further information is required to understand how this will be achieved, particularly as there are a number of parcels of land in this area that are already designated for their wildlife importance. The proximity of some of the land to Gatwick Airport may also limit the type of enhancements that can be achieved to avoid any increased risk from bird strike at the airport.

Overall, there are likely to be a number of sensitive habitats present on the site, and these would need to be protected and enhanced. In particular, the promoter's emerging site masterplan has been informed by the Bechstein bat surveys, in particular focusing on suitable buffers to adjacent off-site habitat and retention of strong commuting features through the site. The proposal maintains around 50% of the total land as undeveloped, and the emerging masterplan ensures that built development avoids such areas whilst providing appropriate buffers, and wildlife corridors are protected. The promoters have stated that the scheme will achieve 10% biodiversity net gain. Given some of the uncertainties around the delivery of biodiversity net gain, the presence of Bechstein bats, and the uplift of biodiversity net gain that can be achieved an unfavourable rating is concluded.

Unfavourable



**Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:**

A significant constraint in relation to cultural heritage is the Ifield Conservation Area on the eastern boundary, which includes the Grade I listed St Margaret's Church, and a further seven Grade II listed buildings. A number of further Grade II listed buildings are present adjoining or close to the site, which could potentially be affected by the proposed development. The medieval moated site at Ifield Court is a Scheduled Ancient Monument is excluded from the development site boundary but is nevertheless an important asset requiring consideration in the masterplanning process.

An Archaeological Notification Area (Iron Ore Industry and Medieval Moated Site) covers the majority of the site. Trial trenching relating to works associated with new water infrastructure has identified the remains of a prehistoric roundhouse and associated features in the south eastern part of the site.

Scoping evidence submitted by Homes England also recognises the significance of historic field boundaries and mature treelines that provide screening to historic assets.

Whilst there are archaeological or heritage constraints affecting this site, it is considered that there is potential for mitigation. At this stage an unfavourable rating is concluded.

Unfavourable

**Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):**

The West of Ifield site is within proximity to Gatwick Airport, and therefore susceptible to aircraft noise. The promoter's indicative masterplan shows that all noise sensitive development will be located to the south of the 60dB  $L_{Aeq,16hr}$  noise contour, thereby complying with the policy framework set out in the Crawley Local Plan and supported by this Council. A full noise impact assessment will need to be undertaken.

The site also lies within a Brick Clay (Weald Clay) Minerals Safeguarding Area. However large parts of Horsham District lies within this area, and subject to further consultation with WSCC, this is not considered to be an overly restrictive constraint.

The site lies approximately 2km to the west of the Hazelwick Air Quality Management Area in Crawley Borough. There is therefore the potential for new development to impact on this designation. The site promoter has committed to a detailed air quality assessment at application stage should the site be allocated. There is good potential to mitigate impacts through the proposed transport strategy which seeks to minimise private car journeys into the centre of Crawley through provision of frequent direct Fastway bus services, provision of direct cycle corridors to the town centre, and prohibition of private cars from using straight-line road links into Crawley.

Unfavourable

Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the 'Arun Valley Sites'). Any allocation would therefore need to be in conformity with the wider Strategic Solution which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality. There is some potential to partially offset future water use due to mains water supply to Ifield Golf Course, however full water neutrality is yet to be demonstrated.

The site promoter indicates that impacts on water quality are dealt with through implementation of a sustainable drainage (SuDs) strategy, and as part of fluvial flood risk management measures. Further evidence will be required in respect of hydrological impacts, surface water flooding, a Flood Risk Assessment and a Level 2 Sequential and Exception Test which will be undertaken for the site by the promoter.

Taking account of the proximity of the site to Gatwick airport and the need for further detail to understand the impacts and mitigation on air quality, the impact is currently assessed as unfavourable.

#### **Flooding / Drainage:**

The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1, however there are parcels of the site that lie in Flood Zones 2 and 3, particularly along the River Mole Corridor and its tributaries, including Ifield Brook. The emerging masterplan does not include development on any area of land classified as Flood Zone 2 or 3 (0.1% and 1% probability of flooding in any given year, respectively).

Homes England recognises the potential for impacts on the River Mole and its tributaries. It therefore proposes to conduct hydraulic modelling of the Upper River Mole in support of a prospective planning application, which will require liaison with the Environment Agency. A Flood Risk Assessment and a Level 2 Sequential and Exception Test will be undertaken for the site. The FRA will inform the further masterplanning for the site.

The landscape is relatively flat and has heavy clay soils across most of the site which has the potential for drainage impacts, and the presence/risk of surface water flooding is noted – it is proposed that mitigation would be delivered through sustainable drainage systems (SuDs).

A key identified constraint is in respect of wastewater network capacity, which is approaching its limit in the local area. Subject to further work, it is anticipated that new waste water infrastructure would be required to support the development, either via upgrading the existing Crawley Waste Water Treatment Works, or on the site. Close ongoing liaison would be necessary with both Thames Water and Southern Water in this respect.

Neutral

<p>Given that the emerging masterplan limits development to Flood Zone 1, and on the basis of good prospect of a comprehensive SuDs strategy being implemented, a neutral rating is concluded.</p>	
<p><b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b></p> <p>Homes England has set out a vision for an exemplar scheme for sustainable development, strategically located to maximise the use of public transport and achieve a '15 minute community' whereby most needs are not more than a short walk or bike ride away. There is a commitment to a carbon neutral scheme, incorporating on-site energy generation. Options being considered to achieve this include a 'fabric first' approach and the use of onsite low and zero-carbon energy technologies. A proposed low-carbon and future-proofed energy strategy will be produced when the scale of development and mix of uses has been confirmed and will evolve through the build-out period.</p> <p>Overall, there are considered to be very good opportunities for the site to realise this vision. The means of achieving this vision are not at this stage fully known, therefore a neutral rating is achieved for this criterion.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p><b>Social considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Housing:</b></p> <p>A strategic scale development of this scale could deliver a very significant proportion of the Council's housing requirements. Crawley has a significant assessed housing need that cannot in its entirety be met within its own administrative boundaries due to a lack of available housing land. Were it not for the area-wide water neutrality constraint (which is expected to endure until at least 2030), it would have potential to deliver a portion of the housing need that has been identified as part of Duty to Co-operate discussions, particularly in the North West Sussex housing market area.</p> <p>The promoter has stated that a policy-compliant level of affordable housing (and at least 35% of the total) would be delivered. This will include market, affordable and social rent. Homes England has confirmed that a range of housing types and tenures would be provided to respond to local needs. House sizes will range between one and five bedrooms and will be of a mix that reflects the future needs of both Horsham District and Crawley. It is considered that given the nature and type of need for affordable housing in the adjoining town of Crawley, a 40% affordable housing target would be more appropriate in this location.</p> <p>The site promoter has stated that a site will be allocated in the masterplan area for up to 15 Gypsy and Traveller pitches. This would make a significant contribution to meeting the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the District.</p>	<p>Very Positive</p>

Overall, there are strong prospects that should the site be allocated, a significant amount of housing will be delivered which addresses the needs of the housing market area. Overall impacts are assessed as very positive.



**Education:**

The site promoters have indicated the development would provide land to accommodate a new 6 form entry (FE) Secondary School (with the opportunity to expand to an 8FE in future) to meet existing identified needs; a 3FE primary school; Early Years educational provision; Special Educational Needs (SEND), and a Further Education, Skills and Innovation facility.

It is proposed that the primary school would be delivered in the early phases of development, and a secondary school site that would address an urgent need for additional school places has Department for Education funding secured (albeit still subject to planning) – this is expected to be delivered in the early phases of housing development. The secondary school would provide for the existing unmet educational needs of Crawley as well as Horsham and the new development itself.

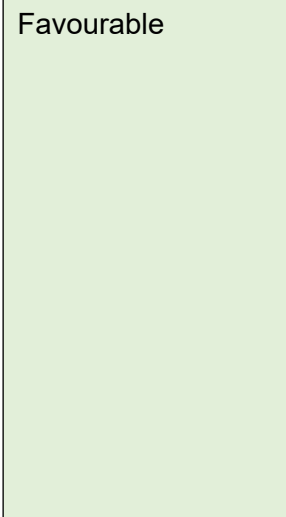
Overall, it is considered that there are strong prospects of an improved educational offer benefitting existing and new communities, should the site be allocated. A very positive impact is therefore concluded.



**Health:**

Homes England has advised that initial discussions with the former Horsham and Mid Sussex / West Sussex CCG (now the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board) have taken place and that the extent and form of future health provision will be informed through further discussions with the ICB and discussions with existing providers. Land for future requirements would be safeguarded within the scheme so as to future proof provision.

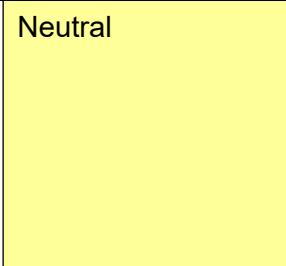
Overall, as with all proposed strategic sites, there is uncertainty over the nature of health facility provision as this is dependent on ICB requirements. Discussions to date indicate that there is an intention on the part of Homes England to make appropriate provision via joint working with the ICB and other partners. Favourable impacts are therefore likely.



**Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:**

The site is located close to the urban edge of Crawley, which is a key cultural hub with a wide range of services and facilities which would be of benefit to new residents.

The site promoters have stated a commitment to delivering at least 50% of the site as formal and informal open space within the masterplan. They have



stated that 85 hectares of new publicly accessible open space, and more than 15km of new footpaths and cycleways, will be provided. Provision of formal and informal recreational open space would take account of local evidence and policies on space standard requirements. The site promoter has actively engaged with Sports England and the local planning authorities to identify requirements which are being reflected in the emerging masterplan. Open space provision would range from a formal sports hub site plus further subsidiary sports pitches, green movement corridors, a major linear ridgeland park.

There is considered to be a high level of commitment to boosting local services and community facilities including a new community hub.

Development of the site would however result in the loss of Ifield Golf Course. The Council's evidence on Golf provision in the District indicates that whilst HDC has a high level of provision of golf clubs, particularly when compared with other areas, these sites may meet the needs of those living in neighbouring districts and boroughs. The golf club is based around private membership, but further detail is required to understand how current users of the site could access similar golf facilities if the site is redeveloped. A study looking at this is being prepared by the promoter. Emerging evidence provided by the promoter indicates that mitigation measures are available that would accord with the NPPF paragraph 99.

Although redevelopment of this site would lead to the loss of one type of recreational facility, this is balanced against the evidence of wider golfing provision in the District and the potential for the site to deliver other and wider forms of public access open space in the future, as well as provision of new community sports and leisure hubs and school sports facilities. However, taking account of the need for further detail on the precise nature and type of any mitigation a neutral impact is concluded at this stage.

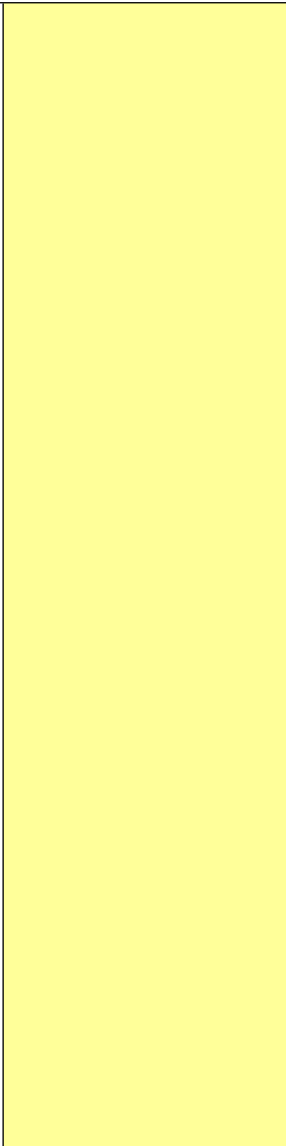
**Transport:**

Walking and cycling

The proposed scheme is for an urban form that reduces the need to travel, is designed to prioritise walking, cycling and travel via public transport, and provides sustainable travel choices that enable non-car choices wherever possible. This would be guided by the principle of a '15 minute community', where people can access all their essential needs within a 15 minute walk or cycle. The promoter has shown on their masterplan a network of attractive, low- or no-traffic cycle and pedestrian routes linking the different parts of the development and into Crawley, as well as multi-modal corridor, with segregated cycle and pedestrian provision, giving access into the site from Charlwood Road to the north. They state that more than 15km of new footpaths and cycleways will be provided.

Public Transport

The site is relatively close to Ifield railway station which provides a direct line between London and the south coast. The scheme proposes to extend the Crawley Fastway bus services to serve the development and provide high quality bus services to key destinations such as Manor Royal business



Favourable

park in Crawley, Gatwick Airport and Crawley Town Centre. The development would also provide active forms of travel such as e-scooters and e-bikes and engage 'mobility as a service'. The details of such measures are being developed through a masterplanning process and an emerging transport strategy. Further refinement on the delivery and phasing of this element of the scheme may be necessary.

**Road Transport**

Roads in and around Crawley are known to experience congestion in the area of the proposed development, for example on the A264 corridor and routes into and through Crawley from the west. The site promoters indicate that in the longer term, should a proposal for 10,000 homes come forward, then a full multi-modal corridor incorporating a link road from the A264 near Faygate to the A23 within Crawley Borough, could be delivered. It is recognised that this would potentially require an alignment passing through land currently safeguarded for potential future expansion of Gatwick airport, albeit different route options are being explored. Whilst the Council will continue to seek a clear commitment from Homes England or other appropriate Government bodies to the full delivery of the sustainable transport corridor link, it is recognised that the development of 3,000 homes proposed for allocation in this local plan cannot demonstrate the land ownership / viability to deliver the full route. The site promoters are however committed to providing a less ambitious multi-modal route to provide access into the development from Charlwood Road, which would form part of any future full A264-A23 route. It is proposed that access from the development to Rusper Road, linking into southern Ifield, would be restricted to public transport and emergency access and so would mainly benefit public transport access rather than significantly addressing existing private vehicle congestion.

Overall, there are likely to be favourable impacts at the strategic level, given the sustainability and transport benefits of locating strategic development close to Crawley and Gatwick which are significant trip generators within the sub-region. This is balanced against likely unfavourable impacts at the local level, given the limited road and junction capacity and worsening congestion at the local level.

**Other infrastructure:**

There is not considered to be any abnormal infrastructure constraint or requirements in terms of supplying key utilities to the site. Thames Water has highlighted that upgrades to both the wastewater network and sewage treatment infrastructure will be required to support the proposed development.

Overall, there are likely to be neutral impacts on other infrastructure on the basis that the key issues are being addressed.

Neutral

**Economic considerations**

**Economy:**

<p>The site promoters have outlined high-level objectives to create employment spaces for start-up, intermediate and grow-on businesses as well as space for established businesses to relocate and expand, deliver an innovation, enterprise and learning hub, provide homes where they are most needed, improve affordability to support recruitment at existing hubs such as Manor Royal and Gatwick Airport, and support local economic objectives such as the emerging C2C Local Industrial Strategy. Approximately 2ha of land (22,000 sqm of new employment space) would be provided for employment, in addition to opportunities provided in the new neighbourhood centre. The promoters have stated that 2,900 jobs would be created in total. The site promoters are developing an economic strategy which does not just create jobs within the site itself, but also seeks to facilitate job growth in existing employment hubs. Full details on delivery of key elements of the economic strategy will emerge only when the detailed planning of the early development phases occurs, however the promoter expects to deliver the innovation centre in the earlier phases of development.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that there would be beneficial impacts arising from the development of this site, with new employment land and connections to existing employment centres. Whilst it is not likely that this development will be able to deliver the Council's aspiration of one new job per home, this is in the context of being located in proximity to a large, well established business park (Manor Royal in Crawley) and also to Gatwick Airport. A strategy for maximising local job opportunities, particularly within the site itself, whilst complementing existing employment hubs, is in development. A favourable impact is therefore concluded at this stage.</p>	Favourable
<p><b>Retail:</b></p> <p>The strategic site would be designed to have a substantial neighbourhood centre accessible to all parts of the development of 3,000 homes. This would provide retail and community uses to serve the new community. The site promoters state that the retail offer would be of a scale that supports rather than undermines the existing retail hierarchy; evidence to date suggests that high connectivity into Crawley Town Centre in particular would be the aim in respect of providing for higher order retail needs. A retail strategy, to be prepared as part of any future outline planning application, would set out the details of this approach.</p> <p>Overall, the evidence provides reasonable confidence that an appropriate strategy for retail provision would be pursued, which would balance the objectives of meeting the local community's needs with supporting not undermining the existing retail hierarchy. Therefore, favourable impacts are likely.</p>	Favourable
<p><b>Further considerations</b></p>	
<p><b>Deliverability and Viability:</b></p>	
<p>97% of the promoted land is within the full ownership or control of Homes England; the Government's housing delivery agency. It is therefore in a strong position to deliver strategic scale housing. Homes England has signposted other schemes, such as Northstowe in Cambridgeshire, as</p>	Favourable

examples of shortened timelines between site acquisition and housebuilding starts, and faster than average build-out rates. Homes England has estimated that build-out rates could reach 300-350 homes per annum, utilising building techniques such as modern methods of construction. Whilst this is considered too high an estimate based on other evidence, and current rates of build out at Kilnwood Vale to the south, which has more than one builder on site at any time. Nevertheless, there is a good prospect for a solid programme of delivery and it is expected that approximately 1,600 homes of a 3,000 home allocation could be completed in the Plan period. Homes England have also committed to early delivery of schools and community infrastructure.

The land proposed for development is within Horsham District but is located on the western edge of Crawley. Any development in this location will ultimately form a new neighbourhood of Crawley and consideration of the scheme will require close working with CBC. Whilst there are challenges with the delivery of such a scheme with cross boundary impacts, Horsham District and Crawley Borough have a long history of joint working and have a track record of delivering strategic scale development to the West of Kilnwood Vale.

Considering the scale of the scheme and the complexities of delivering a new neighbourhood, there are risks to the number of homes that can be delivered. The existing development at Kilnwood Vale to the south also gives an indication of the likely market capacity of the area and potential build out rates. It is however accepted that the ability of the Government's national agency to be involved as the master developer will assist in overcoming delivery issues that may be experienced on other sites.

The site promoter has previously provided a breakdown of viability information to the Council. This indicates that that the provision of a scheme which provides a minimum of 35% affordable housing, and a mitigation and infrastructure package that meets NPPF and regulatory requirements, would be viable. Further work to test the viability of a 40% target for affordable housing is being prepared by the Council.

At this stage impacts are assessed as favourable.

**Development Quality:**

Homes England has set out a vision for a '15 minute neighbourhood' and taking its lead from the Crawley Neighbourhoods concept. They have committed to using the Building for Healthy Life approach, secured through a site-wide design code. There is a strong commitment to sustainable travel which builds on the site's proximity to the existing urban area. As England's national housing delivery agency, Homes England is well placed to deliver on its vision. The proposed development would ultimately read as part of the settlement form of Crawley and is relatively well located in terms of access to existing services and facilities and an already established community.

Favourable



Homes England is looking to deliver a landscape-led development and use a variety of building styles, with a focus on contemporary living. Evidence has been presented to indicate architectural styles that draw inspiration from exemplar developments elsewhere in the UK. A site-wide framework design code is currently being prepared by the promoter.

Homes England is a public body and has a mandated responsibility to achieve good place-making and sustainable communities. Hence there are good prospects for long-term stewardship of place, and also for ensuring land value is captured for community benefit.

Direct community engagement has been undertaken by Homes England in the early stages of planning a scheme for the site and at subsequent stages of the proposals being developed. This has primarily involved community exhibitions.

Impacts are assessed as favourable at this stage.

### **Site Assessment Summary & Recommendation**

Allocation of this site would have benefits in bringing forward a significant level of residential accommodation that would help in meeting identified housing needs including a range of housing types and sizes. Taking account of the wider housing market needs and the proximity of the site to Crawley, it is considered that 40% affordable housing should be provided in this location. The land West of Ifield is adjacent to the built up area of Crawley and benefits from close proximity to existing major employment hubs, and a number of higher order facilities and services at Crawley.

The site promoter indicates that the site would deliver a range of services and facilities to facilitate the creation of a new neighbourhood community in this location. Evidence demonstrates a multi-modal access corridor into the site, a large neighbourhood centre forming a community and education hub, sites for a secondary and primary school respectively, a well developed network of green infrastructure, active travel (walking and cycling) links, a priority bus route, land for employment, and three distinct character residential areas. A Gypsy and Traveller accommodation site will also be provided.

Overall, strategic development at this scale will have an impact on what is currently a generally rural landscape and there are areas where the landscape is sensitive to development. Any development will need to be designed to minimise adverse impacts as far as possible. Without mitigation, there is also potential for adverse biodiversity impacts, including ancient woodland and Ifield Brook Meadows Local Wildlife site. This land is not proposed for built development and the site promoter is committed to enhancing this asset for nature. A significant Bechstein bat population has been identified in the area which will require careful mitigation, including suitable buffers to adjacent off-site habitat and retention of natural features within the site that the bats use to move around. It is further recognised that the site promoter indicates achievement of 10% biodiversity net gain. Given the Council's emerging evidence that at least 12% is achievable across the District as a whole, this will need to be enhanced.

The site is close to Gatwick Airport – this is beneficial in terms of economic links, but there is potential for new development to be adversely impacted by noise. The indicative masterplan

shows that all noise sensitive development will be located to the south of the 60dB L<sub>Aeq,16hr</sub> noise contour. The site is also close to the river Mole. It is noted that the emerging masterplan limits development to Flood Zone 1 and commits to delivering a comprehensive SuDs strategy. There is also limited capacity for foul drainage and it is anticipated that significant upgrades to sewerage infrastructure may be required.

Homes England has set out a vision for a '15 minute neighbourhood' and takes its lead from the Crawley Neighbourhoods concept. There is a strong commitment to walking, cycling and sustainable travel which builds on the site's proximity to the existing urban area.

The site can be readily connected to existing public transport networks, in particular through expansion of the Crawley Fastway bus network. The site is also relatively close to Ifield railway station.

Roads in and around Crawley are known to experience congestion in the area of the proposed development, for example on the A264 corridor and routes into and through Crawley from the west. There is a need to ensure that any development which comes forward addresses the significant local concerns. Provision of high quality and convenient links by active travel means and by Fastway bus are expected to mitigate potential traffic impacts that might otherwise have occurred.

The scheme has been assessed as financially viable. The site is promoted by Homes England, who owns or controls 97% of the land. Homes England is the national agency for strategic housing delivery. As a Government Agency it is also able to help secure infrastructure investment required to accelerate housing delivery. It is therefore considered there is potential to deliver around 1,600 homes in the plan period.

**Officer Recommendation:**

Taking account of the location of the site close to both Crawley and Horsham, this site is well located in terms of its ability to significantly address Horsham District's housing need, and further address pressing educational needs for both Horsham District and Crawley. Urban extensions have also been identified in the Council's Sustainability appraisal as performing reasonably well in their ability to deliver sustainable development.

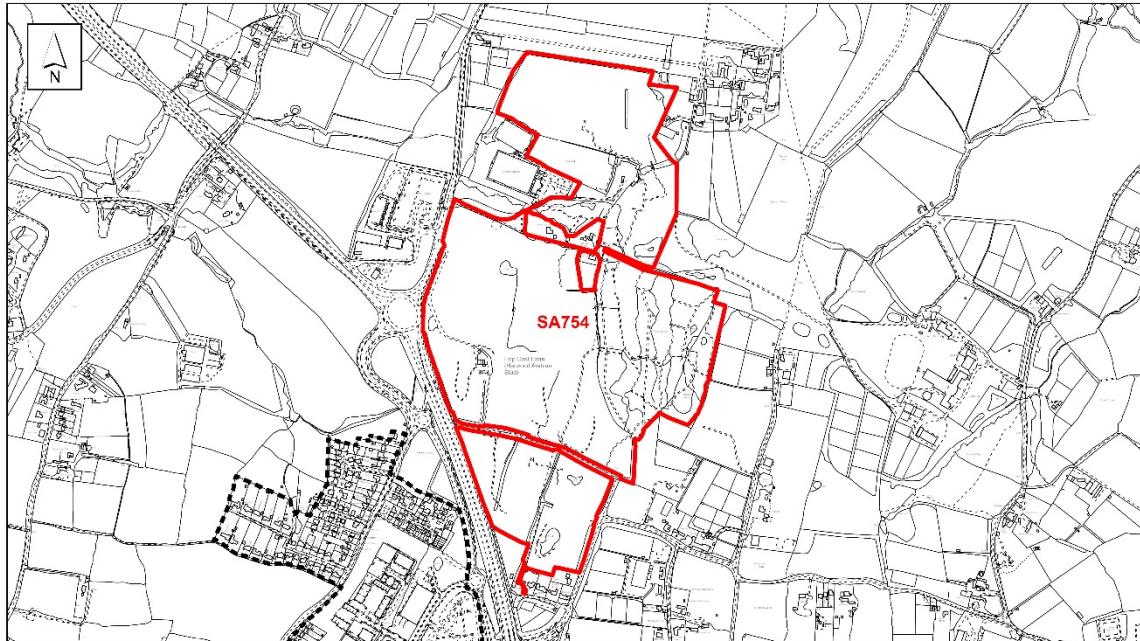
Homes England is the national agency for strategic housing delivery and there is potential to help secure infrastructure investment required to accelerate housing delivery. The site is therefore considered suitable for allocation. However, any scheme must be carefully designed to deliver high quality development that minimises landscape, biodiversity and other environmental impacts and takes account of its relationship on the edge of Crawley. The development will also need to deliver very high rates of sustainable travel and contribute towards the delivery of a wider multi-modal western link.

The site is recommended for allocation in the Horsham District Local Plan.

**Site Name: Horsham Golf & Fitness**

**SA754**

**Site Map:**



**Horsham District Council**

Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham  
West Sussex RH12 1RL  
Barbara Childs : Director of Place

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Local Plan Review 2023  
Horsham Golf and Fitness

Reference No :	Date : 15 November 2023	1:10,000 at A4
Drawing No :	Drawn :	Checked :
		Revisions :

**Site Area:**

55 hectares

**Site Description:**

The site lies in the countryside, to the south of the Horsham built-up area boundary and in-between Horsham and the village of Southwater (south-east). To the west of the site lies the Recycling Centre (Hop Oast) and a petrol station although this is only accessible from the southbound carriageway of the A24. A park and ride facility is located in this area and serves the town of Horsham. Denne Park is located to the north with agricultural land to the west and east. The A24 runs along the south-west boundary of the site. Horsham Golf and Fitness are based to the north of the site with a clubhouse and indoor driving range. Horsham Football Club are based to the west of the golf clubhouse. The footballing facilities are a relatively new addition having received planning permission in 2017. There are mature tree belts located in and around the site including some with TPOs. Ancient woodland is sited along Worthing Road adjacent to the north-west boundary of the site. A high pressure gas pipeline also runs through the site. Two Public Rights of Way (ProW) bisects the site: one along the eastern boundary of the site and other PRoW running alongside Green Lane.

**Summary of Proposal:**

The site is currently subject to an outline planning application (all matters reserved save for access), submitted June 2023, for a Sports and Leisure

	<p>Hub incorporating golfing educational and outdoor play facilities, hockey pitches, a local centre containing a convenience store and co-working space, and up to 800 homes (use class C3). (Reference DC/23/1178)</p> <p><u>Housing</u></p> <p>The site is being put forward as a mixed use scheme for up to 800 homes, a leisure facility, golf college and local centre with a convenience unit. The site promoter has indicated that they could provide 35% affordable housing.</p> <p><u>Employment</u></p> <p>The proposed scheme does not provide significant amount of employment but with the expansion of leisure, a modest retail unit and recreational facilities there will be some employment creation derived from the proposal.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>There is an existing vehicular access onto Worthing Road, which is opposite Horsham Park and Ride. It is proposed to add an additional entrance approximately 400m to the south of the existing entrance. The park and ride facility lies close to the site and has good bus services (hourly or better weekday frequency) to Horsham, Worthing and Crawley.</p> <p><u>Education and Community</u></p> <p>It is understood that the current application does not make provision for schools on site. The nearest primary schools are St Mary's and Arunside (both in Horsham) and Castlewood primary school, and Southwater Infant and Junior Academy, which are all in Southwater. No secondary school is proposed on the site. The proposal includes a golf college to provide courses for a career in the golf industry.</p> <p><u>Net zero carbon</u></p> <p>The promoters indicate the proposal will include the provision of solar panels and electric vehicle charging points alongside other sustainable technologies, including water reduction and management.</p>
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**Site Assessment against Criteria**

***Environmental considerations***

**Landscape:**

Although close to Horsham and Southwater, the site is divorced from both existing built up areas. The development of this site would not accord with the prevailing pattern of Southwater or Horsham, as it relates poorly to both. Nevertheless, taking into account the proximity of both Southwater to the south and the small hamlet of Tower Hill nearby, the development of this site would contribute to a sense of coalescence between currently distinct settlement areas, and could pressure for further development between Horsham and Southwater.

The site does not lie within any protected landscapes. The Landscape

Very Negative

Capacity Study 2021 assesses the capacity of the landscape for both medium and large-scale housing as “no to low”. Although there are some urban influences around the Hop Oast junction, the site is overall very rural in character, and forms an important part of the visual separation between Horsham and Southwater. Some sections of the site adjoining the Worthing Road are bounded by low hedgerows. The site is therefore highly visible in these sections.

For the reasons set out, development of the site would have significant adverse landscape impacts. The site is thus assessed as ‘very negative’ for this category.

**Biodiversity:**

The site and surrounding land is not designated as important for nature conservation. The site does not lie within a Bat Sustenance Zone. Ancient woodland is located just beyond the north-west boundary of the site and also close to the south-east site boundary, and there are a number of woodland corridors which are linked to these. Impacts on this woodland are possible which could potentially lead to a loss of important wildlife habitat, therefore appropriate seasonal surveys to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation will need to be undertaken, and appropriate buffers designed in. A number of Tree Preservation Orders are located within the site and should be afforded appropriate protection to include buffers A commitment to delivering biodiversity net gain of 10% onsite is stated.

At the time of assessment, no detailed biodiversity net gain assessments have been provided to the Council and the level of biodiversity net gain which could be delivered is unclear.

Taking into account the above, impacts are assessed as unfavourable.

Unfavourable

**Archaeology / Cultural Heritage:**

The northern section of the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area and appropriate investigation and surveys should demonstrate any proposal should not have adverse impact on potential heritage assets. There are 2 listed buildings adjacent to the north-east corner of the site (Denne Park House, Grade II and Pineapple Cottage, Grade II). The close proximity of the proposal to the listed buildings may have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building.

Any proposal should demonstrate there is no adverse impact on the open and rural setting of nearby listed buildings including the surrounding park land and entry point at Gate Cottage to Denne Park perceived as an important part of the historical special interest of the listing and its setting. In particular, the experience of arriving at the house along this avenue is an important part of the special interest of the listed building in its setting. The development of the land adjacent to the avenue would impact on the open and rural setting of the avenue to its detriment. It would further diminish an understanding and appreciation of the listed buildings in their parkland setting.

Unfavourable

<p>Policy SNP19 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan also identifies the Denne Parkland as a significant Parish Heritage Asset and requires development to demonstrate that the asset would not be adversely impacted.</p> <p>Given the above, impacts are assessed as unfavourable.</p>	
<p><b>Environmental Quality (Soil / Air / Water):</b></p>	
<p>The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Area but is located in Minerals Safeguarding Area for Brick Clay and Building Stone. Any proposal would require a Minerals Resource Assessment as part of any application. A high pressure gas pipeline passes directly through the site from NW to SE. which can limit the amount of development which can take place in the easements along these pipelines.</p> <p>The proposed housing development would be located on the southern / southwestern portion of the site closest to the A24. This is the main north – south road in the District and there is therefore potential traffic noise that may impact significantly on amenity. Proposals would be expected to include a noise assessment and mitigation is likely to be required which would be expected to have regard to landscape sensitivities.</p> <p>Whilst not unique to this development, there is a District-wide constraint arising from the need for all development to be water neutral, due to potential impacts on further mains water abstraction from the vicinity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site (the ‘Arun Valley Sites’). Any allocation would therefore need to be in conformity with the wider Strategic Solution which has established the potential to deliver a level of offsetting over the plan period. Development would also need to be in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies on water neutrality. The site promoter has indicated that they are of the view that they can deliver a water neutral scheme using existing boreholes on the site. However insufficient detail has been provided to the Council to determine whether this is the case, and at this stage it cannot be concluded there will be no adverse impact on the Arun Valley.</p> <p>Further assessment would be required to inform this.</p>	<p>Unfavourable</p>
<p><b>Flooding / Drainage:</b></p>	
<p>The site does not lie within an area identified as at risk of flooding (Flood zone 1). Worthing Road is undulating in nature and is subject to localised flooding and occasional closure after severe weather events. Areas with localised flooding within the site, including any surface water flooding, should be identified with mitigation SUDS. Impacts are assessed as neutral at this stage.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<b>Climate / Renewables / Energy efficiency:</b>	
<p>The promoters have indicated they will employ photo voltaic panels, electric charging points and other sustainable technologies. However, there is limited detail in relation to these aspects. We would expect any proposal to demonstrate strong support for electric car charging infrastructure in line with best practice and government guidance.</p> <p>Development in this location will generate additional car journeys which have the potential to contribute to carbon emissions (albeit this is likely to fall over time with increased use of electric vehicles). The site promoter indicated that they would make best use of the existing transport hub (Hop Oast) and look to implement sustainable construction methods.</p> <p>An unfavourable impact therefore concluded at this stage.</p>	Unfavourable
<b>Social considerations</b>	
<b>Housing:</b>	
<p>The site is being put forward as a mixed-use scheme for up to 800 homes. The promoter indicates that a mix of homes would be provided including a commitment to the delivery of 35% affordable housing in line with current and emerging local plan policy. Limited detail on the types and densities of housing has been submitted to the Council at this stage. The scheme does not provide any land towards meeting Gypsy and Traveller needs which runs contrary to expectations set out in national policy with regards meeting housing needs identified within the community.</p> <p>The proposed development would contribute towards meeting the Council's housing requirements, including for affordable housing. The lack of any Gypsy and Traveller provision is a significant negative with regards assessment against this category, and it is noted that the total number of homes proposed is less than most other strategic sites under consideration. Nevertheless, taking into account that any strategic scale housing scheme will contribute significantly to the District's housing stock, a favourable impact is concluded.</p>	Favourable
<b>Education:</b>	
<p>A development of this scale generates need for at least a one form entry primary school. However, the illustrative masterplan does not include land for a new primary school. The lack of any primary level provision would mean a substantial number of new occupant families with school-age children looking to access schools in Southwater or Horsham at both primary and secondary level. The nearest primary schools are St Mary's and Arunside both in Horsham and Castlewood Primary School, and Southwater Infant and Junior Academy, which are all in Southwater. No detail is provided as to whether these or other schools have capacity to meet this additional demand or the ability to expand in order to do so. However it is clear that there would be limited ability for new school-age occupants to access existing schools by means other than private car, given their relatively large distance from the site.</p>	Very Unfavourable

Development in this location is within the catchment of Tanbridge House secondary school (in Horsham), and older children would need to travel to this or other secondary schools in the District. It is understood that insufficient secondary education capacity exists currently to meet the needs of the development.

It is acknowledged that the site seeks to provide Golf education facilities for those seeking a career in golf. However, this is a very narrow range of education provision, and is likely to be of limited benefit to all residents of the District.

With the proposal of this size, there will be an expectation to provide primary school provision onsite and possibly a secondary school given local provision at North Horsham is at near capacity. This is not within the site proposals. Taking into account the lack of school provision which would be required, a very unfavourable assessment is concluded.

**Health:**

No new NHS health facility is proposed on the site. There is a health centre at Station Road in Southwater (2km from the site or a 30 minute walk), and a number of GP surgeries in Horsham town centre which would be further still to travel to.

It is acknowledged that the inclusion in this scheme of a sports hub and new fitness and leisure facilities may contribute to healthy lifestyles. The sports hub itself may also have a wider benefit to the health of other residents of the district. Nevertheless, given the considerable distance to any community (NHS) health facilities and uncertainty over access to those, a neutral impact is concluded.

Neutral

**Leisure / Recreation / Community Facilities:**

The recent outline planning application submitted for this site proposes a 'sports and leisure hub' incorporating golf college and further educational facility, sports club house, improved outdoor golfing facilities (albeit the current course would reduce to 9 holes) and hockey pitches, as well as 800 homes.

The provision of these features would help deliver wider community benefits, particularly in respect of the hockey pitches which could meet an identified need in the area. However, the precise role they will play in delivering a cohesive community, and the access the public would have to them, is less clearly expressed. There is more limited provision of public open space than some other proposed strategic sites. There is no formal neighbourhood centre proposed. The Council has produced an open space calculator which indicates the requirement to meeting the Council's standards. There will be an expectation to provide appropriate levels of open space and amenity for local residents to enjoy. Some of which, may be offset by the provision of leisure facilities in the proposal. Nonetheless,

Neutral



approximately 55ha of open space will be reduced to around 18ha. On this basis, unless the loss of existing open space is justified (c.37ha of open space to be lost), the proposal will not meet the open space needs generated by the proposed housing (c. 800 dwellings). Based on a housing scheme of 800 dwellings of unknown size/ type the total generated open space should be taken to equate to a minimum of 8.95 hectares.

Development of the site would result in the loss of some provision of the existing golfing facilities as the current 18-hole course would be reduced to a 9-hole course. The Council's evidence on golf provision in the District indicates that whilst HDC has a high level of provision of golf clubs, particularly when compared with other areas, these sites may meet the needs of those living in neighbouring districts and boroughs. The site promoter has submitted a site-specific golf assessment to help demonstrate that the traditional golf course / open space to be lost is surplus.

It is acknowledged that the assessment provided to HDC is to support a specific planning application. However, in considering a local plan allocation, the impact of the loss of this site and others in the District would need to be considered on a cumulative basis.

It is considered the current evidence fails to clearly demonstrate the existing golf course is surplus to requirements or that the 'replacement' offer appropriately compensates for the significant loss of open space. There is also a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the proposal can appropriately address the generated open space needs of the proposed housing (c. 800 dwellings) or provide the number of new trees to accord with the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

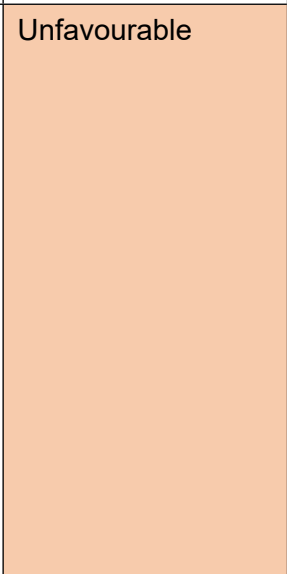
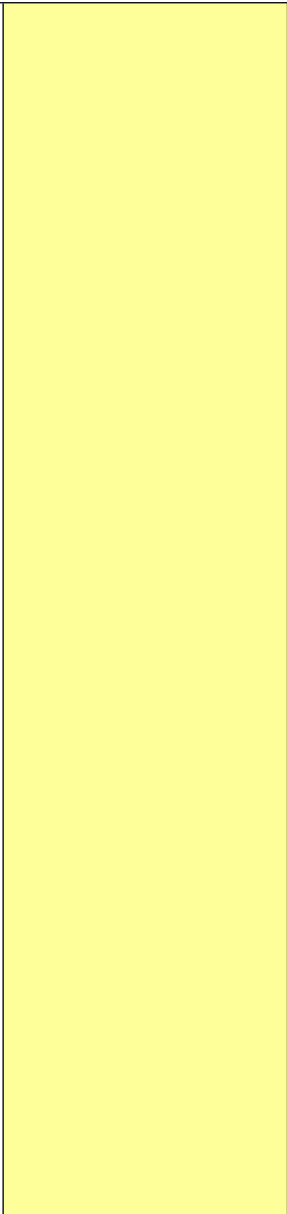
Overall, whilst taking account of the need for further detail on the precise nature and type of any mitigation it is considered that there would be undoubted leisure benefits to this site, in particular for hockey provision for which there is an identified local need. On the other hand, the benefits to the wider community are not sufficiently clear especially the net loss of open space available to the public. On balance, a neutral impact is concluded.

**Transport:**

Walking and cycling

The site is located to the south of Horsham town and would in effect be a small, separate settlement relative to both Horsham town (the distance to the town centre is some 3 to 4 km) and Southwater (some 1.5 to 2.5 km to the village centre). Pedestrian links to both settlements are currently poor, however the proposed development does provide opportunities to create new attractive active travel routes to Southwater by way of improvements to the existing bridge across the A24 ('Southwater Street').

Development is expected to provide walking and cycling connections to both settlements as being integral to any proposal through the implementation of footways, cycle lanes and infrastructure. However, it is considered very challenging to achieve direct, convenient, and attractive active travel routes to Horsham Town as the most direct route, the B2237 Worthing Road, is a constrained and heavily trafficked corridor with a single narrow footway (which alternates sides) for most of its length outside of the built-up



Unfavourable

boundary, with limited scope to improve. A upgrade of Worthing Road would ideally be undertaken, with the provision of widened and continuous footways, cycle lanes, street lighting. Nonetheless, it is noted that significant upgrading of Worthing Road would further urbanise this route into Horsham town affecting the rural character of the area.

Evidence submitted by the promoter acknowledges there are two existing public rights of way running through the site: Footpath 1666 which runs from Kings Lane to the south and to Denne Road to the north, which then provides a connection to Horsham town centre. Byway 1668 which connects Southwater Street to the A24 These existing pedestrian routes will be integrated into future proposals, to encourage active means of travel such as walking and/or cycling and improve connections between the site and the wider locality while other opportunities to improve local walking and cycling infrastructure has been identified in the Transport Assessment but specific details relating to walking and cycling improvements are not clear and to be taken forward in future discussions relating to the planning application.

#### Public Transport

The site is located opposite the Horsham Park and Ride which is served by good frequency buses to Horsham town, and slightly lesser so to Crawley and Worthing via intermediate settlements. There are also local bus stops on the Worthing Road within a short distance of the western boundary of the site, again connecting the site with the wider locality. The proposal would look to improve crossing facilities between the site and the Park and Ride facility located to the west of the site.

#### Road Transport

There is an existing vehicular access onto Worthing Road, which is opposite Horsham Park and Ride. It is proposed to add an additional entrance approximately 400m to the south of the existing entrance. It is anticipated that additional traffic would be generated to and from the site which would put increased pressure on the local road network including Worthing Road. It is however noted that a Transport Assessment has been undertaken to support the recent outline planning application, which provides some reassurance on this point.

Overall, it is recognised that the site benefits from a relatively good level of bus service due to the proximity of Horsham Park and Ride, albeit the attractiveness of using these services is reduced by the lack of any buses being routed through the site itself. However due to the lack of clear evidence of delivery of the required transport upgrades that would be required to achieve safe and attractive routes for active travel into the main settlement of Horsham, impacts are assessed as unfavourable.

#### **Other infrastructure:**

We would expect the provision of superfast broadband to be provided as part of any proposal as to offer the option of local residents to work from home.

Electric charging infrastructure would be expected to be implemented as

Neutral

part of sustainable travel plan for the area.	
A neutral impact is concluded.	
<b><i>Economic considerations</i></b>	
<b>Economy:</b>	
Horsham is the main settlement in the district, which has a large range of employment opportunities, services and facilities including a number of schools and railway stations. Southwater is classified as a large town/ small village and also has a good range of services. The development does not include on-site employment beyond that which would be provided by the new sports and leisure facilities, and whilst there will likely be increased working from home following Covid-19 it is anticipated that most new residents will commute to places of work. Whilst the expansion of the sports hub may provide some employment as part of this proposal, limited details have been put forward by the site promoter other than some SME employment space. Impacts are therefore assessed as neutral.	Neutral
<b>Retail:</b>	
Horsham is the main settlement in the district, which has a large range of shops. Southwater is classified as a large town/ small village and also has a good range of shops, however these are some 1.5 to 2.5 km distant from proposed residential parcels. Following discussions with HDC, the site promoter is proposing the implementation of a convenience store within a proposed mixed use local centre to be at the heart of the development. Nonetheless, residents would most likely rely heavily on via private car, to access higher level goods and services needs in centres such as Horsham or Crawley.  In view of the proposal for a convenience store, but the wider need to travel to reach many shops, impacts are assessed as neutral at this stage.	Neutral
<b><i>Further considerations</i></b>	
<b>Deliverability and Viability:</b>	
The land is in the ownership of one landholder with legal agreements to promote the site for development. Land assembly is therefore not considered to be a constraint to development.  The promoter has indicated that around 800 homes could be delivered within the plan period, albeit it would be possible (depending on market demand) to increase the delivery pace.  A viability appraisal has been submitted as part of the recent outline planning application. Whilst full independent scrutiny of this will be necessary, the appraisal submitted by the promoter indicates a good margin of viability.  Impacts are assessed as neutral at this time, pending full consideration of	Neutral

the evidence.	
<b>Development Quality:</b>	
<p>The developer has put forward a vision for enhanced sports provision and a small new settlement as part of this community. The promoters are clear that they envisage that the site would help deliver healthy lifestyles due to the proximity of the sports hub. They also highlight benefits around access to open space, nature and have a stated commitment to inclusive design. Some consideration has been given to climate change and transport links in and out of the site.</p> <p>This site is not in accordance with the core principles, vision and policies as stated in the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan which was made in 2021 and covers the period to 2031 and forms part of the Development Plan for the District.</p> <p>At this stage, the proposals for this site are relatively limited and at a high level only. It is not considered there is a clear vision as to how the proposed scheme relates to or would benefit existing communities (beyond the benefits of new sports and leisure facilities) or respond to wider local context. Given this lack of information impacts are assessed as neutral.</p>	Neutral
<b>Site Assessment Summary &amp; Recommendation</b>	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The site has the benefit of being close to Horsham Park and Ride and would therefore be relatively well-served by buses, albeit there are no service enhancements or routing of any existing or new service through the site, thereby potentially reducing the attractiveness of bus travel. There are</p>	

opportunities to provide active travel links into Southwater however there are no significant proposals or opportunities to improve walking, wheeling and cycling to Horsham, given the constraints on the existing movement network on that approach. Therefore, a favourable active travel mode share is unlikely.

The proposal inadequately addresses the need for school places, especially given the lack of connectivity with existing schools, and the recognised shortfall of secondary school places on existing school sites.

Further details are required of how the proposal would be fully water neutral in order to be compliant with Habitat Regulations especially given the high water usage expected to prevalent in maintaining the golfing facilities and hockey pitches.

**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.

For the reasons set out, the site is not recommended for allocation.