

5<sup>th</sup> July 2024Patrick Griffin  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]Rural Planning Group  
Second Floor Office  
2 Station Street  
Lewes  
BN7 2DA[www.ruralpg.com](http://www.ruralpg.com)Planning Policy  
Rother District Council  
Town Hall  
Bexhill on Sea  
TN39 3JX

By email only

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) - Land south of A259, Icklesham, Winchelsea, TN36 4BG to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).**

This letter is submitted on behalf of our client, Mrs Virginia Freeman and The Trust of Mrs F M Bates in support of a submission of the above land to the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

**The Site**

The site is located in a sustainable location adjoining the built-up area boundary of the settlement of Icklesham. It is approximately 5 km from Rye to the east and 8 km from Hasting to the south west. In terms of transport links the site is located directly onto the A259 main trunk road that links Rye with Hastings. There is a bus stop adjacent to the site that provides a regular hourly bus service to Hastings and Rye (Number 70 and Number 100). The site is also in relatively close proximity to both Winchelsea railway station (approx. 3.5km) and Doleman railway station (approx. 4km) that provides rail services across the south coast and connections to Hastings and London.

Icklesham village is characterised as a radial settlement within the fringes of Hastings with strong links and connections to the town and its services and facilities. The village has a primary school within 250 metres of the site, two pubs (with one pub directly adjacent to the site), a village hall and thriving local community. The current settlement is located primarily to the north of the A259 and stretches along the road with relatively dense development consisting of a mix in dwelling sizes and types.

The site itself extends to 4.5 hectares and comprises low-grade (mainly horse) grazing land that slopes very gently away to the south. It is bounded by the A259 to the north, Watermill Lane to the west, Laurel Lane and mature trees and hedgerows to the east, and woodland (including ancient woodland) to the south. Access to the site is either via Watermill Lane or directly from the A259. The photo below shows an aerial view of the site edged in red and its relationship with the wider village to the north.



### **Constraints**

The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, however there would be minimal impact on the wider landscape as it sits in the backdrop of the village and the A259 to the north which would be less sensitive to visual change, particularly the north and west of the site.

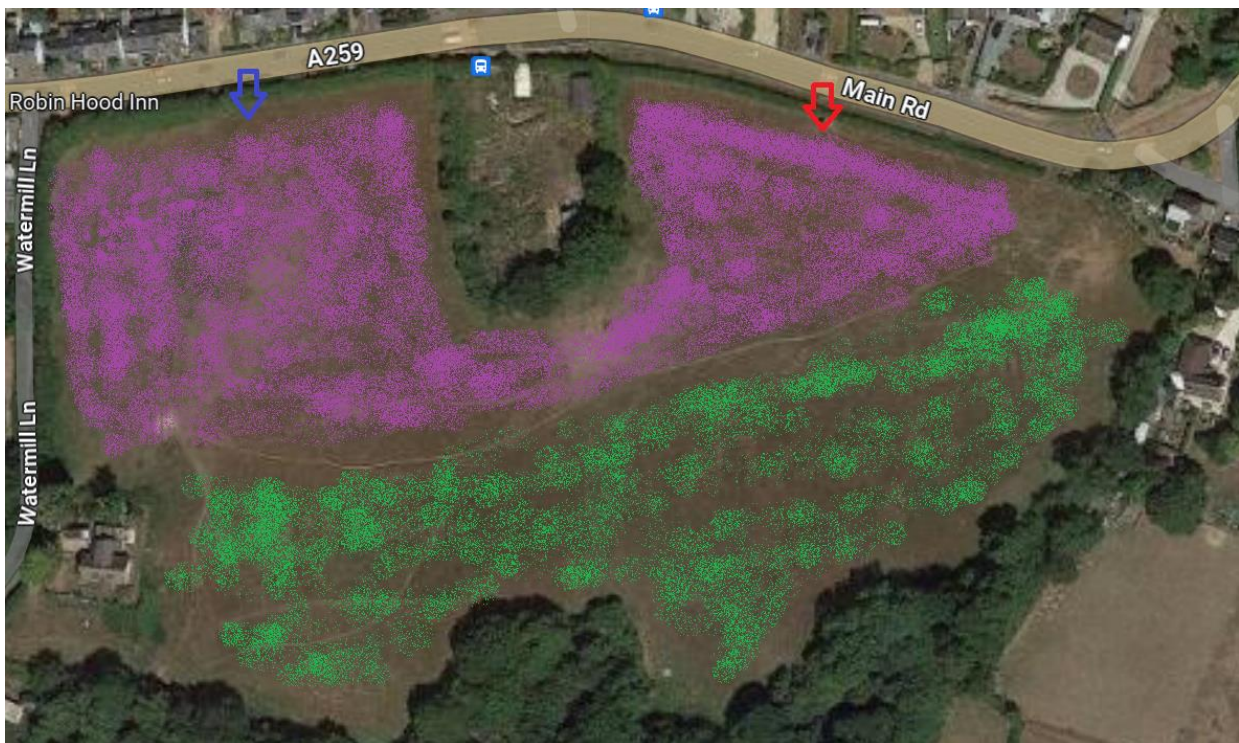
There is a footpath that runs across the site from the north eastern corner to the south western corner. It is currently envisaged that this would be incorporated into any proposed development and enhanced.

Part of the woodland on the southern and south eastern boundary of the site is designated as ancient woodland. It is not within the site, but being on the boundary any proposed development would respect the buffer zones of this designation.

The constraints provide an opportunity to design a suitable scheme which would respect the character of this part of the countryside and conserve and enhance the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The main part of the site is currently low-grade agricultural land, and taking in to account the location and the prevailing character of the site and surroundings, it is considered that there is an opportunity for the land to be used more efficiently and effectively, to meet Council's objectives and the needs of the District in a sympathetic manner which is fully compliant with all levels of Planning Policy.

### Development Opportunities

The site by virtue of its sustainable location adjacent to Icklesham village and the A259 with its excellent transport links provides very good opportunities for new residential development. Taking account of the identified constraints the site lends itself to a sensitive residential scheme on the northern and western parts of the site with the density of development falling away to the south. The plan below shows the potentially developable area in purple stretching across the north and west of the site along the A259 replicating the development patterns to the north. The red arrow indicates the optimum location for a new access into the site from a highway visibility and safety point of view, with the blue arrow indicating an alternative or secondary potential access point.



Development in this location would take account of the constraints. Being in the AONB development would be in the least sensitive parts of the site within the backdrop of the existing built-up silhouette of the village to the north and the A259. It would provide the opportunity to increase the housing stock in the village, but it would

also represent an opportunity to enhance the current footpath and accessible green space available to the village. The site has a footpath that runs through it and used by many of the local community. The development of this site would represent an opportunity to retain and enhance this footpath and formalise accessible green space for existing and new residents across the south of the site (coloured in green on the plan above). This would minimise impact of development on the AONB, footpath and the ancient woodland and also provide a new rural recreational area for the village.

It is considered that the developable area of the site could provide up to 25 dwellings depending on the mix. The village is characterised by quite high density housing for a rural area with a range of attached and detached housing. It is envisaged that this site could replicate the density particularly in the northern areas that is then tapered down towards the south. This would provide a range of houses which would relate to the existing but also allow for any landscape enhancements required to mitigate impacts on the High Weald AONB.

The site is in a single ownership and and it is available immediately should it be required.

The owners are looking to promote the land through the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan when it is initiated. There are no viability issues affecting the site that the owners are aware of; there will be no abnormal site costs to develop the land.

### **Conclusion**

The Land south of the A259 is well located within the sustainable village of Icklesham and within easy access of Rye and Hastings and all of the services that these settlements have to offer. The site comprises low-grade agricultural land in the AONB and taking account of constraints could provide up to 25 dwellings.

This number of dwellings could be successfully accommodated within the land in a manner which respects the character of the surroundings and will make a valuable contribution towards the development needs of the District. It would also provide the opportunity to enhance an existing footpath and provide formal accessible open green space for the community.

We would be grateful for your confirmation of the suitability of this land, which we will also be promoting in the Local Plan. This will then allow the owners to prepare the necessary studies to fully inform the allocation of the land for residential development.

Yours Sincerely

**Patrick Griffin BA(hons) MA MRTPI**

Director

Rural Planning Group

████████████████████

██████████

[www.ruralpg.com](http://www.ruralpg.com)