



## **Appraisal of Potential Strategic Development Site Option 9: Pulborough Expansion Background Document to the Core Strategy Review Consultation Document**

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### **1 General Introduction**

- 1.1 The Horsham District Core Strategy sets out a framework for planning the future of the District, including how the District Council intends to meet the Government's requirements for development. The existing Core Strategy covers the period to 2018, but the Council now needs to review the Core Strategy and look even further ahead in light of the South East Plan being approved.
- 1.2 The first stage of the review process is the consultation document 'Leading Change in Partnership to 2026 and Beyond', which sets out some of the key issues in planning the future of the District and options for how they can be addressed and how the Council's development requirements can be met. A number of potential strategic development sites are identified and this Background Document is an appraisal of one of those sites.
- 1.3 This Background Document has been prepared to inform the Core Strategy Review Consultation Document and to identify and articulate the background information and issues associated with the potential strategic development site. It reflects the site assessment work undertaken to date by the Council and incorporates responses from key delivery stakeholders, where appropriate.
- 1.4 This Background Document forms part of the evidence base that informs the consultation on the Core Strategy Review Consultation Document 'Leading change in partnership to 2026 and beyond'.



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### 2 Site Specific Background Information

- 2.1 The South East Plan identifies nine sub-regions. Part of Horsham District, the northern and eastern part, lies within the Gatwick Sub-Region, with the rest of the District being part of the 'Rest of West Sussex' area. This site is within the **Rest of West Sussex** area and would therefore contribute to the requirement for 3,800 new homes in the Rest of the District.
- 2.2 The settlement of Pulborough is situated towards the south-western boundary of Horsham District and is set beside the confluence of the River Arun and the River Rother in the south. Pulborough is classified as a Category 1 Settlement in the Core Strategy (2007) and the village extends towards Codmore Hill in the north, which is classified as a Category 2 Settlement.
- 2.3 It is generally accepted that Pulborough has an unconventional urban form characterised by a range of important constraints, which is largely due to its location on the banks of the two rivers, its historic pattern of development and the railway line that runs through the middle. Having been designated as a Category 1 settlement in the current Core Strategy (2007) it is considered that Pulborough is capable of sustaining development through either expansion, infilling or redevelopment. Any future development in Pulborough would need to be managed carefully and comprehensively in order to provide the right services and infrastructure linkages across the settlement to sustain it.
- 2.4 The Council are considering a different approach towards potential strategic development at Pulborough to the other strategic development sites proposed in the Core Strategy Review. It is considered that potential development may consist of several key individual sites that have been put forward by developers in Pulborough through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process. It is suggested that any of these sites, or indeed any other future development in the settlement, would need to contribute towards a comprehensive overarching upgrade of the infrastructure and community facilities across Pulborough. This would need to address the current shortfalls and needs in these areas, for the benefit of the wider community. The Location Map at the back of this document shows the general area in which these sites are located.
- 2.5 The four key individual sites have previously been proposed to the Council for development during the preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations of Land Development Plan Documents in 2006. Whilst the sites considered then are slightly different to the potential strategic development site now being considered, they are very similar.
- 2.6 The sites previously considered were not supported by the Council as they did not comply with the strategy for the District, as expressed in the Core Strategy (2007). The independent Inspectors who examined the Core Strategy agreed with this position and therefore the sites were not allocated.
- 2.7 Several of the sites have been subject to previous planning applications. They are listed and described below:

#### Oddstones

- PL/105/00 - In 2001 an application was submitted for a Medical centre approx 100 lifecare units and 20 bed nursing home with associated medical facilities including pharmacy (outline)
- DC/07/0766 - In 2007 an application was submitted for Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 10 x 2-bed, 7 x 3-bed and 8 x 4-bed houses and 12 x 2-bed flats



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- DC/09/0488 - In March 2009 an application was submitted for Demolition of existing property and construction of residential development of 87 dwellings consisting 21 x 2-bed apartments; 28 x 2-bed houses; 16 x 3-bed house and 22 x 4-bed houses together with ancillary works

### Stane Street Nurseries

- DC/07/1276 - Removal of existing timber outbuilding and construction of 4 x retail/commercial units with sanitary accommodation
- DC/08/0908 - Removal of existing timber outbuilding and construction of 4 x retail/commercial units with sanitary accommodation
- DC/04/2737 - Erection of butchers shop with first floor office accommodation



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### 3 Constraints and Opportunities

- 3.1 This section considers a range of issues relating to the potential strategic development site. They have been identified following consultations with key delivery stakeholders, as recommended by national planning policy guidance.

#### Landscape and Biodiversity

- 3.2 **Natural England (NE)** and the **Environment Agency (EA)** have identified that the potential area of development is in close proximity to a number of designated sites such as Park Farm SSSI and the impact development would have on these should be carefully considered. **NE** expressed that it would object to any proposed development which would adversely affect the interest features for which the Park Farm SSSI was notified.
- 3.3 The **EA** have identified several other sites in close proximity to the potential development area that the impact on which should be considered. They have been set out below along with impact descriptions provided by the **EA**.

#### *Pulborough Brooks SSSI and Arun Valley SPA/Ramsar site*

- 3.4 The land at Pulborough, at its closest point, is approximately 1.4km from Pulborough Brooks SSSI and the Arun Valley SPA/Ramsar site. It is unlikely that the development will have direct impacts on these sites, but there is the potential to increase recreational pressure given the housing numbers proposed (300-400 dwellings). Under the Habitats Directive these sites are designated for their wetland habitats and the bird species that they support. Research has shown that such species can be adversely impacted by disturbance, including recreational pressure. Consequently, an appropriate assessment will be required under the Habitats Regulations. Pulborough Brooks already has a visitors centre which helps to manage visitors access on the site and there may be opportunities for enhancement of facilities, habitats and access routes given funding contributions by developers, to help absorb extra visitor numbers.

#### *Upper Arun SSSI*

- 3.5 The watercourse running through the potential development site is a tributary of the River Arun, which in this location is designated as a SSSI (Upper Arun). The River is designated for its outstanding assemblage of dragonflies, including some rare species (Club tailed Dragonfly and the Brilliant Emerald). This SSSI and the species it supports are particularly vulnerable to deterioration in water quality and in the past the ecological value the SSSI has declined as a result of water quality problems. These have been addressed by improvements at the Horsham Sewage treatment works, but illustrate the sensitivity of the site and species to changes in water quality. Consequently if the land at Pulborough is allocated as a potential development site, appropriate surface water management will be necessary to ensure drainage does not impact upon the water quality of the River Arun or the Upper Arun SSSI. This is in keeping with the Core Strategy Policy CP2.

#### *Middle Barn Farm Meadows SNCI*

- 3.6 Middle Barn Farm Meadows SNCI is in the centre of the proposed development site. The site is designated as an unimproved wet grassland site with very rich flora supporting a large number of plant species typical of unimproved wet grassland and fen, including a colony of Southern Marsh Orchids. This site is botanically rich and as such constitutes a Biodiversity Action Plan habitat which requires protection and enhancement as outlined in a number of planning policies (PPS9, NRM5 in the South East Plan) as well as being required within the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). Furthermore the Horsham Core Strategy Policy CP1 states



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that “activities which may influence character should only take place where: protected landscapes, habitat and species are properly protected, conserved and enhance and the biodiversity of the district is conserved and enhanced. Policy CP8 states that provisions may be made in small Greenfield sites where they does not fundamentally undermine the qualities which make them or their countryside setting unique and special. Permission will only be granted where additional local, social and economic needs arise or where development would result in substantial environmental enhancement compatible with the character of the location. As a consequence of these policies the SNCI area should only be included in any strategic development if it is protected and substantially enhanced.

- 3.7 After screening the site using Geographical Information Systems and habitat mapping the **EA** states that much of the land within the development area is either improved grassland or urban areas. It should be noted that these data are not always accurate. However, there is a green corridor running across the site, which would need to be retained and protected. This includes the stream and the mosaic of wetland habitats that it supports such as areas of marshy grassland and inundation vegetation, ponds and broadleaved woodland. The **EA** advises that in making strategic allocations in this location these habitats would need to be retained as they provide an important wildlife corridor and contribute to Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and support protected species such as Pipestrelle bats and Great Crested Newts.

### Water Resource and Quality

- 3.8 The **EA** highlights that there is volumetric capacity available at Pulborough Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) under the terms of the current consent.

### Flooding

- 3.9 The **EA** states that a limited amount of flood zone 3 crosses the site. There are also a number of minor watercourses on site. Essential infrastructure such as main access roads into the site should also be located outside any flood zones. There is known to be a problem with surface water infrastructure.

### Contamination

- 3.10 The **EA** highlights that there are no specific contamination issues within the defined area, however there are a number of farms, industrial and factory units, railway land and former brick pits which may have resulted in areas of contamination.

### Physical Infrastructure

- 3.11 **Scotia Gas Networks** advises that in general it can provide gas to any location that is required, be it through reinforcing an existing network or creating a new network by extending medium/intermediate pressure pipelines.
- 3.12 **Southern Water** supplies water and wastewater services to this area and considers that there is no fundamental reason why this site would not be suitable for development, from a water infrastructure perspective. Major off site mains reinforcements will be required and the development may contribute to the need for additional water infrastructure resources.
- 3.13 The Council has been informed by **Southern Water** that there is no sewer capacity to accommodate development in this location and therefore the developer will need to make adequate provision for a connection to the nearest point of capacity.
- 3.14 **Southern Water** advises that the Pulborough WWTW has the ability to provide for up to 500 additional dwellings, subject to the extension of the existing treatment capacity.



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### Highways and Transport

- 3.15 The **Highways Agency (HA)** is concerned over the cumulative impact of the potential strategic development site on the trunk road network. The **HA** would wish to consider this cumulative impact as part of a review of the transport modelling for the area. If it is determined that development at any of the potential strategic development sites has a material impact on the trunk road network, then the **HA** would expect the developer to make a proportionate contribution to any necessary improvements. Irrespective of any material impact on the trunk road network that may be identified, the **HA** would, in line with Government policy, look for significant sustainable travel initiatives with any strategic development location that could also address the level of car-based travel from existing development.
- 3.16 **West Sussex County Council (WSSC)** highlights the need for comprehensive Transport Assessments in accordance with national guidance. Extensive transport modelling work or financial contributions to access existing transport models is also likely to be required.
- 3.17 In relation to the Pulborough Strategic Development Site **WSSC** state that the site has a direct link with the strategic road network (A29). Pulborough has a mainline station, but pedestrian and cycle links to it are poor. Pedestrian/cycle access to the local school and other community facilities are also poor, particularly adjacent to the A29 between Stane Street Close and New Place Road due to narrow footways. This is especially difficult across the A29 railway bridge for mobility scooters and buggies. Improved footway provision along the A29, including a new pedestrian footbridge adjacent to the railway bridge, is a main village priority. However, in addition, an alternative 'off-road' cycle route to the station should be investigated on the west side of the railway line to Church Place. The A283 Lower Street also suffers from poor pedestrian provision and road safety enhancements in the shopping centre area are also a priority.
- 3.18 **WSSC** indicates that the likely transport infrastructure requirements are:
- A significant contribution towards the provision of a new pedestrian footbridge on the west side of the A29 London Road across the railway line and the widening of the existing footway southwards to New Place Road.
  - Investigate the provision of new 'off-road' pedestrian/cycle links to Pulborough station to the west of the railway line.
  - A contribution towards road safety improvements in the Lower Street shopping area.
  - A contribution towards improving access to the standard of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) at Pulborough station in association with the new rail franchisee's station travel plan.
  - A contribution towards speed reducing measures on residential roads which may be subject to increased short-cutting by development generated traffic.
  - New bus stops, shelters and real-time passenger information

### Education

- 3.19 **WSSC** advice is that secondary pupil provision could meet an increase of 300-400 new dwellings in Pulborough. Should however the catchment changes not yield sufficient 'freed up' places there may be a need to look to increasing provision elsewhere e.g. in Storrington. In respect of primary provision some capacity may exist in existing schools but the development will need to support the provision of new places.
- 3.20 However, **WSSC** go on to state that at present much of this is at best draft strategic approach and would need to be considered in the context of a wider Places Strategy and the necessary consultation with schools and their partners.



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### **Library Service**

- 3.22 **WSCC** general approach to future library provision is that any new large scale community that has a distinctive community focus such as a community centre should have library provision as part of that community building rather than stand alone buildings. As regards further information on library provision it would be necessary to see the nature of the community and then plan accordingly.

### **Wastes Management Services**

- 3.23 The Billingshurst and Pulborough potential locations are within the catchment of the Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) at Billingshurst. WSCC believe that at this time the Billingshurst HWRS would have the capacity to cope with this additional development, although this would need to be kept under review.



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### 4. Details of the Proposal

- 4.1 The Council is required to consider all the potential sites for strategic development and has identified a number that have not been put forward for consideration by developers, of which the Pulborough Expansion is one. Some of the sites have been put forward previously by developers.
- 4.2 The following sets out the key individual sites within the development option and the Council's conclusions and reasons for putting this forward as a potential strategic proposal.
- 4.3 Pulborough is characterised by various important constraints that have driven the settlements unconventional urban form. This means that there are various issues that have to be overcome in order to improve the infrastructure linkages across the settlement and to enhance the quality of the existing community's lives to enable more sustainable future development.
- 4.4 There are several important pressing issues that have been identified by the local community, the Pulborough Village Transport Group and the Council that need to be overcome. They are as follows:

- There is a need to provide improved footway provision along the A29, including a new pedestrian footbridge across the railway line. This is a main local priority as it will improve the pedestrian linkages between all of the existing and potential new development north of the railway line with the rest of the settlement's services and the Station to the south.
- Lower Street also suffers from poor pedestrian provision that needs to be addressed and road safety enhancements in the shopping area are also a priority
- Although some capacity exists within primary and secondary schools, there will be a need, combined with other development elsewhere, to support the provision of new school places.
- There is also a pressing need to explore the means to improve other services or facilities, including parking at the Station and sports pitch provision.

- 4.5 Several key sites for further development in Pulborough have recently been identified by developers. They include:

#### **West Glebe**

- 4.6 The West Glebe site is situated to the south of Church Place just east of the railway line. It is approximately 2 hectares and has been put to the Council for potential residential development. Initial work considers that the site may be developable in the longer term, but that significant work on access solutions and addressing the impact on the sensitive surrounding landscape would have to be undertaken. Initial capacity work suggests that there is potential for approximately 30 dwellings on the site.

#### **Land at Stane Street**

- 4.7 The Land at Stane Street site is situated to the south of Stane Street Close and west of the A29 Stane Street. It is approximately 6.5 hectares and has been put forward through the SHLAA process for potential residential development. The site has been put forward for development before in the Local Development Framework (LDF) for inclusion within the Sites Specific Allocations of Land DPD, but was not included. Initial work considers that the site may be developable in the longer term, but work on the access to the A29 may need to be undertaken. Also, it is likely that there is need



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to provide better pedestrian links across the rest of the Pulborough through the provision of a footbridge across the railway line.

### **Stane Street Nurseries**

- 4.8 The Stane Street Nurseries site is situated to the east of Stane Street and to the immediate south of Sainsbury's supermarket. It is approximately 1.47 hectares and has been proposed for potential residential development. The site adjoins the already developed allocation AL5, of the Site Specific Allocation of Land (2007) Development Plan Document, but has not been previously suggested to the Council for development. There is potential that the site might be developable in the longer term, subject to the pedestrian linkage improvements across the railway line at the A29 to the services in the southern area of Pulborough.

### **Oddstones**

- 4.9 The Oddstones site is situated to the north of Stane Street Close and west of the A29 Stane Street. It is approximately 2.49 hectares and has been suggested to the Council for potential residential development. The site has been put forward for development before through the Local Development Framework process, in the Site Specific Allocations of Land DPD, but was not included as an allocation in the final document. It has also been subject to a number of planning applications; the most recent being DC/09/0488 for 87 dwellings, which is as yet undetermined. Initial survey work indicates that the site might be suitable for residential development of around 80 dwellings, subject to the pedestrian linkage improvements across the railway line to the services in the southern area of Pulborough.
- 4.10 These identified sites, should they come forward for development, would require and rely on improvements to the infrastructure network to facilitate their development. Therefore there is an opportunity to approach all of the key sites comprehensively and require them all to contribute collectively to addressing the key issues across Pulborough as identified in paragraph 4.3. The sites are too small to individually address the issues, but with a collective contribution and joined up approach the Council consider these issues could be addressed more effectively. It has therefore been put forward as a potential strategic development site.

### **Indicative Land Budget**

- 4.11 Following the consultations with the key delivery stakeholders set out in Section 3, and the initial technical work undertaken by the Council, it is considered that a total of approximately 335 dwellings could be delivered through this strategic development area. Due to the nature of the proposal it is difficult to complete an indicative land budget table at this time, but the aim of the proposing the Pulborough Expansion as a strategic development site is to take the opportunity to address the current important infrastructure and community facility issues identified in the settlement and address them through a comprehensive strategy that will benefit the future expansion of Pulborough.



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### **5. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Considerations**

- 5.1 The potential strategic development site broadly complies with the majority of the SA Objectives presented in the SA Scoping Report, which has been published alongside the Core Strategy Review Consultation Document.
- 5.2 The SA process will identify whether a potential strategic development site is suitable for development from a sustainability point of view. The outcome of this process will then feed into the overall process of allocating strategic development locations.
- 5.3 Once the appropriate strategic development locations have been identified, following consultation each strategic site will be subject to a formal SA (incorporating an Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment). This will be used to highlight the full range of impacts that the development of the potential strategic site would have on the natural environment, the economy and the local population and any possible mitigation measures.