

## DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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| <b>Application Number:</b>                                                                                                                                                            | 261241                                           |
| <b>Site Address:</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Malmsbury Estate, Remenham Hill, Henley, RG9 3HN |
| <b>Expiry Date:</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | 17 September 2026                                |
| <b>Site Visit Date:</b>                                                                                                                                                               | 20 August 2026                                   |
| <b>Proposal:</b> Full application for the change of use of part of the existing office and staff welfare and veterinary treatment buildings to groom's accommodation. (Retrospective) |                                                  |

### **PLANNING POLICY**

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| <b>National Policy</b>                      | National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<br>National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Core Strategy (CS)</b>                   | CP1 – Sustainable Development<br>CP2 – Inclusive Communities<br>CP3 – General Principles for Development<br>CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements<br>CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability<br>CP6 – Managing Travel Demand<br>CP7 – Biodiversity<br>CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals<br>CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits<br>CP12 – Green Belt<br>CP17 – Housing Delivery                                                                               |
| <b>MDD Local Plan (MDD)</b>                 | CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development<br>CC02 – Development Limits<br>CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping<br>CC06 – Noise<br>CC07 – Parking<br>CC09 – Development and Flood Risk<br>CC10 – Sustainable Drainage<br>TB01 – Development within the Green Belt<br>TB05 – Housing Mix<br>TB07 – Internal Space Standards<br>TB21 – Landscape Character<br>TB23 – Biodiversity and Development<br>TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets<br>TB25 – Archaeology |
| <b>Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)</b> | DM1 - Sustainable Development<br>DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation<br>DM3 - Protection of Habitats and Species<br>DM5 - Protection of the Countryside<br>DM6 - Green Belt<br>DM7 - Conserving the Historic Environment<br>DM10 - Flood Risk<br>DM11 - Water Resources                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|                                                  | DM14 - Ancillary development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)</b> | SS1 – Sustainable development principles<br>SS2 – Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy<br>SS5 – Development in the countryside<br>SS6 – Development in the Green Belt<br>SS10 – Meeting our housing needs<br>CE3 – Environmental standards for residential development<br>CE6 – Reducing energy consumption in existing buildings<br>C2 – Mitigation of transport impacts and highway safety and design<br>C4 – Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way<br>C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging<br>H1 – Housing mix, density and standards<br>H5 – Rural workers’ dwellings<br>H8 – Conversion and sub-division of buildings<br>FD2 – Sustainable drainage<br>NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity<br>NE2 – Biodiversity net gain<br>DH2 – Safeguarding amenity<br>DH5 – The historic environment<br>DH6 – Archaeology<br>DH7 – Equestrian development |
| <b>Other</b>                                     | Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document<br>CIL Guidance + 123 List                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| <b>PLANNING HISTORY</b> |                                                                                                                                                                 |                              |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Application No.         | Description                                                                                                                                                     | Decision & Date              |
| 251400                  | Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. triple unit, 3no. double units and 1no. single unit stables (retrospective)                                  | Approved<br>31 July 2025     |
| 242596                  | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the construction of 2 no. earth mounds.                                                        | Approved<br>29 November 2024 |
| 242602                  | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of a building, concrete base and gravel hardstanding to the front of the building | Approved<br>05 December 2024 |
| 242603                  | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the installation of a sewage treatment plant and power unit.                                   | Approved<br>05 December 2024 |
| 242607                  | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of 2 no. pony lines.                                                              | Approved<br>29 November 2024 |
| 242606                  | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for gravel tracks, asphalt driveway,                                                               | Approved<br>09 December 2024 |

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|        | asphalt hardstanding and concrete linkway with rubber paved surfacing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                              |
| 242612 | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for a change of use from staff day area to a self-contained dwelling occupied by staff employed at Park Place Stables (shown edged in red on the plan attached).                                                                                                                        | Approved<br>20 December 2024                 |
| 242597 | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of 10no. wooden stable buildings (comprising a total of 24no. individual stables), concrete enclosure and timber shed.                                                                                                                                                 | Approved<br>09 December 2024                 |
| 242628 | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of 4no. marquee frames and associated hardstanding                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Approved<br>11 December 2024                 |
| 242629 | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the erection of a building, raised paved terrace and hard paving.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Approved<br>18 December 2024                 |
| 250370 | Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for building operations comprising the permanent siting of 7 no. portacabins, a WC unit and shed on the land.                                                                                                                                                                           | Split Decision<br>09 April 2025              |
| 182327 | Full planning application for the proposed erection of grooms accommodation with a players gym following the demolition of existing outbuilding.                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Refused<br>Appeal dismissed<br>11 March 2020 |
| 182524 | Full planning permission for the erection of a stable (consisting of 24 boxes, tack room, feed room and storage) with outdoor area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Refused<br>Appeal dismissed<br>11 March 2020 |
| 170791 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent 162288 (8/12/2016). 3. Ground and building levels. 4. External materials. 5. Details of boundary walls and fences. 6. Landscaping. 7. Lighting Scheme. 8. Programme of Archaeological work. 9. Parking details. 14. Construction Method statement. | Approved<br><br>14 September 2017            |
| 160871 | Full application for the proposed creation of a private polo facility, including polo field, practice area, exercise track, stable block and summer pavilion.                                                                                                                                                                                        | Withdrawn<br>10 August 2016                  |
| 162288 | Full application for the proposed creation of a polo facility for private use, comprising of a polo                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Approved                                     |

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|        | field, exercise track, stable block, all weather practice area, summer pavilion and widening of existing access onto A4130.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 08 December 2016                  |
| 161849 | Full application for the proposed erection of a new dwelling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Withdrawn<br>22 February 2017     |
| 130981 | Application to extend implementation date for planning consent RM/2010/1243 for a further 3 years (Reserved Matters application on outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect West- New Dairy Farm) Reserved Matters to be considered for the siting, design (including floorspace, height massing, internal layout & external appearance), access and landscaping.)                                                                                                                                                             | Approved<br>24 July 2013          |
| 122056 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consents RM/2010/1243 & RM/2010/1240: 4. (On both consents) Submission and approval of details of hard and soft landscaping proposals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Split decision<br>29 March 2012   |
| 122391 | Erection of one dwelling. Demolition of existing dwelling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Withdrawn<br>12 March 2013        |
| 112582 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consents RM/2010/1237 & RM/2010/1245: 5. Landscaping proposals (RM/2010/1237). 6. Landscape management plan (RM/2010/1237). 9a - d. Arboricultural works (RM/2010/1237). 10. Plan of residential curtilage at 1:500. (RM/2010/1237). 4. Landscaping proposals (RM/2010/1245). 5. Landscape management plan (RM/2010/1245). 6. Work to trees (RM/2010/1245). 7a-d. Arboricultural works (RM/2010/1245). 8. Plan of residential curtilage at 1:500 (RM/2010/1245). | Approved<br>03 August 2011        |
| 110781 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of Reserved Matters planning consent RM/2010/1237 (for Templecombe Farm): 1. Removal of agreed volume of built form 3. Details/s amples of external materials 4. Demolition and removal of barns 5. Landscape and planting scheme 6. Landscape management plan 7. Det ails of earthworks 9. Arboricultural works scheme 10. Plan showing residential curtilage 13. Detailed                                                                                                  | Split Decision<br>19 October 2011 |

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|        | drawings of new external joinery 14.Details of brickwork                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                              |
| 110885 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consents RM/2010/1240 & RM/2010/1243: 4. Details of hard and soft landscaping (both applications)                                                                                                | Refused<br>13 December 2011  |
| 112581 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent RM/2010/1243: 4. Landscaping scheme. 5. Landscape management plan. 7. Arboricultural works. 8. Plan of residential curtilage at 1:500.                                                   | Approved<br>03 August 2011   |
| 112580 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent RM/2010/1240: 4. Landscaping scheme. 5. Landscape management plan. 7. Arboricultural works scheme. 8. Plan of residential curtilage at 1:500.                                            | Approved<br>03 August 2011   |
| 100459 | Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent RM/2010/1237: 15. Record of the existing brick buildings at Combe Dairy.                                                                                                                  | Approved<br>03 December 2010 |
| 101748 | Reserved Matters application on outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect West- New Dairy Farm) Reserved Matters to be considered for the siting, design (including floorspace, height massing, internal layout & external appearance), access and landscaping. | Approved<br>4 August 2010    |
| 101723 | Application for Reserved Matters on Outline Consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one dwelling (Aspect Park East) Reserved matters to be considered is Siting, Design, (Including floorspace, height, massing, internal layout and external appearance), access and landscaping.         | Approved<br>04 August 2010   |
| 101512 | Application for Reserved Matters on Outline consent O/2008/1353 for the erection of one Dwelling (Conway Park House). Matters to be considered are Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale.                                                                                      | Approved<br>04 August 2010   |

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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| <b>Internal</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>WBC Environmental Health</b> – No comments received<br><b>WBC Drainage</b> – No comments to make<br><b>WBC Built Heritage Officer</b> – No objections<br><b>WBC CIL</b> – No comments received<br><b>WBC Waste Services</b> - No comments received<br><b>WBC Cleaner and Greener</b> - No comments received |
| <b>External</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Historic England</b> – No comments received<br><b>Thames Water Utilities Ltd</b> – No comments received<br><b>The Garden Trust</b> – No objections                                                                                                                                                          |

| <b>REPRESENTATIONS</b> |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Parish/Town Council    | No comments received |
| Ward Member(s)         | No comments received |
| Neighbours             | No comments received |

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| <b>APPRAISAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Site Description:</b></p> <p>The site is part of the Malmsbury Estate on the South side of the A4130. The site is part of an extensive approved equestrian polo complex. The application is submitted retrospectively.</p> <p>The site lies within the countryside towards the top of Remenham Hill and to the east of Henley-on-Thames. They are located to the south of the A4130 and close to the northern boundary of the 240ha Park Place and Templecombe Grade II* Registered Park and Gardens.</p> <p><b>Background to the site:</b></p> <p>There was an original masterplan for restoration of the Registered Park and Gardens comprising O/2008/1353 for:</p> <p>Outline application for the demolition of 8 dwellings and erection of 5 new dwellings. Change of use of 3 dwellings to form 2 boathouses and guest accommodation. Conversion of 2 dwellings to form 1 dwelling. Alterations to the barns and the bungalow to form a single residential unit plus alterations and extensions to existing buildings.</p> <p>There were significant very special circumstances to allow this development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Restoration of main house (listed building)</li> <li>2. Restore landscape setting of registered park and garden</li> <li>3. Remove harmful buildings and hardstanding.</li> <li>4. To remove major traffic generating issues in the Countryside</li> <li>5. To safeguard long term management of the overall estate</li> <li>6. Demolish 8 houses but construct 5 new ones.</li> </ol> |

This application agreed principles of development across the park offsetting the volume against the demolition of various buildings across the site and seeking to restore the landscape. These benefits are now seen, the masterplan has been achieved and the overall estate restored. These circumstances cannot be re-used for other development. Similarly, volumes etc. cannot be re-used for other applications. However, the local authority has recently carried out a review of the volumes remaining on across the wider Park Place estate, however, each new application must be assessed on its own merits.

With each application made on the whole of the Park Place Estate (that within the original O/2008/1353 area information must be provided demonstrating the volumes proposed against any traded off volumes and overall volumes available. This approach has been accepted in previous applications and is an appropriate means of restoring the Estate and Registered Park and Garden whilst improving the built form within the Green Belt.

The above being said, while the traded volumes hold weight in the planning balance, the overall justification for the re-development of the Park and Garden was to provide an overall public benefit in terms of the designated heritage assets and openness of the Green Belt (through the signing of a maintenance plan and through removal of volumes). The outline permission was granted over 10 years ago and the improvement of the estate has been largely achieved. The traded volume is therefore not the sole consideration.

#### **Proposal:**

The application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of part of the existing office and staff welfare and veterinary treatment rooms to groom's accommodation.

The accommodation proposed is a shared flat style arrangement with a communal living space/kitchen. The rooms comprise 2 x ensuite bedrooms (twin bedrooms) and 2 x single bedroom with shared bathroom.

It is noted that there is no loss of welfare space formerly provided by the office and veterinary room as this has been absorbed into the existing facilities at the complex. Additional welfare facilities have been added to the tack room, rug room and ancillary gym. A team meeting room/physio room also includes staff amenity, staff cloakroom/showers and the veterinary room has been relocated to another stable area. these facilities all remain ancillary to the stables and comprise a re-arrangement of the approved permission 162288.

#### **Polo Information:**

The equestrian facilities at Malmsbury Estate comprise two separate yard areas, one used by the Borodin family (of the applicant) for their own family horses and ponies (total 7) and the main yard which is used by the polo team.

The equestrian facilities at Malmsbury Estate comprise two separate yard areas, one used by the Borodin family (of the applicant) for their own family horses and ponies (total 7) and the main yard which is used by the polo team.

At the time of the Bruton Knowles report (May 2026) there were 103 horses on site with 45 belonging to professional players on the Park Place team, 18 for sale or exercise and the remaining 40 belonging to the applicant.

Over the course of the polo season there are 21 polo grooms employed on site.

Numbers were provided as of 24 August 2026 there being 47 horses grazing at Cowdray with a further 17 horses due to return from Spain at the end of August/start of September and a further 22 polo ponies at the application site.

The ponies currently on site are a mix of injured and non-injured horses. Four of the non-injured horses belong to the Patron and following the summer season are kept on site to allow the Patron to train with stick and ball over the winter months and five are on site to be fit for the winter arena season. These nine horses are stabled and exercised twice a day.

The remaining 13 horses are kept on site for injury and rehabilitation reasons with 10 belonging to Park Place and the remaining 3 belonging to Professional team players. Once rehabilitation is completed the horses will be sent to Cowdray for grazing.

The remaining horses are kept on site and undergo treatment and rehabilitation work or training.

It was discussed at the site meeting that horses will come and go between the application site and winter grazing at Cowdray but that there will normally be between 8 to 25 horses on site year round.

The additional information details that the plan is to keep 10 polo ponies at Park Place over the winter with 12 being transferred to Cowdray.

The permanent polo groom is Argentinian but has UK residency status and the seasonal four grooms are all employed on a seasonal visa valid from February to August/September each year. An additional Argentinian groom works through the winter but lives off site.

The permanent groom resides on site and is on call 24/7 for the polo ponies kept on site

however it was discussed on site that the polo groom and private groom will assist each other in cases of emergencies on either yard area

Permission was granted under 242612 for grooms accommodation within the American Barn used for the family horses and ponies.

### **Principle of Development:**

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham

Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

*Green Belt:*

The site is located within the Green Belt and the Countryside. Chapter 13 of the NPPF states that the objective of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, the essential features of which are their openness and permanence.

Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7.

GB7 states The following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances:

- a) Development which is for agriculture, horticulture and forestry, or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;
- b) The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building.

The NPPF separately recognises the principle of isolated rural workers' dwellings through HO11(a) where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live at or near their place of work. However, HO11(a) is not listed within GB7 as a category of development which is automatically "not inappropriate" in the Green Belt. Notwithstanding this, the proposal comprises the conversion and reuse of part of an existing office/welfare/veterinary building within the established stable complex to provide groom accommodation. As the proposal involves the reuse of an existing building and does not materially increase the built form on the site and can be considered under GB7(b) of the NPPF.

*Countryside:*

By virtue of its location outside the settlement boundary and in the countryside, Policy CP11 applies, which aims to protect the quality of the environment. It prevents development outside of development limits except in certain circumstances.

Proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement;

The explanatory notes state that proposals for agricultural/equestrian workers dwellings will need to comply with this policy and PPS7 (withdrawn with the commencement of the NPPF in 2012). PPS7 is still relevant as background context explaining the origin or purpose of the policy, particularly around traditional tests for agricultural and rural workers' dwellings but is not a separate policy in its own right. The proposal is therefore assessed against the Development Plan, the NPPF (2026) and relevant Planning Practice Guidance rather than PPS7 itself.

S5 of the NPPF sets out the principle of development outside settlements. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects. The relevant parts of S5 to this proposal are S5(1)(a), (b) and (c).

A similar provision applies to HO11 of the NPPF which only supports isolated homes in the countryside where one or more of the following apply. In this case HO11 (a) applies. It states: There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. The site is isolated in its location and it has maintained an equestrian use first established around 2017.

An equestrian appraisal prepared by Bruton Knowles Ltd concludes that there is justification for the retention of accommodation for one permanent groom and four seasonal grooms, primarily due to the welfare requirements of horses on the site and the need for a rapid response to emergencies.

The evidence has been independently reviewed by the Council's agricultural consultant, Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd, who concludes that the identified essential need is one full time worker and four seasonal workers (February to October). The consultant accepts that there is a justified essential need for one full-time rural worker to be available on a 24-hour basis to support the equestrian enterprise and ensure that animal welfare is not compromised. Furthermore, the HMO style arrangement of 102.2sqm with two ensuite bedrooms, one single bedroom and a shared kitchen/living WC/shower area was considered appropriate accommodation for the needs of the workers'.

*Sustainable location:*

Policies CP1, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy seek to direct development to sustainable locations whilst recognising that certain forms of development, by their nature, require a countryside location. This is reflected in paragraph 4.57 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to prevent unnecessary development in locations that are poorly related to services and facilities and which would increase reliance on the private car.

Similarly, Policies CC2 and TR3 of the NPPF seek to promote sustainable patterns of development and sustainable transport choices. However, the NPPF also recognises that some forms of development are appropriately located outside settlements, including accommodation required to support rural enterprises where a countryside location is necessary.

In this case, the accommodation is proposed in direct association with an established equestrian enterprise and is intended to meet an identified essential operational need for an on-site worker. The accommodation would be located immediately adjacent to the facilities it serves, enabling the occupant to undertake animal welfare, supervision and emergency response functions that could not be readily achieved from a settlement location. Whilst the site is not located in an area offering a wide choice of transport modes, the functional requirement for an on-site presence carries significant weight in this instance. The proposal is therefore considered to represent a sustainable form of development in the context of the operational needs of the enterprise and the objectives of the Development Plan and NPPF.

### **Emerging Local Plan:**

The Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040: Proposed Submission Plan ("LPU") was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Planning Inspector on Friday 28 February 2025 (Regulation 22 stage). Two independent Inspectors were appointed, with Part 1 examination hearings held in November 2025. It was then confirmed by the Inspectors that the examination could progress to Part 2 hearings, which commenced in March 2026 (Regulation 24 stage), and the post hearing letter has been received confirming that the plan could be made sound subject to main modifications.

DM4 states local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given)
- b) b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

As a whole, the LPU is still given limited weight, despite its advance stage of preparation. The proposed Inspector modifications have yet to be consulted upon and adopted, and objections remain outstanding in relation to a number of policies. Limited weight is afforded to the Emerging Plan as a whole, although greater weight may be attached to individual policies where they are consistent with the NPPF and are not the subject of main modifications. Notwithstanding this, for information, the most relevant policies to this development are listed at the front of this report.

### **Character of the Area:**

Section 14 promote high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design. Policy DP3 focuses on key principles for well-designed places. It states that development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context (G1) and respond positively to the local character of the area (G2).

The site is already in an equestrian use with significant buildings and hardstanding adjoining these proposed stables. The proposal is for conversion of the existing buildings with an appropriate layout for the use and does not introduce any additional built form as it predominately relates to the use and the internal alterations to facilitate this use.

As such, the development accords with Policy CP1(1) and CP3(a), which require development to respect and respond to its surroundings in terms of built form, layout, and massing.

#### **Heritage:**

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Policy HE5 of the NPPF26 requires development proposals affecting heritage assets to be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, and an assessment of the likely effect of the proposal on that significance.

Policy HE6 requires substantial weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with any harm to significance being a matter of considerable importance and weight. Development proposals which would result in harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must therefore be carefully assessed having regard to the degree of harm and any public benefits arising from the proposal. HE6(6) also states, within this context, development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; while development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas, including their views and setting.

The Built Heritage Officer has raised no objections to the proposal nor has the Garden's Trust and Historic England does not wish to offer any comments.

The proposal would result in no harm to the significance or setting of designated heritage assets and that the statutory duty under Section 66 has been fully discharged. The proposal accords with Policy TB24 and the NPPF.

#### **Neighbouring Amenity:**

The nearest residential dwelling to the site is sufficient distance from the proposed development to maintain privacy, prevent loss of light or have any overbearing impact. There are therefore no neighbouring amenity concerns.

#### **Highway Access and Parking Provision:**

Planning permission 162288 for the polo facility did not provide a detailed parking arrangement, however it was considered that an adequate parking area was proposed. Conditions relating to parking were discharged under application 170791 10 parking spaces were proposed which was considered adequate for the proposed scale of the facility. The car park as built currently has around 20 marked out parking spaces rather than the 10 shown on the original plan. This significantly exceeds the level of provision previously approved.

Given that the proposed groom's accommodation is intended to house workers employed at the existing polo facility, the development is unlikely to generate any material additional parking demand beyond that associated with the authorised use of the site.

The proposal would not result in any changes to the existing means of access or parking arrangements serving the site.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any adverse impact on parking provision, highway safety or the free flow of traffic.

#### **Amenity Space:**

##### *Internal Amenity*

The accommodation is not proposed as a traditional self-contained dwellinghouse but as shared groom accommodation associated with the equestrian enterprise. Whilst the Nationally Described Space Standards are primarily intended for self-contained dwellings, they provide a useful benchmark when considering living conditions. 102sqm of accommodation is provided which approximately aligns with the size requirements for a 5-7 person single storey dwelling. In this case, the accommodation benefits from adequately sized bedrooms, communal kitchen and living facilities, and appropriate bathroom facilities. all rooms appear to benefit from adequate natural light. The proposal is therefore considered capable of providing an acceptable standard of accommodation for its intended occupants.

##### *External amenity*

There appears to be no private external amenity space associated with the accommodation. Ordinarily, the absence of dedicated private amenity space would weigh against a proposal for a conventional dwellinghouse. However, in this instance the accommodation forms part of an established equestrian complex in a rural setting and is intended as shared staff accommodation. Given the nature of the proposed use and the availability of the wider site surroundings, the absence of dedicated private garden space is unlikely, on its own, to justify refusal, provided the overall living conditions for occupiers are acceptable.

### **Flooding and Drainage:**

The site is located in Flood zone 1 and comprises the conversion of an existing building with no proposed operational development. The Lead Local Flood Authority has no objection to the proposal.

### **Landscape and Trees:**

The site is located within the Countryside, however it comprises the conversion of an existing building with no proposed operational development. There are no objections in relation to trees and landscaping.

### **Ecology:**

The site is located within the Countryside, however it comprises the conversion of an existing building with no proposed operational development. There are no ecological impacts anticipated by the proposal.

### **Planning Balance**

Significant weight is attached to the support afforded by Policies S5(1)(a), S5(1)(b) and S5(1)(c) of the NPPF, which recognise that certain forms of development require a countryside location and support rural businesses and services together with the reuse of existing buildings, unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by any adverse effects. Further support is provided by Policy HO11(a), which allows isolated residential accommodation in the countryside where there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work. In this case, the proposal relates to the conversion of part of an existing office, welfare and veterinary building within an established equestrian enterprise to provide groom accommodation. The Council's independent agricultural consultant accepts that there is a justified essential need for one permanent on-site worker and four seasonal worker's to support the operation of the business and the welfare requirements of the horses kept at the site.

Against these benefits, the proposal introduces a residential use within the stable complex. However, the development is contained entirely within an existing building and does not result in any significant increase in built form. It is noted that the proposal would not result in the loss of staff welfare or operational facilities, as the former office, welfare and veterinary functions have been re-provided elsewhere within the stable complex. The proposal would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the area, neighbouring amenity,

highway safety, drainage, ecology or landscape character. Accordingly, only limited adverse impacts have been identified.

However, substantial weight must be attributed against the proposal under Policy DM8(2). The accommodation was created and occupied without planning permission. The planning history demonstrates that the accommodation was created and occupied following previous refusals relating to residential accommodation on the site. Having regard to the available evidence, the unauthorised nature of the development is considered to have been intentional and substantial weight is therefore attributed against the grant of retrospective planning permission in accordance with Policy DM8(2). This weighs significantly against the grant of retrospective planning permission.

Nevertheless, Policy DM8 does not preclude the grant of retrospective planning permission and the proposal must be considered in the round having regard to all material considerations. It does not create a presumption of refusal. Significant weight is afforded to the support provided by Policies S5 and HO11(a) of the NPPF, the evidenced essential need for a permanent on-site rural worker, and the benefits arising from supporting the continued operation and welfare requirements of an established equestrian enterprise. The proposal makes use of an existing building within the stable complex and gives rise to only limited adverse impacts. Whilst substantial weight is attributed against the development due to its intentional retrospective nature under Policy DM8(2), it is considered that the policy support for the proposal, together with the demonstrated functional need for on-site accommodation and the absence of significant planning harm, outweigh that conflict. Taking all matters into account, the proposal is considered to accord with the Development Plan and the NPPF when read as a whole, and the planning balance weighs in favour of granting planning permission.

### **Conclusion**

The proposal is supported by Policies S5 and HO11(a) of the NPPF and addresses an evidenced need for permanent on-site groom accommodation. Whilst substantial weight is attributed to the intentional unauthorised nature of the development, this is a procedural consideration rather than a harm arising from the development itself.

Taking all matters into account, it is considered that the proposal remains acceptable in planning terms and that the benefits and policy support for the development outweigh the conflict identified with Policy DM8(2) and planning permission should therefore be granted.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):**

When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

### **The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):**

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

| <b>RECOMMENDATION</b>              |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Conditions agreed:</b>          | Not required     |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>             | Approve          |
| <b>Date:</b>                       | 8 September 2026 |
| <b>Earliest date for decision:</b> | 9 July 2026      |

|                                                           |                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation agreed by:<br/>(Authorised Officer)</b> |  |
| <b>Date:</b>                                              | <b>29.09.26</b>                                                                    |

### Conditions:

1. WOK-NM-211-3.02 Rev A – Block Plan; WOK-NM-211.3.06- Rev B – Floorplan; WOK-NM-211-3.04 rev A – Elevations; WOK-NM-211.3.01 Site Location Plan received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 May 2026.

2. *The accommodation and associated welfare facilities shall be retained in accordance with Drawing No. XXXX and shall not be altered so as to provide additional sleeping accommodation without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.*

**Reason:** *To ensure the accommodation remains commensurate with the identified operational need.*

3. *The residential grooms accommodation shown on Block Plan WOK-NM-211-3.02 Rev A hereby permitted shall be occupied only by:*

1. *one person solely or mainly employed in the operation of Park Place Polo, together with any resident dependants; and*
2. *during the period between 1 February and 1 October in any calendar year, up to 4 additional persons employed on a temporary or seasonal basis in connection with the operation of Park Place Polo.*

*At no time outside the period of 1 February to 1 October shall the residential accommodation be occupied by more than one permanent employee of Park Place Polo (together with any resident dependants).*

*4. The accommodation hereby approved shall remain as groom's accommodation ancillary to and occupied in connection with the operation of Park Place Polo and shall not be occupied as an independent C3 dwellinghouse or separate planning unit.*

*Reason: The accommodation has only been justified on the basis of an essential need associated with the equestrian enterprise and is not suitable as an unrestricted dwelling in the countryside and Green Belt.*

*5. No area of land shall be enclosed, laid out or used as private residential garden associated with the accommodation unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

**Reason:** *To safeguard the character of the countryside and openness of the Green Belt.*

*6. An up-to-date register of occupiers of the accommodation shall be maintained and made available to the Local Planning Authority upon request. The register shall record the names of occupiers, their role within the enterprise and the dates of occupation.*

*Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to monitor compliance with the occupancy restriction.*

*7. Within one month of the date of this permission, the room labelled 'Store' on Drawing No. WOK-NM-211.3.06 Rev B (Floorplan) shall be returned to and thereafter retained as a store and shall not be used for sleeping accommodation or as a bedroom at any time.*

**Reason:** *To ensure the accommodation remains commensurate with the identified essential rural worker need and in the interests of proper planning.*

For the avoidance of doubt, the accommodation approved under this permission has been assessed and approved as shared groom accommodation associated with the operation of Park Place Polo. It does not comprise a dwellinghouse within Use Class C3 and does not benefit from the permitted development rights typically available to dwellinghouses under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).