

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

Proposed Residential Development

Jeffrey's Farm, Lewes Road, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Brief and Background

- 1.1.1 Ramsay & Co has been commissioned by Ms. Helena Griffiths to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) for a proposed residential development to a location immediately west of Jeffrey's Farm, Lewes Road, Horsted Keynes and to fields west of Sugar Lane, Horsted Keynes (north of Jeffrey's Farm).
- 1.1.2 Jeffrey's Farm comprises a mix of low grade agricultural buildings, barns, storage containers and a farm house which lie to the west of Horsted Keynes - to the north is Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane lies to the east.
- 1.1.3 The requirement for a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been identified by the planning consultant: Dowsett Mayhew Planning Partnership. This report will assess and identify the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed residential scheme on the landscape character and visual amenity of the development site and surrounding area. This report has been prepared by Andrew Ramsay (BA Hons) MALA who is a Landscape Architect and a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).
- 1.1.4 All the relevant photographs and figures are included with this report.
- 1.1.5 This report considers the potential effects of the proposed development on:
- *Landscape character;*
 - *Visual amenity and the people who view the landscape.*

1.2 The Purpose of the Report

- 1.2.1 Within the *Guidelines for landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition)* it makes clear there is a difference between *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments* which are conducted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure and a standalone 'Appraisal'. GVLIA 3 states: *as a standalone appraisal the process is informal and there is more flexibility, but the essence of the approach – specifying the nature of the proposed change or development; describing the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity in the area that may be affected; predicting the effects, although not their likely significance; and considering how those effects might be mitigated – still applies.*
- 1.2.2 The main objectives of this report are to:
- *evaluate and describe the baseline conditions of the proposed development site;*

- *identify the relevant landscape character of the proposed development site and surrounding area as well as any notable landscape features within the site;*
- *identify the key views and visual receptors in relation to the proposed development site;*
- *assess the sensitivity of the existing landscape character and visual receptors;*
- *assess the size and scale of the landscape and visual effects - magnitude of change;*
- *describe any proposed mitigation measures;*
- *predict and evaluate the overall degree of landscape and visual effects.*

1.2.3 The assessment and scope of work has been identified in accordance with the relevant guidance (Refer to Section 3.0 - Methodology) and includes:

- *A description of the proposed development scheme;*
- *A desktop study and review of the relevant national and local planning policies together with statutory and non-statutory landscape designations;*
- *An identification and assessment of the study area and Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV);*
- *An identification and assessment of the relevant existing landscape character assessments, landscape components and landscape receptors;*
- *An identification and assessment of the key visual receptors and viewpoints in relation to the proposed development site;*
- *A description and assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects and whether they are adverse, beneficial or neutral.*

2.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

2.1 Proposed Residential Scheme: Jeffrey's Farm

2.1.1 The proposed residential scheme would comprise a mix of 42 residential units (including 4 x 1 bed bungalows; 4 x 2 bed bungalows; 12 x 2 bed terrace houses; 12 x 3 bedroom semi-detached properties; 5 x 3 bedroom detached properties and 5 x 4/5 bedroom detached houses) which would be arranged off a single access road. Several dwellings would be located to the west of the Jeffrey's Farm area (replacing low grade agricultural buildings and shipping containers) with the remainder of the development located to a field to the north of the farm area. For further details refer to Crowther Architects architectural drawings.

2.1.2 The proposed access road would run west off Sugar Lane (opposite and slightly north of Jefferies) and head north before curving around to the west of the existing farm area. The field to the north-east of the farm area is proposed to be a designated open space and a new community building for village use is proposed

to the north-east corner. The majority of the residential development would be located to a field which lies south of Keysford Lane and west of Sugar Lane.

- 2.1.3 A recreational pedestrian path would allow access to the northern end of Sugar Lane (which does not have a dedicated pedestrian pavement) as well as running through the woodland which lies to the west of the highway. A pedestrian path would also provide a link from the proposed dwellings to the west of the farm area to Sugar Lane via the southern edge of the proposed community space (to the north-east of the farm area).
- 2.1.4 Jeffrey's Farm House and associated garden area does not form part of the proposed development site area and the current farm access off Sugar Lane would be retained. Several agricultural buildings are being retained for agricultural use by the owner (to the east of the farm area).
- 2.1.5 The existing field edge vegetation and mature trees are proposed to be retained and protected wherever possible and an extensive native tree and shrub planting scheme is proposed which would enhance and reinforce the existing planting as well as softening near distance views within the proposed development site area.
- 2.1.6 The development proposals are illustrated on: *RCo180 / Figure 03 / Proposed Development and Mitigating Planting Scheme*.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Principles and Overview

- 3.1.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:
- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Third Edition* published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in 2013;
 - *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* published by Natural England 2014;
 - *Photography and Photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment*; Advice Note 01/11, Published by the Landscape Institute.
- 3.1.2 This Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal will follow the guidelines for assessment as contained within GLVIA Third Edition.
- 3.1.3 The following Landscape Character Assessments and digital resources were referred to - underlined text include a digital link to the original document:
- *Natural England - National Character Areas Profile: 122 - High Weald (2013)*;
 - *The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2014-2019)*;

- Regional Landscape Character - Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003): HW1 - High Weald;
- District Landscape Character - A Landscape Character Assessment For Mid Sussex (2005): High Weald;
- *MAGIC Interactive Map, Defra and Natural England.*

3.1.4 The following planning documents were referred to:

- The National Planning Policy Framework;
- Mid Sussex District Council: Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004;

3.1.5 Within the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition)* it states: *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of, and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.* This report will assess and describe these two elements separately.

3.1.6 *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third edition)* defines the four essential components which should be included within a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA):

- *Project Description;*
- *Baseline Studies;*
- *Mitigation;*
- *Identification and Description of Effects.*

3.1.7 GLVIA3 recognises that professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA and within the guidelines it states that: *whilst there is some scope for quantitative measurements of some relatively objective matters..... much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements.*

3.2 Baseline Studies

3.2.1 The initial step in LVIA is to establish the baseline landscape and visual conditions. The landscape baseline aims to provide an understanding of the landscape context of the area that may be affected; its constituent elements, character, condition and value. The visual baseline aims to define the area where the development may be visible, the nature of the views and the types of people who may experience the views. The anticipated landscape and visual effects can then be assessed against the existing baseline conditions.

3.2.2 The overall degree of landscape and visual effects can be predicted by making judgements regarding two main components:

- *The value and susceptibility of the visual and landscape receptors to change (sensitivity);*
- *Nature of the effect likely to occur (magnitude of effect).*

- 3.2.3 Assessment of the above criteria is combined to allow the overall degree of landscape and visual effects to be assessed and predicted.

3.3 Assessment of Landscape Effects

- 3.3.1 GVLIA 3 recommends that: *An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource.* The baseline landscape is described by referring to existing landscape character assessments and by a description of the proposed development site and the surrounding area: *Landscape is an area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of action and interaction of natural and / or human factors.*
- 3.3.2 Landscape character assessments identify and describe the physical influences (geology, soils etc.), human influences (land use, management, etc.) and aesthetic and perceptual qualities providing an overall character of the landscape. They also classify the overall character, including any distinctive landscape types and the particular combinations of aesthetic and perceptual qualities that make them distinctive.
- 3.3.3 Development can give rise to a variety of landscape effects and can include:
- *Change or loss of features and elements which contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;*
 - *Addition of new features / elements which influence or change the existing landscape character;*
 - *A combination of the above.*

3.4 Sensitivity and Susceptibility to Change of Landscape Receptors

- 3.4.1 Predicting the overall degree of landscape effects is based on an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor combined with the magnitude of the effect.
- 3.4.2 Sensitivity of a landscape receptor is based on its susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed combined with the value attached to the landscape. Within GVLIA3 it states that sensitivity is; *specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and to the location in question.* Sensitivity is judged on a scale of *High, Medium or Low.*

Table 01: Criteria for Assessing Landscape Character / Receptor Sensitivity	
High Sensitivity	<p>Landscapes which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>of national importance and which are particularly distinctive with elements that are likely to be substantially changed by the development proposals;</i> • <i>assessed to be in good condition, intact and particularly vulnerable to disturbance;</i> • <i>valued and have little potential for replacement.</i>
Low Sensitivity	<p>Landscapes which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>either by designation or assessment have no value / importance attached to the landscape area and/or features;</i> • <i>have few features or qualities susceptible to change;</i> • <i>have features which could be improved and enhanced;</i> • <i>have good potential for replacement or substitution.</i>

- 3.4.3 Susceptibility to change is expressed on a scale of *High, Medium* or *Low* and is an assessment of the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development or change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the existing baseline conditions. Within GVLIA3 the guidelines state: *It is possible for an internationally, nationally, or locally important landscape to have relatively low susceptibility to change resulting from the particular type of development in question, by virtue of both the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the proposal.*

Table 02: Criteria for Assessing Landscape Character / Receptor Susceptibility	
High Susceptibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The landscape effects, as a consequence of the development would change the quality or condition of the overall character of a landscape type / area;</i> • <i>As a consequence of the development, the landscape effects would alter or remove landscape elements or components, change aesthetic or perceptual qualities important to that landscape character or introduce new elements which would be inappropriate to the existing landscape character;</i> • <i>The development would be contrary to current landscape planning policies and strategies relating to the landscape.</i>
Low Susceptibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The changes as a consequence of the development proposals would not affect the existing character / quality / condition of the existing landscape character;</i> • <i>the aims of existing planning policies / strategies would not be compromised by the proposed development;</i> • <i>The development proposals would not remove or alter landscape components / receptors which are important to the existing landscape character or introduce new elements incongruous to the existing landscape character.</i>

3.4.4 The value of the landscape is expressed on a scale of *High, Medium* or *Low* and is defined by assessing the information which contributes to understanding landscape:

- *Information about areas recognised by statute such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc;*
- *Information about Heritage Coasts, where relevant;*
- *Local planning documents for local landscape designations;*
- *Information on individual or groups of features such as conservation areas, listed buildings, special historic or cultural sites;*
- *Art and literature identifying value attached to particular areas or views;*
- *Material on landscape of local or community interest.*

3.4.5 The following factors can also contribute to understanding the value of landscape:

- *Landscape quality (condition);*
- *Scenic quality;*
- *Rarity;*
- *Representativeness;*
- *Conservation interest;*
- *Recreation value;*
- *Perceptual aspects;*
- *Cultural Associations.*

Table 03: Criteria for Assessing Landscape Value

High Value	Landscapes which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>have existing, recognised national or local designations;</i>• <i>are judged to have scenic / wildness / tranquil qualities;</i>• <i>have cultural heritage features or cultural / artistic associations;</i>• <i>are not designated but which are assessed as being intact and in good condition;</i>• <i>are particularly representative of a typical landscape character;</i>• <i>have specific landscape components which are identified as being important to the landscape character.</i>
Low Value	Landscapes where: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>the character is assessed to be in poor condition;</i>• <i>key characteristics such as scenic quality / cultural heritage features / wildness or tranquillity / rarity are absent;</i>• <i>cultural / artistic associations are not in evidence.</i>

3.5 Magnitude of Landscape Effects

3.5.1 GVLIA3 states: *Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility.*

- 3.5.2 For the purposes of this report the magnitude of landscape effects in relation to the size or scale of the change is expressed as *major, moderate, minor, or none*. The size or scale of change in the landscape is judged in terms of:
- *The extent of existing landscape components that will be lost;*
 - *The degree to which perceptual or aesthetic aspects of the landscape are changed - either by the removal or the addition of components;*
 - *Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape character.*
- 3.5.3 The geographical extent over which the landscape would be changed is categorised as:
- *At the site level – within the development site itself;*
 - *At the level of the immediate setting of the site;*
 - *At the scale of the landscape type or character area within which the proposal lies;*
 - *On a larger scale – influencing several landscape types or character areas.*
- 3.5.4 The duration and reversibility of the proposed development are separate but linked. The duration of the proposed development would be considered in relation to the expected life span of the scheme and is expressed as:
- *Short term: zero – five years;*
 - *Medium term: five – ten years;*
 - *Long term: ten – thirty years;*
 - *Permanent: greater than thirty years.*
- 3.5.5 The reversibility of the scheme would consider the practicality of the change being reversed within thirty years.

3.6 Assessment of Visual Effects

- 3.6.1 The assessment of visual effects describes the changes in the character of the available views as a result of the development proposals and the change in visual amenity available to visual receptors. Predicting the overall degree of visual effects is based on an assessment of the sensitivity of the visual receptor combined with the magnitude of effect.
- 3.6.2 Viewpoint locations are selected as objectively as possible with the aim of providing a range of representational views which will demonstrate long-distance, medium distance and near distance views (where possible and appropriate) of the proposed development site.

3.7 Sensitivity and Susceptibility to Change of Visual Receptors

- 3.7.1 The sensitivity of visual receptors is dependent on location, importance of view and expectation or activity of viewer. The overall sensitivity of a visual receptor is

assessed by combining the susceptibility to change with the value of the view.
Overall sensitivity is expressed on a scale of *High*, *Medium* or *Low*.

Table 04: Criteria for Assessing Visual Sensitivity	
High Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Visual receptors in residential properties with open views of the proposed development site;</i> • <i>High quality views experienced by many visual receptors;</i> • <i>A view which is valued nationally for its visual / scenic quality.</i>
Low Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A view of low importance or value with little scenic quality;</i> • <i>A view from a landscape which has little value and existing, detracting features;</i> • <i>Glimpsed or intermittent views from highways;</i> • <i>A view available to few visual receptors.</i>

- 3.7.2 For the purposes of this report the susceptibility to change is expressed as *High*, *Medium* or *Low*. The visual receptors most susceptible to change and therefore with a susceptibility to change likely to be *High* could be:
- *Residents at home;*
 - *Views experienced by many viewers;*
 - *Recreational walkers whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on landscape and the available views;*
 - *Visitors to heritage assets where views form an important part of the experience.*
- 3.7.3 The susceptibility to change of visual receptors travelling on road, rail or other transport routes would tend to fall into the *Low / Medium* category however if the route were to feature recognised scenic views then *High* may be more appropriate.
- 3.7.4 Visual receptors likely to be less concerned with change and therefore with a susceptibility to change assessed to be *Low* could include:
- *People engaged in sport or external activities where views are less likely to be appreciated;*
 - *Intermittent or glimpsed views from transport routes;*
 - *Workers where attention is likely to be focused on an activity not connected with the surroundings.*
- 3.7.5 Judgements on the value of the selected viewpoints are expressed as *High*, *Medium* or *Low* and assessing the value attached to a view takes account of:
- *The nature of the view eg a panoramic view of open countryside from an elevated location as opposed to a constrained urban viewpoint;*
 - *Recognition of the value of views eg. scenic viewpoints within Areas Of outstanding Natural Beauty;*
 - *Viewpoints where the views have been noted on maps, guidebooks, websites etc.*

3.8 Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 3.8.1 Each of the visual effects identified is assessed with regard to size or scale, geographical extent and where appropriate duration / reversibility:
- 3.8.2 The magnitude of visual effects in relation to the size or scale of the change is expressed as *major, moderate, minor, or none*. The size or scale of change in the view is judged in terms of:
- *The degree of the loss or addition of features in the view;*
 - *The extent of the changes in the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
 - *The degree of contrast or integration of the changes with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics;*
 - *The nature of the view of the proposed development, whether full, partial or glimpsed, or the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced.*
- 3.8.3 The geographical extent of the visual effects is concerned with an assessment of:
- *the angle of the view;*
 - *the distance involved;*
 - *the extent of the area over which the change would be visible.*
- 3.8.4 The duration and reversibility of the proposed development are separate but linked. The duration of the development would be considered in relation to the expected life span of the development scheme and is expressed as:
- *Short term: zero – five years;*
 - *Medium term: five – ten years;*
 - *Long term: ten – thirty years;*
 - *Permanent: greater than thirty years.*
- 3.8.5 The reversibility of the scheme would consider the practicality of the change being reversed within thirty years.

3.9 Overall Degree of Landscape and Visual Effects

- 3.9.1 The overall degree of landscape and visual effects are assessed by combining the separate judgements of sensitivity and the magnitude of effects on landscape and visual receptors. Table 05 defines and describes the range of landscape and visual effects which can be expressed as adverse, beneficial or neutral.

Table 05: Overall Degree of Landscape and Visual Effects: Definitions and Descriptions	
NEUTRAL	
No Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No part of the development would be discernible; There would be no effect within the context of the existing landscape; The development proposals would be appropriate to the existing landscape scale, character, pattern and quality of the existing landscape resource.
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a very small part of the development would be discernible; There would be little effect within the context of existing landscape character.
ADVERSE	
Low / Slight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposals would constitute only a minor component within the existing landscape character; Awareness of the proposals would not have a marked effect upon the existing landscape quality, pattern and landform.
Moderate	<p>The Proposals would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> form a visible and recognisable new element within the existing landscape; negatively affect the existing landscape character.
Substantial	<p>The proposals would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> form a significant part of the existing landscape; be unable to be fully mitigated; substantially and negatively affect an existing high quality landscape.
Severe	<p>The proposals would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> become a dominant feature within a high quality landscape; be entirely inappropriate to the existing landscape pattern, scale and landform; permanently degrade or damage the existing landscape.
BENEFICIAL	
Low / Slight	<p>The proposals would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the landscape quality and character; be appropriate to the landscape scale, quality and pattern; provide some restoration of lost or degraded landscape features.
Moderate	<p>The proposals would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate very well within the existing landscape character; Improve the overall landscape quality through restoration of missing or degraded landscape features due to other uses or neglect.

3.10 Field Survey Methodology and Viewpoint Images

3.10.1 The on-site survey visit was carried out by Andrew Ramsay BA (Hons) MALA CMLi on the 23rd of June 2016 and was conducted from Public Rights of Way and Public Highways surrounding the proposed development site area – weather conditions were generally overcast with occasional brighter spells. It should be noted the site survey was conducted during Summer when the vegetation was in leaf - views would be more open during late Autumn, Winter and early Spring when deciduous vegetation would be out of leaf.

3.10.2 The photographs were all taken with a Canon Power Shot G11 digital camera with a 6.1 - 30.5 mm (35mm equivalent: 28-140mm) lens. The photographs were taken on a standard setting approximately 1.5 - 1.7m above ground level.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

3.10.3 The ZTV is the area from within which the proposed development is anticipated to be visible. It is mapped by means of desktop research which is then refined and clarified with on-site investigations – refer to: *Section 7.4 Visual Effects* and *RCo180 / Figure 01 / PROW and Viewpoint Locations*.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 National Planning Policy Context

4.1.1 Ramsay & Co have undertaken a desk top study assessment of the relevant planning policy designations and existing statutory landscape designations surrounding the proposed development site area. This desktop study has been undertaken at a national and local planning level.

4.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government on 27th March 2012 and came into immediate effect. The NPPF has introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable developments. The framework has reaffirmed that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the current Development Plan for the District unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework states the following: *At the heart of the planning system is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. Local planning authorities should plan positively for new development and approve all individual proposals wherever possible. Local planning authorities should:*

- *prepare Local Plans on the basis that objectively assessed development needs should be met, and with sufficient flexibility to respond to rapid shifts in demand or other economic changes;*
- *approve development proposals that accord with statutory plans without delay.*

- 4.1.3 The NPPF promotes sustainable development through the enhancement and protection of biodiversity and the conservation of landscape character within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The framework also seeks to protect and maintain Protected Species, valuable ecological habitats and the protection of Heritage Assets. Local Planning Authorities are required to implement the policies of the framework within the LPA Development Plans and development control decision making process.

4.2 District Planning Policy

- 4.2.1 Ramsay & Co have undertaken a desk top study assessment of the relevant Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Local Planning Policies and Statutory Landscape Designations surrounding the proposed development site area. The relevant MSDC and statutory planning policy designations are illustrated in: *RCo180 / Figure 02 / Landscape and Planning Policy Designations*.
- 4.2.2 Local planning policies are contained within the Mid Sussex Local Plan which was adopted on May 27th 2004 and is part of the development plan for Mid Sussex: *The Plan sets out policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land to guide planning decisions. In September 2007 the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) confirmed that the majority of policies within the adopted Mid Sussex Local Plan have been saved. These policies have been saved indefinitely. In practice this means that the majority of policies are saved until replaced by policies within a future Development Plan Document, in which case the Development Plan Document will clearly set out which Local Plan policies it replaces.*
- 4.2.3 The new District Plan is due to be adopted in Winter 2016 and will be: *the main planning document used by the Council when considering planning applications. It will cover the period to 2031 and includes the strategy, proposed level of development and a number of planning policies.*

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy C1

- 4.2.4 The proposed development site lies outwith of any designated built up area and is therefore designated in the Mid Sussex Local Plan as being covered by *Policy C1: Outside built-up area boundaries, as detailed on the Proposals and Inset Maps, the remainder of the plan area is classified as a Countryside Area of Development Restraint where the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Proposals for development in the countryside, particularly that which would extend the built-up area boundaries beyond those shown will be firmly resisted and restricted to:*
- (a) proposals reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;*
 - (b) proposals for new uses in rural buildings of a scale consistent with the building's location;*
 - (c) in appropriate cases, proposals for the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;*
 - (d) in appropriate cases, proposals for quiet informal recreation and/or tourism related developments;*

- (e) proposals for facilities which are essential to meet the needs of local communities, and which cannot be accommodated satisfactorily within the built-up areas;*
- (f) proposals for which a specific policy reference is made elsewhere in this Plan; and*
- (g) proposals which significantly contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity.*

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy C4

- 4.2.5 The proposed development site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Within the Local Plan it states: *Within the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as shown on the Proposals Map and its Insets, the aim to conserve and enhance natural beauty is regarded as the overall priority. Proposals for development will be subject to the most rigorous examination and only those which comply with this aim will be permitted. Development will not be permitted in the Sussex Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, unless:*

- (a) it is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture or some other use which has to be located in the countryside;*
 - (b) it is essential for local social and / or economic needs; or*
 - (c) it can be demonstrated that the development would be in the national interest and that no suitable sites are available elsewhere.*
- In considering development proposals within or immediately adjacent to the AONB, including those regarded as exceptions, particular attention will be paid to the siting, scale, design, external materials and screening of new buildings that are proposed in order to ensure that they enhance, and do not detract from, the visual quality and essential characteristics of the area.*

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy C5

- 4.2.6 There are a number of areas surrounding the proposed development site which have statutory designations. An area of woodland to the north-west of Jeffrey's Farm, *Parson's Wood* is designated as Ancient Replanted Woodland. To the south of the proposed development site area, *Coneyborough Wood* is also designated as Ancient Woodland. The nearest Site of Special Scientific Interest is located approximately 1.0km to the south and the southern end of an area designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance lies approximately 1.4km to the north west of the proposed development site area.
- 4.2.7 Within the Mid Sussex Local Plan it states: *Proposals for development or changes of use of management within Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodlands or to other sites or areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological importance, including wildlife corridors will be subject to rigorous examination, and only permitted where the proposal, by virtue of design and layout, minimises the impact on features of nature conservation importance. Proposals should take advantage of opportunities for habitat creation wherever possible. The weight to be attached to*

nature conservation interests will reflect the relative significance of designations. Special scrutiny will be applied to those sites which are statutorily designated.

- 4.2.8 Policy C6 also states: *Development resulting in the loss of woodlands, hedgerows and trees which are important in the landscape, or as natural habitats, or historically, will be resisted.*

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy B10

- 4.2.9 Immediately to the north of the proposed development site area are *Ludwell Grange* and *Ludwell* - both of which are listed by Historic England. To the east of Jeffrey's Farm and Sugar Lane: *Boxes Farmhouse* is also a listed building. Policy B10 states: *Listed Buildings and their settings will be protected. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the following will apply:.....*
(d) In considering new proposals, special regard will be given to protecting the setting of a listed building and the use of appropriate designs and materials.

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy B12 and B15

- 4.2.10 Approximately 280.0m to the east of the proposed development site lies an area within Horsted Keynes which is designated as a Conservation Area. Within the Local Plan Policy B12 states: *The protection of the special character and appearance of each Conservation Area will receive high priority. When determining planning applications for development within or abutting the designated Conservation Areas, special attention will be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area and to safeguard the setting of any Listed Building.....*
- 4.2.11 Policy B15 goes on to mention: *Development affecting the setting of a Conservation Area should be sympathetic to, and should not adversely affect its character and appearance. In particular, attention will be paid to the protection or enhancement of views into and out of a Conservation Area, including, where appropriate, the retention of open spaces and trees.*

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy CS15

- 4.2.12 Jeffrey's Farm lies approximately 370.0m to the south east of an area which is designated as a floodplain. Within the Local Plan Policy RA5 states: *Planning permission will not be granted for development (including redevelopment and intensification of existing development) in areas at risk of flooding or for land raising within river floodplains unless environmentally acceptable flood mitigation measures to protect the floodplain can be provided by the developer to compensate for the impact of the development.....*

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy B18

- 4.2.13 The proposed development site lies approximately 1.4km to the south-east of an area which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Within the Local Plan it states: *Sites of archaeological interest and their settings will be protected and enhanced where possible. In particular, the fabric and setting of Scheduled Ancient*

Monuments and other nationally important archaeological sites should be preserved intact.

Mid Sussex Local Plan: Policy R14

- 4.2.14 An area which is designated as the *Bluebell Railway Extension* lies approximately 1.37km from the proposed development site area. Within the Local Plan it states: *The line of the Bluebell Railway is shown on the Local Plan Proposals Maps and will be safeguarded from any development which could prevent its completion. Proposals for additional development associated with the Bluebell Railway will only be permitted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that such development would have no significant adverse impact on the environment such as through visual intrusion, excessive traffic generation, noise and disturbance or loss of amenity to neighbouring residential properties. Proposals for the opening or re-opening of further stations or stopping places will be subject to particularly close examination.*

- 4.2.15 Policy HK3 goes on to state: *Proposals for additional development associated with the Bluebell Railway at Horsted Keynes will be permitted where the Council is satisfied that such development would have no significant adverse impact on the environment through visual intrusion, excessive traffic generation, noise and disturbance or loss of amenity to neighbouring residential properties.*

4.3 Local Planning Policy

- 4.3.1 Horsted Keynes Parish Council have recently produced a draft Neighbourhood Plan which having undergone a period of public consultation was due to be submitted to Mid Sussex District Council by the 15th of June 2016 for a further period of consultation before being assessed by an independent examiner.

Draft Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan - Policy HK1: Built Up Area Boundary

- 4.3.2 The draft Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies which relate to the proposed development site area. Policy HK1 states: *New residential development in Horsted Keynes parish shall be contained within the built-up area boundary of Horsted Keynes village as identified on the Proposal Map. Development proposals will be permitted within the built-up area boundary subject to compliance with other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. Development proposals outside the built-up area boundary will not be permitted unless:*
- *they represent development proposals on the site allocations, HK18 to HK20; and*
 - *they comply with Policy C1 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2004; or*
 - *they relate to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available: or*
 - *they comply with other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan in particular those relating to dwelling extensions and business premises.*

Draft Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan - Policy HK7: Minimise the Environmental Impact of New Developments

- 4.3.3 Policy HK7 states: *New developments shall maximise the retention of well-established features of the landscape including mature trees, hedgerows and ponds. Where the loss of such features cannot reasonably be avoided the development shall include for their full replacement by similar or equivalent features elsewhere on the site.*

Draft Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan - Policy HK8: Protection and Improvement of Natural Habitats

- 4.3.4 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan also makes provision for the protection and improvement of natural habitats: *New developments shall provide for the protection and enhancement of existing habitats of any flora and fauna on the site. Where damage to natural habitat cannot reasonably be avoided, measures shall be taken which will ensure that damage is minimised and the habitat affected can continue to thrive.*
Where the destruction of natural habitat cannot reasonably be avoided, the development shall provide suitable compensation measures that allow for the creation of new habitats off-site.

Draft Horsted Keynes Neighbourhood Plan - Policy HK19: Land At Jeffrey's Farm

- 4.3.5 Policy HK19 refers specifically to Jeffrey's Farm: *Residential development for approximately 6 dwellings on 0.7 hectares of land at Jeffrey's Farm will be permitted subject to the following criteria:*
- *the development is on the land currently occupied by the farm buildings; and*
 - *the development is designed in a courtyard style or equivalent to ensure that there is no potential to extend development further in the future; and*
 - *suitable landscaping is provided to protect the views from the west.*

National Planning Policy Framework: Public Rights Of Way

- 4.3.6 There are no Public Rights of Way (PROW) either within or adjacent to the proposed development site area. The nearest designated Public Right of Way is a Footpath which lies to the south-east of the proposed development site area and runs east off Lewes Road along Hamsland. To the south of Jeffrey's Farm, a PROW: Footpath runs south off Treemans Road to the north of Old Keysford Hall before turning through ninety degrees (to the north of Old Keysford Hall) and heading west.
- 4.3.7 Public Rights of Way are indicated on RCo180 / Figure 01 / Viewpoint locations and ZTV.

5.0 EXISTING BASELINE CONDITIONS

5.1 Landscape Context

- 5.1.1 The residential scheme proposes a mix of residential dwellings including apartments, bungalows, semi-detached dwellings and detached houses which would be located to a field south of Keysford Lane to the north-western edge of Horsted Keynes. Several residential units would replace dilapidated agricultural buildings, barns and storage containers to the west of the Jeffrey's Farm area. A proposed access road would run west off Sugar Lane from a location slightly north of Jefferies and head north before curving around to the western edge of the Jeffrey's Farm area.
- 5.1.2 Jeffrey's Farm lies to the west of Horsted Keynes and comprises a number of agricultural buildings (some of which are derelict and dilapidated), storage containers and a farm house which was sold to a third party some years ago. The farm is reached by means of a narrow access track off the northern end of Treemans Road and is lined with mature trees and shrubs – to the south of the track are several residential dwellings. Jeffrey's Farm is currently home to a small herd of beef cows but primarily produces and sells chicken eggs. The field to the west of Sugar Lane and immediately south of Keysford Lane is currently given over to equestrian grazing and there are two, small stable buildings.
- 5.1.3 To the eastern edge of the proposed development site lies Sugar Lane and to the northern edge is Keysford Lane. Residential properties lie to the east of Sugar Lane forming the western, urban edge of Horsted Keynes whilst the landscape to the north of Keysford Lane is rural in character with woodland blocks and agricultural fields. To the west are grassland fields which are delineated with hedgerows and trees – a farm lies to the southern edge of Keysford Lane: *Tyhurst*.
- 5.1.4 To the south of Jeffrey's Farm are agricultural fields and a large woodland block - there are residential dwellings to the eastern and western edges of Treemans Road.

5.2 Proposed Development Site: Baseline Topography

- 5.2.1 The proposed development site area is characterised by a gradual fall to the northern boundary and Keysford Lane. To the east of Jeffrey's Farm, a grassland field extends to Sugar Lane and the levels gradually fall towards the vegetated northern boundary - Sugar Lane (to the south and immediately north of Jefferies) is of a similar level to the grassland field. Further east the topography over the urban environment of Horsted Keynes is fairly even.

- 5.2.2 To the south of the farm area, the topography is generally even with only minor variations in levels although there is a distinct fall to the south west towards the Bluebell Railway line.
- 5.2.3 To the west of the proposed development site area, the topography is more undulating in nature and there is a fall to the Bluebell Railway line before the topography rises again creating a valley.
- 5.2.4 To the north of Jeffrey's Farm, there is a noticeable fall in levels towards the dense tree belt which lies to the northern edge of the proposed development site area (adjacent to Keysford Lane). This fall extends to Sugar Lane with an appreciable climb heading south from the junction with Keysford Lane. Sugar Lane is also at a lower level than the proposed development site area ie. in cutting with a steep bank to part of the highway leading to dense woodland. Further north the topography is more even.

5.3 Existing Vegetation

- 5.3.1 The proposed development site is characterised by mature trees and dense shrubs to the field boundary edges. To the north-eastern boundary (adjacent to Sugar Lane) is a dense belt of shrubs and trees some of which have developed into very large and mature specimens. Further south (to the eastern boundary) are several large and mature tree specimens with dense shrub and ruderal underplanting. To the northern boundary is a dense strip of tree specimens which are a mix of coniferous and deciduous species - an informal hedgerow (comprising mainly Hazel and Holly) lies to the southern boundary of Keysford Lane.
- 5.3.2 To the western boundary is a hedgerow which has not been pruned and has therefore developed into more of a small tree line. The farm area is delineated with dense trees and shrubs which in part lie to the garden edge of the farmhouse. There are also a number of trees within the farm area which are likely to have self-seeded – several lie in very close proximity to existing, agricultural buildings. Two very large and mature Oaks lie in close proximity to an agricultural building to the east of the farm area.
- 5.3.3 The access road to the southern boundary is edged with mature trees to the north and a mix of dense shrubs and mature trees to the southern edge.

5.4 National Landscape Character: Natural England – National Character Areas Profile (122): High Weald

- 5.4.1 The top tier of landscape character assessments is the National Countryside Character assessment comprising of 8 Regional Volumes which are subdivided into 159 distinct, natural areas.

- 5.4.2 The proposed development site lies within Volume 7: South East and London and is located to the west of National Character Area Profile (122): High Weald which: *encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78 per cent of the NCA. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wild flower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.*
- 5.4.3 The relevant key characteristics of the NCA - High Weald - National Character Area are summarised below (those particularly relevant to the site and surrounding area are highlighted in **bold**):
- *High density of extraction pits, quarries and ponds, in part a consequence of diverse geology and highly variable soils over short distances;*
 - *A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets **and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages** founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber- framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier;*
 - *Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. **There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips.** The area includes several large towns such as Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Battle and Heathfield and is closely bordered by others such as Crawley, East Grinstead, Hastings and Horsham;*
 - ***An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape** with glimpses of far reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe amidst lanes and paths;*
 - *Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. **A great extent of interconnected ancient woods,** steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management;*
 - ***Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws,** plus steep valleys with gill woodland;*
 - ***Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing;***

- A predominantly **grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle**;
- There is a strong influence of the Wealden iron industry which started in Roman times, until coke fuel replaced wood and charcoal. There are features such as a notably high number of small hammer ponds surviving today.
- **An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.**

5.5 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2014-2019)

- 5.5.1 The proposed development site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the High Weald AONB Management Plan is the document in which the local authorities with land in the AONB set out: *their policy for the management of the area and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it*. The plan states: *The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty however In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.*
- 5.5.2 The management plan goes on to describe the High Weald as: *a historic countryside of rolling hills draped by small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. It covers 1461 sq km across four counties and 11 districts. The High Weald was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1983.*
- 5.5.3 The document continues: *Woodland is extensive covering nearly a third of the area in an intricate network of small wooded shaws, pits and gills; farm woods and larger wooded estates. Most of the woodland is ancient, managed in the past as coppice and swept with bluebells and wood anemones in the spring but of the mature oaks for which the Weald was once famous, few remain.....*
- 5.5.4 The management plan identifies five main components which combine to create the: *distinctive pattern and form the fabric of the landscape we see today*:
- **Geology, landform, water systems and climate:** *Deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British sub-oceanic climate;*
 - **Settlement:** *dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries;*

- **Routeways:** *ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. These routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks;*
- **Woodlands:** *the great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to long-term management;*
- **Field and Heath:** *small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing; small holdings; and a non-dominant agriculture; within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.*

5.5.5 Within the management plan it states: *The AONB Management Plan complements but does not duplicate the development plans of constituent local planning authorities. It does not itself propose policy to address development issues. Instead it sets out a 'criteria-based' framework (the objectives and indicators of success for conserving and enhancing natural beauty) against which the impact of development on the purpose of designation can be assessed.*

5.6 Regional Landscape Character: Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003) – HW1: High Weald

5.6.1 In 2003, West Sussex County Council completed a landscape character assessment which identified 42 no separate and unique landscape character areas. Land Management Guidelines were produced for each area which were intended to provide a resource for landowners, managers, district councils, parish, town and borough councils, other organisations and members of the public.....

5.6.2 The proposed development site area lies within *HW1: High Weald* which is described as being: *The High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area.....*

5.6.3 The key characteristics of HW1: High Weald landscape character area are summarised below with those particularly relevant to the proposed development site and surrounding area in **bold**:

- *Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by gill streams. Headwater drainage of the Rivers Eden, Medway, Ouse and Mole;*
- *Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge;*
- *Includes major reservoir at Ardingly and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir.*
- ***Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees;***

- ***Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland;***
- ***Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland;***
- *Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
- ***Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages;***
- *Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor;*
- *London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area;*
- *Mill sites, hammer ponds and numerous fish and ornamental lakes and ponds;*
- ***Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile hanging;***
- *Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses;*
- *Visitor attractions include Wakehurst Place, Nymans Gardens, the South of England Showground and the **Bluebell Line Steam Railway.***

5.7 District Landscape Character - A Landscape Character Assessment For Mid Sussex (2005): High Weald

5.7.1 In November 2005, Mid Sussex District Council published a district wide landscape character assessment which was prepared: *to help protect and enhance the distinctive character of the District and to manage change.* The proposed development site lies within the Landscape Character Area 6 – High Weald which covers approximately 11,408 hectares and is:....*the largest Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex, contains the highest ground in the High Weald within West Sussex and lies wholly within the District and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).....*

5.7.2 Many of the key landscape characteristics identified within the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003) - HW1: High Weald are repeated within the Mid Sussex - High Weald landscape character assessment. Additional landscape characteristics which are relevant to the proposed development site and surrounding area are summarised below (those applicable to the development site are highlighted in **bold**):

- ***Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, perceived as attractive, locally secluded and tranquil;***
- ***Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, including some larger woods and a dense network of hedgerows and shaws, creates a sense of enclosure, the valleys damp, deep and secluded.***

5.8 Proposed Development Site: Landscape Character

- 5.8.1 The proposed development site landscape features and components are illustrated in Appendix A.
- 5.8.2 The proposed development site includes the western area of Jeffrey's Farm and two fields to the north and north-east of the farm area. Jeffrey's Farm comprises a number of low grade, agricultural buildings (some of which are in a state of disrepair), barns, steel shipping containers and the farm house which was sold to a third party some years ago and is therefore excluded from the proposed development site area. The farm area is slightly chaotic in appearance with derelict buildings, discarded machinery, parked vehicles, chicken wire fences and self-seeded trees combining to create an impression of visual disorder.
- 5.8.3 The fields to the north and north-east of Jeffrey's Farm are characterised by dense shrub and ruderal vegetation as well as trees (many of which are mature and large specimens) which delineate the field edges. The proposed site area is edged by Keysford Lane to the north and Sugar Lane to the east – the urban edge of Horsted Keynes lies to the east of Sugar Lane. Tranquillity is intermittently affected by the close proximity of traffic using the highways. The field immediately south of Keysford Lane is largely given over to equestrian use and therefore it is likely the grassland has little ecological value. Several residential dwellings are located to the south of the narrow access road which leads off Treemans Road to Jeffrey's Farm.
- 5.8.4 The proposed development site area is enclosed and small scale in character as a result of the dense field edge vegetation, mature trees and urban, western edge of Horsted Keynes. There are some very long distance views over existing trees to a ridge line to the north. There is a prevailing urban element to the semi-rural landscape character as a result of the close proximity to Horsted Keynes.
- 5.8.5 The main landscape receptors would be summarised by:
- *Mature tree specimens and tree / shrub belts;*
 - *Jeffrey's Farm Area: Agricultural Buildings and Storage Containers;*
 - *Equestrian outbuildings / Stables;*
 - *Overhead Telephone Wires;*
 - *Jeffrey's Farm House;*
 - *Horsted Keynes – urban edge;*
 - *Highways: Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane.*

5.9 Landscape Receptor Value

- 5.9.1 The aspects of the landscape which may be affected by the proposed residential scheme were identified from existing landscape character assessments and the site visit. The characteristics and guidelines within the landscape character assessments were considered as indicators of aspects of the landscape important to landscape character.

5.9.2 The value of the landscape character and receptors are assessed below:

- *The mature tree specimens and tree/ shrub belts to the field edge boundaries are judged to be of High value, important to landscape character and referred to within existing landscape character assessments;*
- *The Jeffrey's Farm area is assessed as being of Low value with agricultural buildings which are in a state of disrepair and storage containers which detract from the landscape and AONB setting;*
- *The overhead telephone wires and stables are assessed as being of Low value making little contribution to landscape character;*
- *Jeffrey's Farm House and garden area is assessed as being of Medium value as although not listed it makes some contribution to landscape character;*
- *Horsted Keynes urban edge is judged to have a Medium value as there is a mix of newer, less attractive buildings (around Boxes Lane and Jefferies) as well as some older buildings some of which are listed (to the northern end of Sugar Lane);*
- *Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane are assessed as being of Medium value – mentioned within existing landscape character assessments: 'dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips';*
- *The proposed development site area is judged to be of Medium value as although located within the High Weald AONB it is in close proximity to two highways and Horsted Keynes urban edge is prominent. The farm area comprises a number of low grade agricultural buildings some of which are derelict and there are several elements which detract from the landscape setting including stables, electric fencing, storage containers and overhead telephone wires.*

5.10 Visual Baseline: Potential Visual Receptors

Residential Receptors

5.10.1 To the east of the proposed development site is Sugar Lane which forms the western edge of Horsted Keynes and there are a number of properties which lie to the eastern edge of this highway. To the northern end of Sugar Lane, views of the proposed development site area are limited by the dense tree and shrub belt which lies to the western edge of Sugar Lane and south of Keysford Lane. Further south, views of the southern field which forms the proposed development site area (where the proposed access road and community building would be located) are more open although mature trees limit perceptibility – there would be views of the proposed access road entrance off Sugar Lane from residential properties to the western end of Jefferies. Views from the properties to the south of the existing Jeffrey's Farm access track are limited by dense shrubs and mature trees.

5.10.2 Within the wider landscape, views of the proposed development site are constrained by the dense vegetation which delineates the field edge boundaries.

Views from Jeffrey's Farm House would be limited by the dense and mature vegetation which lies to the garden boundary.

Recreational Users

- 5.10.3 Views of the proposed development site area from locations to Public Rights of Way are limited by the dense shrubs and mature tree specimens which lie to the field edge boundaries.

Agricultural Workers

- 5.10.4 Any views of the proposed development site area from adjacent fields would also be limited by the mature shrubs and trees which lie to the field boundaries – partial views would be limited to gaps in the vegetation. There would be some views from part of the field which lies immediately west of the Jeffrey's Farm area.

Road Users

- 5.10.5 Views of the proposed development site area from locations to Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane would be limited by the dense trees and shrubs which lie to the eastern and northern boundaries of the proposed development site area. Occasional gaps may allow fleeting, glimpsed views of the proposed development site area. Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane do not have a dedicated pedestrian path / pavement meaning pedestrian use is likely to be minimal. To the south of Sugar Lane, views west to the southern field which forms the proposed development site area would be slightly more open however mature trees and shrubs would limit the perceptibility of the proposed access road and community building.

5.11 Visual Analysis: Representational Viewpoints

- 5.11.1 This section of the report provides an analysis of the existing visual condition. A range of key viewpoints has been selected to demonstrate the views available of the proposed development site area and also viewpoints which demonstrate a lack of visibility due to the prevailing topography and/or intervening vegetation. Views are shown in *Appendix B: Viewpoint Photographs*.

Viewpoint 01 – PROW: Footpath South of Bennetts Looking North

- 5.11.2 This viewpoint is located approximately 300.0m to the south of the proposed development site area on a PROW: Footpath and looks north. To the right of the image is a single storey, residential development: *Bennetts* which is located to the south of a row of detached houses which lie to the western edge of Treemans Road. To the north is a mature tree and shrub belt which lies to the field edge boundary. There is a partial, long distance view of an agricultural building which is located to the western edge of the Jeffrey's Farm area – further north are limited views of the topography as it rises in the distance.

Viewpoint 02 – PROW: Footpath Looking North

- 5.11.3 Viewpoint 02 looks north from a location to a PROW: Footpath which lies to the south of a tree and shrub belt approximately 380.0m from the proposed

development site. The viewpoint lies on an unmade farm track and *Old Keysford Hall* lies to the south east. Views north are limited by the mature trees and shrubs which are located to the field edge. Whilst there are clear views of the residential dwellings which lie to the west of Treemans Road, the Jeffrey's Farm area and associated agricultural buildings are not perceptible in views from this location as a result of intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 03 – Keysford Lane Looking North-East

- 5.11.4 This viewpoint lies on a location to Keysford Lane adjacent to a residential dwelling: *High Beeches* and the entrance to Woodsland Farm. The viewpoint is located approximately 1.70km to the south-west of the proposed development site area and the elevated location allows for panoramic views over the landscape to the east. The view demonstrates the undulating, wooded nature of the landscape and the long distance views which are available from elevated and isolated locations. Tranquillity is intermittently affected by the close proximity of traffic to Keysford Lane and there are partial, long distance views of isolated buildings within the landscape. The perceptibility of the proposed development site area and Jeffrey's Farm is constrained by distance and intervening vegetation.

Viewpoint 04 – PROW: Footpath off Keysford Lane Looking East

- 5.11.5 Viewpoint 04 lies to the north of Keysford Lane approximately 850.0m from the proposed development site area and looks east across the Bluebell Railway Line - a bridge which crosses the railway track is partially visible to the centre of the image. The proposed development site area is hidden from view in this location by a combination of the rising topography and intervening, mature vegetation. To the centre of the image, the PROW: Footpath (which also provides access to Nobles Farmhouse to the north-west) is clearly visible heading south to Keysford Lane and the dense woodland which lies to the southern edge of the highway is also perceptible. The view demonstrates the undulating nature of the landscape to the west of Horsted Keynes and the prevailing wooded character which limits views and creates a strong sense of enclosure.

Viewpoint 05 – Private Farmland off Keysford Lane Looking East

- 5.11.6 This viewpoint lies approximately 90.0m from the western boundary of the proposed development site and looks east across Keysford Lane. The location is on private farmland close to a field opening to the north of Keysford Lane. The proposed development site area is hidden in views due to the dense tree and shrub belt which lies to the northern boundary of the proposed development site area. To the left of the image, agricultural fields which lie to the north of Keysford Lane are visible and there is a partial view of Ludwell Grange to the north east.

Viewpoint 06 – Junction of Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane Looking South

- 5.11.7 This viewpoint lies approximately 70.0m to the north of the proposed development site area to the junction between Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane. The view looks south and the perceptibility of the proposed site is constrained by the large and mature trees which lie to the south of the junction. The viewpoint is located to the northern edge of Horsted Keynes and has an urban character with a

view of Ludwell Grange to the right of the image and the rooftops to properties which lie to the east of Sugar Lane also partially visible. The northern end of Sugar Lane is visible rising as it heads south to the eastern edge of the proposed development site area.

Viewpoint 07 – Boxes Lane Looking West

- 5.11.8 Viewpoint 07 lies approximately 50.0m to the east of the proposed development site area and looks west. The viewpoint is located to a slightly elevated location on Boxes Lane – a cul-de-sac which runs east off Sugar Lane. The view demonstrates the dense shrubs and mature trees which lie to the north-eastern edge of the proposed development site area as well as the steep bank which lies to the western edge of Sugar Lane which limits views west.

Viewpoint 08 – Jefferies Looking West

- 5.11.9 This viewpoint looks west from a location to the south of Viewpoints 06 and 07 and lies on Jefferies which links Sugar Lane with Lewes Road. To the right of the image is a partial view of a residential dwelling which lies to the east of Sugar Lane which can be seen to the eastern edge of the proposed development site area. The topography is more even in this view (to the south east of the proposed development site area) and the large and mature trees which characterise the western edge of Sugar Lane are visible adjacent to the highway. As with Viewpoints 06 and 07, the location of Viewpoint 08 to the western edge of Horsted Keynes is urban in character with man-made components prominent in views.

Viewpoint 09 – Treemans Road Looking North

- 5.11.10 Viewpoint 09 lies to the south of the existing access to Jeffrey's Farm and looks north along Sugar Lane – the existing farm access can be seen to the centre of the image. The view shows the residential properties which form part of the western, urban edge of Horsted Keynes and to the left of the image is a hedgerow which lies to the east of a dwelling which lies to the south of the farm access road. The view demonstrates the dense vegetation which lies to the western edge of Sugar Lane and to the south of the Jeffrey's Farm access road. The field which forms the southern part of the proposed development site area is partially visible through gaps in the vegetation to the north of the farm access track.

6.0 MITIGATION AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

6.1 Mitigation

- 6.1.1 The proposed development scheme would seek to retain and protect existing, mature tree specimens and tree / shrub belts to the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the proposed development site area. A number of self-seeded tree specimens within the farm area would require removal due to very close proximity to existing agricultural buildings which are proposed to be demolished. Limited areas of shrubs and small trees to the boundary which separates the two fields

would be removed as well as to the north-western edge of the Jeffrey's Farm House garden area.

- 6.1.2 To the south-eastern field boundary (adjacent to Sugar Lane), a limited section of shrubs would be cleared to facilitate the proposed access road entrance. (For details of the proposed tree protection measures refer to: *RCo180 / 02a and 2b / Tree Protection Drawings* and accompanying *Existing Tree Schedule*).
- 6.1.3 The boundaries of the proposed residential development scheme would be enhanced with native hedgerows and tree specimens which would soften and filter near distance views from locations within the proposed development site area. To the south east, the proposed access road would be enhanced with tree specimens and a hedgerow to the proposed community building frontage.
- 6.1.4 Pedestrian paths to the north western, northern and southern edges would be enhanced with native tree specimens. The existing small trees / shrubs to the western boundary edge of the proposed development site area would be enhanced with a 5.0m wide buffer of native understorey shrub planting and tree specimens. To the north of the proposed residential dwellings, an extensive area of native grassland and wildflowers would be established which would enhance the development site biodiversity attracting invertebrates such as butterflies and bees.
- 6.1.5 For details of the scheme proposals refer to: *RCo180 / Fig 03 / Proposed Development and Mitigating Planting Scheme*.

6.2 Potential Effects: Construction Phase

- 6.2.1 The potential construction phase activities would involve the demolition of several Jeffrey's Farm agricultural buildings, the construction of the proposed access road and general works associated with the construction of the proposed community building and residential dwellings— these activities would be regarded as short term:
- *Demolition of several Jeffrey's Farm agricultural buildings;*
 - *Construction of access road;*
 - *Localised, general ground works;*
 - *Delivery of building materials;*
 - *General construction site activities.*

6.3 Potential Effects: Post Construction

- 6.3.1 Following completion of the proposed development scheme, potential effects would include views of the proposed residential dwellings, community building and access road: effects would be permanent.

7.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 Landscape Effects

- 7.1.1 This section will deal with the potential effects of the proposed development scheme on the landscape character and fabric of the development site and surrounding area.
- 7.1.2 The proposed development site area comprises agricultural buildings and steel shipping containers to the Jeffrey's Farm area – some of which would be removed to facilitate the construction of residential units. Limited areas of small trees and shrubs which delineate pasture fields would be removed to enable the construction of the access road and proposed residential units to the north and north east of Jeffrey's Farm.
- 7.1.3 A small area of shrubs to the western edge of Sugar Lane would be removed to allow the access road entrance to be constructed however mature trees would be retained and protected within the proposed development scheme. Several trees within the Jeffrey's Farm area would be removed due to close proximity to buildings proposed to be demolished.
- 7.1.4 The shrub / tree belts to the western, northern and eastern edges of the proposed development site area would be retained as would the mature tree specimens to the eastern boundary adjacent to Sugar Lane. The mature tree specimens which line the existing Jeffrey's Farm access track would also be retained and protected within the proposed development scheme.

Existing Landscape Receptors: Potential Effects

- 7.1.5 The existing landscape components which are important to the proposed development site landscape character have been identified as follows:
- *Mature tree specimens and tree/shrub belts;*
 - *Jeffrey's Farm Area: Agricultural Buildings and Storage Containers;*
 - *Equestrian outbuildings / Stables;*
 - *Overhead Telephone Wires;*
 - *Jeffrey's Farm House;*
 - *Horsted Keynes – urban edge;*
 - *Highways: Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane.*

Landscape Character: Potential Effects

- 7.1.6 Landscape character is partly derived from the combination and pattern of landscape elements within any view and therefore there is an overlap between visual amenity and landscape character.

7.2 Effects On The Landscape

Sensitivity

7.2.1 The sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been assessed as follows:

- ***Mature tree specimens and tree/shrub belts*** have been assessed as having a high value. Susceptibility to change would be medium as the majority of the existing trees and shrubs would be retained. The overall sensitivity of the existing mature tree specimens and tree / shrub belts is judged to be **Medium**;
- ***The Jeffrey's Farm Area: Agricultural Buildings and Storage Containers*** are assessed as being of low value being in a state of disrepair and detracting from the landscape setting. There would be a low susceptibility to change as some agricultural buildings would be retained to the east of the farm area leading to a **Low** sensitivity overall;
- ***The Equestrian Outbuildings / Stables*** are judged to be of low value. There would be a low susceptibility to change as the stables and equine fencing detract from the landscape setting and a **Low** sensitivity overall;
- ***The Overhead Telephone Wires*** are also assessed as being of low value as they detract from the landscape and AONB setting. The susceptibility to change is judged to be low as they would be retained and therefore sensitivity is assessed as being **Low** overall;
- ***Jeffrey's Farm House***: is judged to be of medium value as the isolated dwelling makes some contribution to landscape character. Susceptibility to change is judged to be medium due to the dense boundary vegetation which surrounds the garden area - leading to a **Medium** sensitivity overall;
- ***The Horsted Keynes – Urban Edge*** is assessed as being of medium value. The susceptibility to change is judged to be medium as the proposed access road would run off Sugar Lane - sensitivity is assessed as being **Medium**;
- ***Highways: Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane*** are judged as being of medium value. The proposed access road would be located off Sugar Lane and therefore susceptibility to change is judged to be medium. The resulting sensitivity would also be **Medium**;
- ***Proposed Development Site: Landscape character*** - value has been assessed as being medium. Susceptibility to change is judged to be High as the character of the two fields and farm area would permanently change with the type of development proposed. The development site landscape character is judged to have a **High** sensitivity overall.

Magnitude of Change: Construction Phase

7.2.2 During the construction phase of the proposed development scheme, there would be short term effects in relation to the demolition of agricultural buildings, general ground works and construction of the access road, community building and residential units.

- Magnitude of Change: Completion of the Proposed Development Scheme***
- 7.2.3 Following completion of the proposed scheme, effects would be permanent and related to the perceptibility of the proposed access road, community building and residential units.
- Assessment of Landscape Effects***
- 7.2.4 The proposed scheme would require the removal of several agricultural buildings to the west of the Jeffrey's Farm area as well as storage containers and self-seeded trees. There would be limited removal of dense shrub areas to facilitate the construction of the residential dwellings and access road.
- Mature tree specimens and tree/shrub belts***
- 7.2.5 The magnitude of change in relation to existing mature tree specimens and tree / shrub belts is assessed as being **Minor** as the removal of existing vegetation would be limited to self-seeded trees within the farm area and localised areas of dense shrubs / small trees. There would be a **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect in relation to the mature tree specimens and tree / shrub belts as a result of the proposed development scheme.
- Jeffrey's Farm Area - Agricultural Buildings and Storage Containers***
- 7.2.6 Several agricultural buildings and shipping containers are proposed to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. A number of the buildings are derelict and the farm area is slightly chaotic in appearance. There would be a **Moderate** magnitude of change in relation to the proposed removal of the agricultural buildings and a permanent **Low / Slight Beneficial** overall degree of landscape effect as the buildings and storage containers detract from the landscape and AONB setting.
- Equestrian Outbuildings / Stables***
- 7.2.7 There would be a **Minor** magnitude of change in relation to the proposed removal of the equestrian electric fencing and two stables. The outbuildings and fencing detract from the landscape and AONB setting and therefore, there would be a permanent **Low / Slight Beneficial** overall degree of landscape effect as a result of their removal.
- Overhead Telephone Wires***
- 7.2.8 The overhead telephone wires are a man-made component which detracts from the landscape setting. As they are proposed to be retained the magnitude of effect would be **None** and there would be **No Change** in the overall degree of landscape effect.
- Jeffrey's Farm House***
- 7.2.9 The setting of Jeffrey's Farm House would experience a short term **Moderate** magnitude of change in relation to demolition and construction activities however this would be set against the close proximity of everyday farming activities. There would be a short term **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect as a

result of the proposed scheme and resulting impacts on tranquillity as well as the removal of some shrub/small tree planting to the north-west of the garden area.

Horsted Keynes – Urban Edge

- 7.2.10 The setting of the residential dwellings which form the western, urban edge of Horsted Keynes would experience a short term **Moderate** magnitude of change due to the close proximity of the proposed development site area to the west of Sugar Lane. There would be a short term **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect during the construction phase of the proposed scheme due to construction deliveries to Sugar Lane and general development site activities.

Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane

- 7.2.11 There would be a short term, **Minor** magnitude of change in relation to the setting of Sugar Lane and the construction of the entrance to the proposed access road and a short term **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect.

Proposed Development Site - Landscape Character (Construction Phase)

- 7.2.12 The magnitude of change in relation to landscape effects arising from the proposed development scheme during the construction phase would be short term and **Major** and limited to the immediate development site context. The overall degree of landscape effect would be a short term **Substantial Adverse** as localised demolition operations and general construction site activities would negatively impact on the development site landscape character.

Proposed Development Site - Landscape Character (Post Construction)

- 7.2.13 Following completion of the proposed residential scheme the magnitude of change is anticipated to be **Major** but would be limited to the immediate development site context. The proposed development scheme would introduce a new access road off Sugar Lane, a community building and residential units to the west and north of the Jeffrey's Farm area. Therefore, the overall degree of landscape effect following completion of the scheme would be a permanent **Substantial Adverse**.

Conclusion

- 7.2.14 The proposed scheme would comprise 42 no. mixed residential units which would be partly located to a green-field site to the north of Jeffrey's Farm and to an area west of the main farm area. A new access road would be constructed off Sugar Lane from a location opposite and slightly north of Jefferies and a community building is proposed to the north east of the farm – also to a grassland field. All the mature trees which lie to the field edges are proposed to be retained with only self-seeded trees which are in close proximity to agricultural buildings proposed to be demolished to be removed. Limited areas of shrubs / small trees would also be removed to facilitate the proposed development however an extensive soft landscape scheme would incorporate native tree planting throughout the site as well as hedgerows, understorey shrub planting areas and a native grassland and wildflower meadow area.

- 7.2.15 There would be short term and permanent adverse landscape effects as a result of the proposed development scheme however the site is bordered to the east and north with highways and adjacent to the western urban edge of Horsted Keynes. Jeffrey's Farm lies to the south and there are residential dwellings to the south of the existing farm access track meaning there is an existing urban element to the proposed site area character. The retained dense vegetation to the site boundaries would mean adverse landscape character impacts would be limited to the immediate development site area.

7.3 Statutory Landscape Designations

High Weald - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 7.3.1 Jeffrey's Farm and the proposed development site area lies within the High Weald AONB and within the High Weald AONB Management Plan it states that looking forward to 2024, the AONB should retain: *its remarkable character and scenic beauty*. The farm area with its slightly dilapidated and chaotic appearance, the overhead telephone lines and equestrian stables all detract from the setting of the High Weald AONB.
- 7.3.2 The plan goes on to mention: *In pursuing the primary purpose of designation, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities*. Within the: *Role of the AONB vision* section of the plan, it mentions the need to take a: *realistic and practical view that faces up to the likely demographic changes that increase demand for housing, lifestyle and technological changes, increase in traffic, climate change, and the decline of traditional farm businesses as well as: protecting biodiversity and improving the quality of the natural and historic environment*.
- 7.3.3 The management plan identifies a number of objectives which have relevance to the proposed scheme including:
- ***S2 Objective: To protect the historic pattern of settlement.*** Rationale: *To protect the distinctive character of towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads and to maintain the hinterlands and other relationships (including separation) between such settlements that contribute to local identity;.*
 - ***W1 Objective: To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland.*** Rationale: *To maintain irreplaceable habitats for biodiversity, to maintain a key component of the cultural landscape, and to maintain contribution to carbon storage;*
 - ***FH2 Objective: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.*** Rationale: *To maintain fields and field boundaries that form a part of the habitat mosaic of the High Weald; and to maintain this key component of what is a rare UK survival of an essentially medieval landscape;*
 - ***FH3 Objective: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.*** Rationale: *To*

improve the condition, landscape permeability and connectivity of fields and heaths and their associated and interrelated habitats (such as hedges, woodlands, ditches, ponds and water systems) for wildlife.

- 7.3.4 Whilst the proposed scheme lies partly to a green field site it is also adjacent to the western edge of Horsted Keynes and is edged by Keysford Lane to the north and Sugar Lane to the east. The Jeffrey's Farm area and several residential dwellings are located to the southern edge. Therefore, the proposed development site has a existing urban element to its character.
- 7.3.5 The retained boundary vegetation would be enhanced with additional native shrub planting areas and trees which would reinforce the existing vegetation as well as providing succession tree specimens. The existing field patterns would be largely maintained with retained trees and shrub belts. The proposed residential development would incorporate native species hedgerows, tree specimens and a grassland and wildflower meadow area which would enhance the proposed development site biodiversity and create a new habitat area.
- 7.3.6 Whilst the proposed scheme would result in the loss of some limited shrub planting areas and part of a grassland field, it would provide a mix of much needed housing as well as allowing farming activity to continue – albeit on a reduced scale.

Ancient Woodland

- 7.3.7 *Parson's Wood* to the north west of the proposed development site area is designated as Ancient Replanted Woodland and *Coneyborough Wood* to the south is designated as Ancient Woodland. The distance between the designated areas and the proposed development site as well as intervening landscape features (Keysford Lane to the north and residential dwellings to the southern edge of the Jeffrey's Farm access track) mean the setting of the designated woodland would be unaffected by the proposed residential scheme.

7.4 Visual Effects: Extent of Visibility - Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 7.4.1 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrating the anticipated perceptibility of the proposed development scheme has been assessed by means of a desktop survey which was then refined with a site visit. The ZTV is illustrated on: *RCo180 / Figure 01 / Viewpoint Locations and ZTV*.
- 7.4.2 The existing field edge vegetation constrains views of the proposed development site area from locations to the surrounding urban and semi-rural landscape. To the northern boundary, a belt of coniferous and deciduous trees as well as dense shrubs to the southern edge of Keysford Lane limit views from locations to the highway and open fields further north. There are some, very long distance views from elevated locations to the north of the proposed development site area over the top of the boundary trees.

- 7.4.3 To the north-east, the tree and shrub belt to the western edge of Sugar Lane, limits and constrains views from locations to Sugar Lane and the residential properties to the eastern edge of the highway. There are partial views from locations to the southern end of Sugar Lane to the field which is proposed to be given over as a community space – however mature trees and shrubs to the western edge of the highway limit views west. Residential dwellings constrain views further east of Sugar Lane from locations within the urban environment of Horsted Keynes.
- 7.4.4 To the south, mature trees and dense shrubs to the southern edge of the Jeffrey's Farm access track constrain the Zone of Theoretical visibility. To the south west, a gap in the boundary vegetation allows views from locations to part of an open agricultural field. To the west and north-west, views from Keysford Lane and locations to the north of the highway would be limited by intervening vegetation to the highway edge and development site boundaries.
- 7.4.5 The undulating nature of the landscape to the north, west and south of Jeffrey's Farm as well as the wooded character means views are generally constrained however, there are occasional long distance views from elevated and isolated locations to the north and south west.

7.5 Visual Effects: Viewpoints and Visual Receptors

- 7.5.1 The viewpoint photographs are shown in *Appendix B: Viewpoint Photographs*.

Viewpoint 01 - PROW: Footpath South of Bennetts Looking North

- 7.5.2 This viewpoint is located to the west of Treemans Road and south of Jeffrey's Farm. The view looks north and to the right of the image is a clear view of Bennetts – one of several, detached residential dwellings which lie to the east and west of Treemans Road south of Horsted Keynes. This view is representative of recreational walkers who would be anticipated as having a high susceptibility to change - value is assessed as being high as the location is within the AONB and there are partial, long distance views of elevated locations to the north - the resulting sensitivity is judged to be **High**. Intervening vegetation constrains the visibility of the proposed development site area and therefore the magnitude of effect is assessed as being **Minor**.

- 7.5.3 There would be a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed development scheme. Any views of residential dwellings would be limited by intervening vegetation which would be enhanced with additional tree specimens to the southern edge of the proposed development site area.

Viewpoint 02 - PROW: Footpath Looking North

- 7.5.4 Viewpoint 02 looks north from a location to a PROW: Footpath to the north-west of *Old Keysford Hall*. The viewpoint lies to an unmade farm track and the near proximity of mature trees and dense shrubs mean views north are limited although residential dwellings which lie to the west of Treemans Road are visible to the edge

of a grassland field. Value is assessed as being medium as although the viewpoint is located within the AONB, views are limited and modern residential dwellings are visible in mid-distance views. The viewpoint would be representative of recreational walkers and therefore susceptibility to change is high with the resulting sensitivity judged also to be **High**. The magnitude of effect would be **None** as the Jeffrey's Farm area and proposed development site are not perceptible in views from this location.

- 7.5.5 There would be **No Change** in the overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed development scheme as dense, intervening vegetation constrains the visibility of the proposed site in views from this location.

Viewpoint 03 - Keysford Lane Looking North-East

- 7.5.6 This viewpoint is located to Keysford Lane adjacent to a residential dwelling: *High Beeches* and is included as an example of the long distance views which are available to the south-west of Horsted Keynes. The elevated location allows for panoramic views across the landscape and would be representative of road users and residents of High Beeches - residents would be anticipated as having a high susceptibility to change. Value is also assessed as high due to the scenic quality and AONB designation - the resulting sensitivity is judged to be **High**. The magnitude of effect would be **Minor** due to the nature of the long distance views and intervening vegetation which limits the visibility of the proposed development site area.

- 7.5.7 The perceptibility of the proposed development site area is constrained by a combination of long distance and intervening trees and shrubs, therefore the anticipated overall visual effect would be **Negligible Neutral**.

Viewpoint 04 – PROW: Footpath off Keysford Lane Looking East

- 7.5.8 Viewpoint 04 is located to a PROW: Footpath which runs north off Keysford Lane to the west of the Bluebell Railway line. The combination of the rising topography and trees to the southern edge of Keysford Lane mean views east are very constrained. The value of this view is judged to be medium as although the viewpoint lies within the High Weald AONB it is not particularly representative of the designation with limited scenic quality. This viewpoint would be representative of recreational walkers who would be anticipated to have a high susceptibility to change - the resulting sensitivity is judged to be **High**. The magnitude of effect would be **None** as there are no views of the proposed development site area from this location.
- 7.5.9 There would be **No Change** in the overall degree of visual effect as views of Jeffrey's Farm and the proposed development site area are constrained and limited by intervening vegetation and topography.

Viewpoint 05 – Private Farmland off Keysford Lane Looking East

- 7.5.10 Viewpoint 05 is located to private farmland adjacent to Keysford Lane and looks east towards the north-western boundary of the proposed development site area. This view would be representative of agricultural workers who would be anticipated as having a low-medium susceptibility to change. Value is judged to be medium as although the location is within the High Weald AONB, the close proximity of Keysford Lane and overhead power lines means the view is not particularly representative of the designation. The resulting sensitivity is assessed as being **Medium**. The magnitude of effect would be **None** as the proposed development site is not perceptible in views from this location.

- 7.5.11 There would be **No Change** in the overall degree of visual effect as the proposed development site and Jeffrey's Farm area are not visible in views from this location due to intervening vegetation to the edge of Keysford Lane.

Viewpoint 06 – Junction of Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane Looking South

- 7.5.12 This viewpoint is located to the junction of Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane to the north-east of the proposed development site area. The highways and residential dwellings mean there is a distinct urban character to this location to the north-west of Horsted Keynes. The view would be representative of road users and residents to nearby properties – residents would be anticipated to have a high susceptibility to change. The view south is constrained by mature trees and there are a number of man-made components including telegraph poles and signage - although Horsted Keynes is located within the High Weald AONB value is considered to be medium with the resulting sensitivity judged to be **High** overall. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Minor** as views of the proposed development site area would be limited by the mature trees to the southern edge of the junction.

- 7.5.13 There would be a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect as mature trees to the north-east of the proposed development site area (which are proposed to be retained and enhanced with additional tree specimens) would limit the perceptibility of the proposed residential scheme.

Viewpoint 07 – Boxes Lane Looking West

- 7.5.14 Viewpoint 07 lies to the east of the proposed development site area to Boxes Lane which runs off Sugar Lane. The view shows the existing mature trees and dense shrub planting to the western edge of Sugar Lane which limits the visibility of the proposed development site. This view would be representative of road users and residents to nearby properties to the north and south of this location – residents are likely to have a high susceptibility to change. The constrained nature of this view means despite its location within the High Weald AONB value is assessed as being medium - sensitivity is judged to be **High**. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Minor** as the dense tree and shrub belt to the eastern boundary of the proposed development site would limit views of the proposed residential scheme.

- 7.5.15 The proposed development would result in a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect as the tree and shrub belt to the western edge of Sugar Lane is proposed to be retained and enhanced with additional tree planting to the east of the proposed development site area. This would constrain views of the proposed development from this location and Sugar Lane.

Viewpoint 08 – Jefferies Looking West

- 7.5.16 This viewpoint lies to Jefferies and looks west over Sugar Lane towards the eastern edge of the field which is proposed to be used as a community open space. The view shows the mature trees and dense shrubs which lie adjacent to Sugar Lane which limit views west. This view would be representative of road users (Sugar Lane and Jefferies) and residents to the properties which lie to the western end of Jefferies – residents would be anticipated to have a high susceptibility to change. Despite the location being within the High Weald AONB, the highways and residential dwelling means value is assessed as being medium - sensitivity is judged to be **High**. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Moderate** as the proposed access road and community building would be perceptible in views from this location.
- 7.5.17 A limited section of shrub planting to the edge of Sugar Lane would be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed entrance of the new access road. The retained trees and proposed tree and hedgerow planting would filter views of the access road and community building however they would still be new components within this view and therefore, there would be a **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of visual effect.

Viewpoint 09 – Treemans Road Looking North

- 7.5.18 Viewpoint 09 looks north up Sugar Lane and is located to Treemans Road which lies to the south of Sugar Lane. The existing trees to the edges of Sugar Lane and the Jeffrey's Farm access track mean views to the proposed development site area are limited. This view would be representative of road users who would be anticipated as having a low susceptibility to change, value is judged to be medium as AONB status notwithstanding the view is urban in character with modern dwellings and Sugar Lane prominent. The resulting sensitivity is assessed to be **Medium** overall. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Minor** as the existing trees and shrubs limit views of the proposed development site area.
- 7.5.19 Any partial views of the community building proposed to the eastern edge of the proposed development site area and access road would be viewed within the context of the existing residential dwellings and Sugar Lane. The existing trees to the edge of Sugar Lane and to the Jeffrey's Farm access road would be retained and additional tree and hedgerow planting is proposed to the edges of the new access road. Therefore, there would be a **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed development scheme.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 8.1.1 The proposed development site is located to the western edge of Horsted Keynes and benefits from mature tree and dense shrub planting to the boundaries. All the existing boundary vegetation, with the exception of limited areas of shrubs and self-seeded trees (within the existing farmyard area) are proposed to be retained. A comprehensive soft landscape scheme would seek to reinforce the existing boundary planting with native shrub, hedgerow and tree planting.
- 8.1.2 To the north, the ZTV boundary is constrained by the dense coniferous and deciduous tree belt which lies to the southern edge of Keysford Lane which limits views south from Keysford Lane and fields further north. There are some very long distance views of a limited area of the proposed development site from elevated locations to the north of Horsted Keynes. To the east, the ZTV is defined by the mature trees and shrubs which lie to the western edge of Sugar Lane as well as the urban, western edge of Horsted Keynes.
- 8.1.3 To the south the ZTV is constrained by the mature trees which lie to the edges of the existing Jeffrey's Farm access track. Further west to the southern edge, mature trees and shrubs would be reinforced with additional tree specimens which would limit the perceptibility of the proposed residential scheme in views from locations to an agricultural field to the south.
- 8.1.4 To the south-west and west, the existing boundary planting is proposed to be reinforced with a 5.0m wide buffer of native trees and shrubs which would enhance the existing vegetation and limit views from agricultural fields to the west.

8.2 Mitigation

- 8.2.1 The proposed development site benefits from mature tree and shrub planting to the boundaries and with the exception of limited areas of boundary shrub planting and self-seeded tree specimens to the west of the Jeffrey's Farm area, the boundary vegetation would be retained and protected. To the north, the existing tree and shrub belt would be reinforced with additional, native tree planting to the edge of a pedestrian path. To the east, the existing mature trees and shrubs to the edge of Sugar Lane would be reinforced with tree specimens to the edge of the residential garden areas.
- 8.2.2 To the west, the existing shrub/small tree planting to the boundary would be enhanced with a 5.0m wide 'green' buffer of native trees and shrubs. The south western boundary would also benefit from tree planting which would reinforce the existing retained, vegetation.

- 8.2.3 Within the proposed development site area, the garden boundaries would be enhanced with native hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The main access road and pedestrian paths would also be edged with native hedgerow and tree planting. A native wildflower and grassland meadow area is proposed to the north of the proposed residential development which would enhance the existing biodiversity - attracting invertebrates such as bees and butterflies.

8.3 Landscape Effects

- 8.3.1 The overall degree of landscape effects with regard to the proposed development are summarised below in Table 06.

Table 06 Anticipated Overall Degree of Landscape Effects (Landscape Character / Landscape Components)			
<i>Landscape Receptors</i>	<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Magnitude of Effect</i>	<i>Overall Degree of Landscape Effect</i>
Mature tree specimens and tree/shrub belts	Medium	Minor	Low / Slight Adverse
The Jeffrey's Farm Area: Agricultural Buildings and Storage Containers	Low	Moderate	Low / Slight Beneficial
Equestrian Outbuildings / Stables	Low	Minor	Low / Slight Beneficial
Overhead Telephone Wires	Low	None	No Change
Jeffrey's Farm House	Medium	Short term Moderate	Short Term Moderate Adverse
Horsted Keynes – Urban Edge	Medium	Short term Moderate	Short Term Moderate Adverse
Highways: Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane	Medium	Short Term Minor	Short Term Low/Slight Adverse
Proposed Development Site: Landscape character (Construction Phase)	High	Major	Short term Substantial Adverse
Proposed Development Site: Landscape character (Post Construction)	High	Major	Permanent Substantial Adverse

- 8.3.2 The proposed scheme would seek to construct 42 housing units of varying types to the west of the Jeffrey's Farm area and to a pasture field to the south of Keysford Lane, Horsted Keynes. An access road and community building is proposed to a field to the north east of the farm area (to the west of Sugar Lane). The existing vegetation would be retained with the exception of several self-seeded trees to the farm area and limited areas of dense shrub planting. A comprehensive soft landscape scheme would enhance and reinforce the existing boundary vegetation with native hedgerow, understory shrub planting areas and tree specimens. A

- native wildflower and grassland meadow is proposed to the open area to the north of the residential dwellings.
- 8.3.3 The existing mature tree specimens and tree/shrub belts are proposed to be largely retained and protected with only limited shrub planting areas and trees which are in close proximity to existing farm buildings proposed to be removed. Therefore, there would be a **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect in relation to the existing mature tree specimens and tree/shrub belts as a result of the proposed residential scheme.
- 8.3.4 The removal of several agricultural buildings (some of which are derelict) and storage containers would mean there would be a **Low / Slight Beneficial** overall degree of landscape effect as they detract from the landscape setting and AONB designation.
- 8.3.5 The equestrian fencing and stables / outbuildings detract from the landscape setting and therefore their removal would result in a **Low / Slight Beneficial** overall degree of landscape effect.
- 8.3.6 The overhead telephone wires are a visible, man-made component which detracts from landscape character however there would be **No Change** in the overall degree of landscape effect as the overhead wires are to be retained.
- 8.3.7 There would be a short term **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect on the setting of Jeffrey's Farm House as a result of construction site activities and deliveries.
- 8.3.8 Sugar Lane forms the western edge of Horsted Keynes with a number of residential properties to the eastern edge of the highway. There would be a short term **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect on the setting of the Horsted Keynes urban edge as a result of deliveries and general construction site operations.
- 8.3.9 Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane lie to the northern and eastern boundaries of the proposed development site area respectively. There would be a short term **Low / Slight Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect as a result of construction site deliveries and the construction of the entrance to the new access road.
- 8.3.10 The proposed residential scheme is anticipated to have a short term **Substantial Adverse** overall degree of landscape effect on the proposed development site landscape character as a result of demolition activities, ground work operations and general construction site activities. Following completion of the scheme, the overall degree of landscape effect would be permanent and **Substantial Adverse** as the bulk of the residential dwellings, the community building and associated access road would be new, man-made components within two agricultural fields to the west of Horsted Keynes.

- 8.3.11 Whilst short and long-term adverse development site landscape character impacts are anticipated, they would be limited to the immediate development site context due to the enclosed character of the site. The retained development site boundary planting would be reinforced with native trees, hedgerows and shrubs - enhancing the development site ecology and biodiversity.

8.4 Visual Effects

- 8.4.1 The overall degree of visual effect in relation to the proposed development and the selected representational viewpoints is summarised below in Table 07.

Table 07 Anticipated Overall Degree of Visual Effect			
<i>Viewpoint</i>	<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Magnitude Of Effect</i>	<i>Overall Degree of Visual Effect</i>
Viewpoint 01 - PROW: Footpath South of Bennetts Looking North	High	Minor	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 02 - PROW: Footpath Looking North	High	None	No Change
Viewpoint 03 - Keysford Lane Looking North-East	High	Minor	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 04 – PROW: Footpath off Keysford Lane Looking East	High	None	No Change
Viewpoint 05 – Private Farmland off Keysford Lane Looking East	Medium	None	No Change
Viewpoint 06 – Junction of Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane Looking South	High	Minor	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 07 – Boxes Lane Looking West	High	Minor	Negligible Neutral
Viewpoint 08 – Jefferies Looking West	High	Moderate	Moderate Adverse
Viewpoint 09 – Treemans Road Looking North	Medium	Minor	Low / Slight Adverse

8.5 Visual Receptors

Residential

- 8.5.1 The nearest residential dwelling to the proposed development site area is Jeffrey's Farmhouse which lies to the north and east of the farm area within a moderately sized garden. It is likely the existing farm buildings would be visible in views from the dwelling and garden area and the proposed development scheme would seek to retain as much of the boundary trees and shrubs as possible which would be

enhanced with additional tree specimens to the boundaries. There would be partial views of some proposed residential dwellings to the west and north-west, therefore it is anticipated there would be a **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of visual effect in views from Jeffrey's Farm House and garden area. The visibility of proposed new buildings would be viewed within the context of existing farm buildings and the perceptibility of residential buildings would be expected to decrease as the planting to the boundaries matured.

- 8.5.2 There would be partial views from residential properties to the western end of Jefferies (*Viewpoint 08*) of the access road entrance and community building however existing, retained tree specimens and proposed hedgerow and tree planting would filter and soften views west and north-west. There would be a **Moderate Adverse** overall degree of visual effect as a result of the proposed scheme in views from the properties to the west of Jefferies.
- 8.5.3 A long distance view from a location close to a property to the southwest of the proposed development site area (*High Beeches*) off Keysford Lane (*Viewpoint 03*) has been assessed as having a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect. A view from Boxes Lane to the east of the proposed development site area (*Viewpoint 07*) has also been assessed as having a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect.

Recreational Users

- 8.5.4 Whilst there are no Public Rights of Way either within or adjacent to the proposed development site area, there are designated bridleways and footpaths to the surrounding area. To the south of the proposed development site area, a PROW: Footpath runs off Treemans Road immediately south of a row of residential dwellings however intervening vegetation limits views to Jeffrey's Farm and the proposed development site area. *Viewpoint 01* to the south of Bennetts has been assessed as having a **Negligible Neutral** overall degree of visual effect. There would be **No Change** in the overall degree of visual effect in views from *Viewpoint 02* (to the north-west of Old Keysford Hall).
- 8.5.5 To the west of the proposed development site, a PROW: Footpath runs north off Keysford Lane adjacent to the Bluebell Railway line. *Viewpoint 04* would have **No Change** in the overall degree of visual effect due to the rising topography and intervening mature vegetation.

Road Users

- 8.5.6 Views south to the development site area from a location to the junction of Keysford Lane and Sugar Lane (*Viewpoint 06*) are limited by mature trees and shrubs - therefore, the overall degree of visual effect is anticipated to be **Negligible Neutral**.
- 8.5.7 To the south of the Jeffrey's Farm access road, a location to the northern end of Treemans Road (*Viewpoint 09*) is assessed as having a **Low / Slight Adverse** overall

degree of visual effect as existing and proposed vegetation would soften and filter views north-west to the proposed development site area.

Agricultural Workers

- 8.5.8 The existing vegetation and proposed reinforcing boundary planting would limit and constrain views from agricultural fields to the north, north-west and south of the proposed development site area. The proposed development would be partially visible from locations to an open agricultural field to the west of Jeffrey's Farm. A proposed 5.0m wide buffer of tree and shrub planting would soften and filter any views of the proposed dwellings which would be within the context of the existing farm buildings.
- 8.5.9 To the north of the proposed development site area, a location to the north of Keysford Lane (*Viewpoint 05*) to the edge of an agricultural field has been assessed as having **No Change** in the overall degree of Visual effect as intervening trees limit views of the proposed development site area.

8.6 Conclusions

- 8.6.1 Jeffrey's Farm is a small, commercial egg producing business which lies to the west of Horsted Keynes. The proposed development scheme would seek to construct a total of 42 no. mixed, housing units to a field which lies to the south of Keysford Lane and west of Sugar Lane. In addition, several dwellings would be located to the west of the Jeffrey's Farm area resulting in the removal of a number of agricultural buildings and storage containers. A community building and access road are proposed to a field to the north-east of the farm area and pedestrian paths would provide links from the proposed development to Sugar Lane and the village beyond.
- 8.6.2 The proposed development site benefits from dense shrub and ruderal planting to the boundaries as well as numerous trees – some of which are large and mature specimens. The proposed scheme would seek to retain the existing boundary planting wherever possible – maintaining the existing field patterns. A comprehensive soft landscape scheme would reinforce the existing boundary planting with native understorey shrub planting areas and tree specimens. The residential garden areas, access road and pedestrian paths would be enhanced with native hedgerows and tree specimens – a native wildflower and grassland meadow area is proposed to the north of the proposed development.
- 8.6.3 As the proposed residential scheme would introduce residential dwellings, a community building and access road to two agricultural fields, it is inevitable there would be adverse landscape character effects. However, negative impacts would be limited to the immediate context of the proposed development site due to the retained field edge vegetation which is proposed to be enhanced with additional planting.

- 8.6.4 There is also an existing urban element to the landscape character with residential properties to the south and east as well as Sugar Lane and Keysford Lane to the eastern and northern boundaries respectively – overhead telephone wires running across the proposed development site area are also prominent in views. A number of visually intrusive elements including dilapidated farm buildings, chicken wire fences, steel storage containers and equestrian out-buildings would be removed as part of the proposed scheme.
- 8.6.5 Adverse visual effects as a result of the proposed residential scheme from locations to the surrounding landscape would be limited by the existing, mature planting to the boundaries which is proposed to be enhanced. Near distance views from the northern section of Sugar Lane and the residential dwellings to the western edge of Horsted Keynes would be constrained by the dense tree and shrub belt to the north-eastern edge of the proposed development site. Views from the southern end of Sugar Lane and Jefferies would be filtered and softened by existing mature trees. The entrance to the access road would form a new component in near distance views but would be within the context of Sugar Lane and Treemans Road. Views from locations to the south, west and north of the proposed development site would be constrained by the existing and proposed boundary vegetation.
- 8.6.6 It is therefore envisaged the proposed residential scheme could be accommodated within the development site area without undue harm to the existing landscape character, visual amenity or the setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

9.0 REFERENCES

9.1.1 This assessment has been prepared with in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition)* published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in 2013;
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* published by Natural England 2014;
- *Photography and Photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment*; Advice Note 01/11, Published by the Landscape Institute.

9.1.2 The following Landscape Character Assessments and digital resources were used:

- *Natural England - National Character Areas Profile: 122 - High Weald (2013)*;
- *The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2014-2019)*;
- *Regional Landscape Character - Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (2003): HW1 - High Weald*;
- *District Landscape Character - A Landscape Character Assessment For Mid Sussex (2005): High Weald*;
- *MAGIC Interactive Map, Defra and Natural England.*

9.1.3 The following Planning Policy Documents were used;

- *The National Planning Policy Framework*;
- *Mid Sussex District Council: Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004*;