

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-2040)

Hearing Statement Relating to Matter 10
On Behalf of Vistry Group PLC
Relating to Bridgewater Farm, Billingshurst

November 2024

Vistry Group

Gillings
Planning

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Client

Vistry Group PLC

Date of Issue

22nd November 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client Vistry Group PLC ('Vistry') in response to the publication of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 Our client previously made representations at Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages of the Local Plan preparation.
- 1.3 Vistry have land interests within the Plan area at a site known as Bridgewater Farm, Billingshurst.

Billingshurst

- 1.4 The Billingshurst site is identified in the image below, located to the south of Newbridge Road. The site measures approximately 10.44ha and is currently pastoral fields that adjoin the settlement boundary of Billingshurst to the east. The site forms a logical and sustainable extension to the village and could provide approximately 200 dwellings, including much needed affordable housing.



Aerial photograph showing the Billingshurst site outlined in red (by courtesy of Google ©)

- 1.5 The site was submitted as part of the call for sites in 2018 as part of a Broad Location within the Northern West Sussex Housing Market area (SHLAA reference SA642)

This Statement

- 1.6 This brief Hearing Statement has been prepared in accordance with the prevailing planning policy and guidance, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), September 2023 and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 1.7 We do not seek to unnecessarily repeat points raised in our comprehensive representations, but we have answered the questions posed by the Planning Inspector in the Matters, Issues and Questions (14th October 2024) where we feel it would be helpful to do so.
- 1.8 Gillings Planning, on behalf of the Vistry Group PLC wish to take a full and active part in the relevant Hearing sessions relating to their interests in the site.

2.0 Our Responses to the Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 10 – Monitoring and Review

Matter 10, Issue 1 – Whether the Plan would be able to be monitored effectively to ensure timely delivery and trigger the need for review?

Q2. How would the implementation of the Plan be monitored? Would it be effective? How would the results of any monitoring be acted upon? What would trigger a review of the Plan or specific policies within it? Are main modifications needed to the Plan to reflect this?

2.1 Whilst we cannot assist the Inspector with answers to these questions, we do consider that a clear expression of the triggers for a review of the Plan are in the interests of all parties. Given that the difference between the current and future Standard Methodology is substantial the Council will need to review the Plan “as soon as possible” and a timetable for such a review should be set out now.

Q3. Overall does the Plan deal adequately with uncertainty?

2.2 No. As we have demonstrated in our representations, there are flaws and conflicts that would prevent windfall sites from coming forward on the edge of settlements due to the overly restrictive wording of policies SP14 and SP15. Furthermore, there is uncertainty with regards to the ability of windfalls sites to achieve water neutrality if the water neutrality mitigation is only permitted to be assigned to allocated sites.

2.3 Windfall sites can greatly assist housing supply during times of uncertainty, and so without certainty that windfall sites can come forward, by default the Plan is not adequately dealing with uncertainty.