

# Horsham District Local Plan (2023-2040)

Hearing Statement Relating to Matter 4  
On Behalf of Vistry Group PLC  
Relating to Bridgewater Farm, Billingshurst

November 2024

**Vistry Group**

**Gillings**  
Planning

## Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Our Responses to the Matters Issues and Questions:	5

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### Client

Vistry Group PLC

### Date of Issue

22<sup>nd</sup> 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 (14<sup>th</sup> 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 4 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

**Matter 4, Issue 2 – Whether the approach to the natural environment, biodiversity, landscape, coalescence, countryside, green and blue infrastructure and local green space is justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared?**

**Q2.** *Is Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection sound?*

*a) Should this policy make reference to its geographical application on the Policies Map?*

2.1 As set out in our Representations, we have highlighted a conflict between policies SP14 and SP3 with regards to sites allocated in the Local Plan or in Neighbourhood Plans at the edge of settlements. Clear geographical delineation of Policy SP14 would assist.

**Q3.** *Is Strategic Policy 15: Settlement Coalescence sound?*

*a) Does this policy apply to the whole District or just specific locations within it? Does it have a geographical application which should be identified on the submission Policies Map?*

2.2 As set out in our Representations, we have highlighted a flaw in the policy because, as currently drafted, it would apply to all planning application proposals on sites outside of the built-up area boundaries. Clear geographical delineation of Policy SP15 would assist.

*c) Is there any conflict between this policy and others in the Plan which allocate sites for development?*

2.3 As set out in our Representations, we have highlighted a flaw in the policy because, as currently drafted, it would apply to all planning application proposals on sites outside of the built-up area boundaries. Clear geographical delineation of Policy SP15 would assist.