

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-2040)

Hearing Statement Relating to Matter 3
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

Author

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Gillings Planning Ltd
2 Wessex Business Park
Colden Common
Winchester
Hampshire
SO21 1WP

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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 3 – Climate Change and Water

Matter 3, Issue 2 – Whether the approach to water neutrality and flooding is justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared?

Q1. *Is Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality sound?*

e) Has achieving water neutrality been adequately assessed as part of the viability evidence and is this policy flexible enough to deal with changes in circumstances with regard to water neutrality?

- 2.1 As set out in our representations, and not repeated here; we are very concerned that the Plan has not assessed the true level of mitigation that will be available during the plan period to address the matter of water neutrality. We remain concerned that the matter of water neutrality has been used as an excuse to unnecessarily constrain the housing growth in the District and wider housing market areas.
- 2.2 We also remain concerned that the Plan also uses the issue of water neutrality to artificially push housing delivery to the end of the Plan period.