

EMAIL ONLY

Sarah Groom
Clerk to the Council
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council

sarah.groom@hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk

Mocatta House
Trafalgar Place
Brighton
BN1 4DU

☎ 01273 671174

Email dale.mayhew@dowsettmayhew.com

URL www.dowsettmayhew.com

9 March 2026

Dear Sarah

Mid Sussex District Local Plan Review Update

I write further to the submission of representations on behalf of the Parish Council to the examination of the Mid Sussex District Plan Review, and attendance at 2 days of Hearings last week. The latter related to the overarching spatial strategy and the approach to the selection of sites for allocation in the plan.

There are a number of interim conclusions and actions which have arisen from the first 2 weeks of Hearings. As promised, I set out a brief summary of these below.

Housing Numbers

The Inspector has concluded that the Council should seek to allocate additional land for housing. This is substantively in order to help meet the unmet needs of neighbouring authorities that fall within the same 2 local Housing Market Areas that cover Mid Sussex. In particular, the adjoining authority of Crawley has a significant unmet housing need (some 7500 dwellings over their Plan period), and the Inspector has indicated that Mid Sussex District should investigate whether it is capable of finding land for some 50% of this unmet need. In addition, the Inspector has suggested that the Council should seek to contribute a notional figure (of say 100-200 dwellings over the plan period), to help meet the substantial unmet need that arises from the South Coast Housing Market Area.

The District Plan submitted for Examination indicated the housing need for Mid Sussex was some 1090 dwellings per annum, and the Plan would meet this requirement, together with an oversupply for both resilience and unmet need purposes of a little under 1000 dwellings.

The target put forward by the Inspector, to be tested in the search for additional housing sites, is between 1200-1300 homes per annum, with an indication that, as far as possible, the Council should seek to identify sites to meet the upper end of that range.

Spatial Strategy

The Inspector has indicated that he is likely to consider the overarching spatial strategy put forward by the Council to be broadly 'sound'. However, he inferred that the Council will need to allocate more land in and around the 3 main towns, and in particular Haywards Heath and East Grinstead, given that these settlements are to be the focus for development, but have relatively modest land allocated for housing.

The Inspector also indicated that he is minded to conclude that the approach to the protection of the National Landscape (formerly AONB's), may need to be relaxed in order to deliver organic growth of these areas.

Discussion took place around the approach to the spatial strategy as a 'cascade', with the 4th limb that resulted in the allocation of substantial development in and around Sayers Common, coming forward only once all options for housing development under the 3 higher limbs have been exhausted. The Inspector has indicated that he is minded to consider all 4 limbs equally when weighing up the comparative merits and demerits of competing housing sites.

Re-Appraisal of Candidate Housing Sites

As a result of the Inspector's interim conclusions on the need to seek additional housing sites, and the concerns around the methodology to the site allocations process, the Council have confirmed they will undertake a reappraisal of all known candidate housing sites. This will include those that have previously been promoted and any new sites, submitted on or before 20th March 2026.

The Council have indicated that, given the Inspector's expectation of the delivery of additional housing over that currently proposed, they do not envisage the removal of any allocated sites.

There is likely to be re-appraisal of sites in and around Sayers Common that were previously dismissed for being too remote from the settlement when considered in isolation, given that some are adjoining/ close to the strategic allocation, and close to existing and proposed infrastructure.

Notwithstanding the impending re-appraisal work, the Hearings will continue next week in respect of the allocations for development in and around Sayers Common, and the strategic allocation to the west of Burgess Hill/north of Hurstpierpoint.

The agenda also indicates time is allocated for considering the allocation that is on land west of Kemps in Hurstpierpoint (Policy DPA12). I understand this is on the grounds that there is no longer an active promoter representing the site and it has been asserted that there are access constraints which bring into question the deliverability of the development.

These representations have in particular been made by the promoters of a "competing site", Danworth Farm, which lies to the east and west of Cuckfield Road and north of Willow Way and Talbort Mead, and for some 153 dwellings (SHELAA site reference 1075).

It was rejected at Stage 3 of the site allocations process by the District Council on the basis that the site may contribute to the coalescence of settlements. This site will be re-appraised by the Council as part of the above work.

I trust that this update is helpful, and if there are any questions, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely



Dale Mayhew BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI
Director

Sarah Groom

From: Sarah Sheath <sarah.sheath@dowsettmayhew.com>
Sent: 18 March 2026 14:22
To: Sarah Groom
Cc: Julia Shorrocks (Cllr); Lindsay Thompson (Cllr); Dale Mayhew
Subject: Re: District Plan Hearing Agenda

Caution: This email originated from outside of Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Sarah

The two hearings in relation to Sayers Common and land West of Burgess Hill/North of Hurstpierpoint have now finished. Thank you to both Lindsay and Julia for accompanying me.

Yesterday's hearing to discuss the Sayers Common sites went on for most of the day, finishing around 2:45pm. Today's hearing was much shorter finishing around 11am.

For both sites, the Inspector particularly wanted to discuss:

- The delivery of the sustainable community facilities;
- The integration of sustainable transport;
- Impact on the wider transport network and mitigation measures; and
- The phasing and delivery of transport infrastructure.

In respect of Sayers Common:

There was discussion about timing/delivery of associated infrastructure and the status of the Masterplan and how this draws all the sites together (especially in light of the four applications in advance of the adoption of the plan). The Inspector has asked the Council to go back and look at the wording of the plan/policies to see how the Masterplan can be ingrained into the plan better and made to work to give more confidence to its delivery. He understood the local concerns about confidence in the delivery of the "promised" infrastructure and felt that there must be a way of giving the masterplan more status.

The Inspector appeared to have some concerns about whether traffic impact has been given sufficient consideration and was quite critical of how the current draft masterplan deals with where and how access to the site will work. He seemed very alive to the fact that the Council has to be realistic and accept that people from these developments will drive to higher order settlements. What isn't clear to him at the moment is what the impact of this movement will be on linking roads and whether any mitigation is needed or possible. Whilst the Council tried to argue that WSCC Highways weren't raising any objections to the plans, he pointed out that they were largely focussing on junction capacity, and not the planning matter the Council should turn their mind to such as amenity for existing residents living on these road etc. Whilst he wasn't suggesting that he found the proposed allocations inherently unsound, he has asked the site proponents and the

Council to review their transport evidence on this basis, in liaison with the Parishes (via the liaison group). In short the Inspector indicated that more work was required to pull together a package that deals with all the site allocations holistically.

I understand you have a liaison group meeting scheduled for next week - this is likely to be a subject of discussion.

In respect of Land West of BH/North of HPP:

Again there were discussions regarding the delivery and timing of the associated infrastructure and how this will be delivered in a timely way. The Inspector however seemed more comfortable with this site on the basis that it is a single site proponent, therefore not as complex as the Sayers Common situation. He seemed comfortable that through the development management process of dealing with the forthcoming application(s), the Council would have adequate control to ensure the necessary infrastructure is delivered appropriately.

The fact that the proposed allocation incorporates a large swath of additional land in between the proposed allocation and the existing edge of Burgess Hill, into the built up area boundary without actually identifying whether it should be protected from further development or is open for additional development was debated. This is clearly something the Council hadn't considered and the Inspector has asked them to go away and review this.

In respect of both sites:

There was some discussion regarding mitigation of additional users at Burgess Hill and Hassocks stations. The Inspector is clearly aware that the existing station car parks are already at capacity from early in the morning and has asked the Council to explain what, if any mitigation can and will be provided.

Please let me know if you would like any further detail on the above.

Kind regards,
Sarah
Sarah Sheath
BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI
Senior Planner

T: 01273 621806
E: sarah.sheath@dowsettmayhew.com
W: www.dowsettmayhew.com

dowsettmayhew Planning Partnership
Mocatta House | Trafalgar Place | Brighton | BN1 4DU



This email is confidential and may contain legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient it may be unlawful for you to read, copy, distribute, disclose or otherwise make use of the information herein. If you have received this email in error please contact us immediately. dowsettmayhew Planning Partnership LTD will accept no liability for the mis-transmission, interference or interception of any email and you are reminded that email is not a secure method of communication.