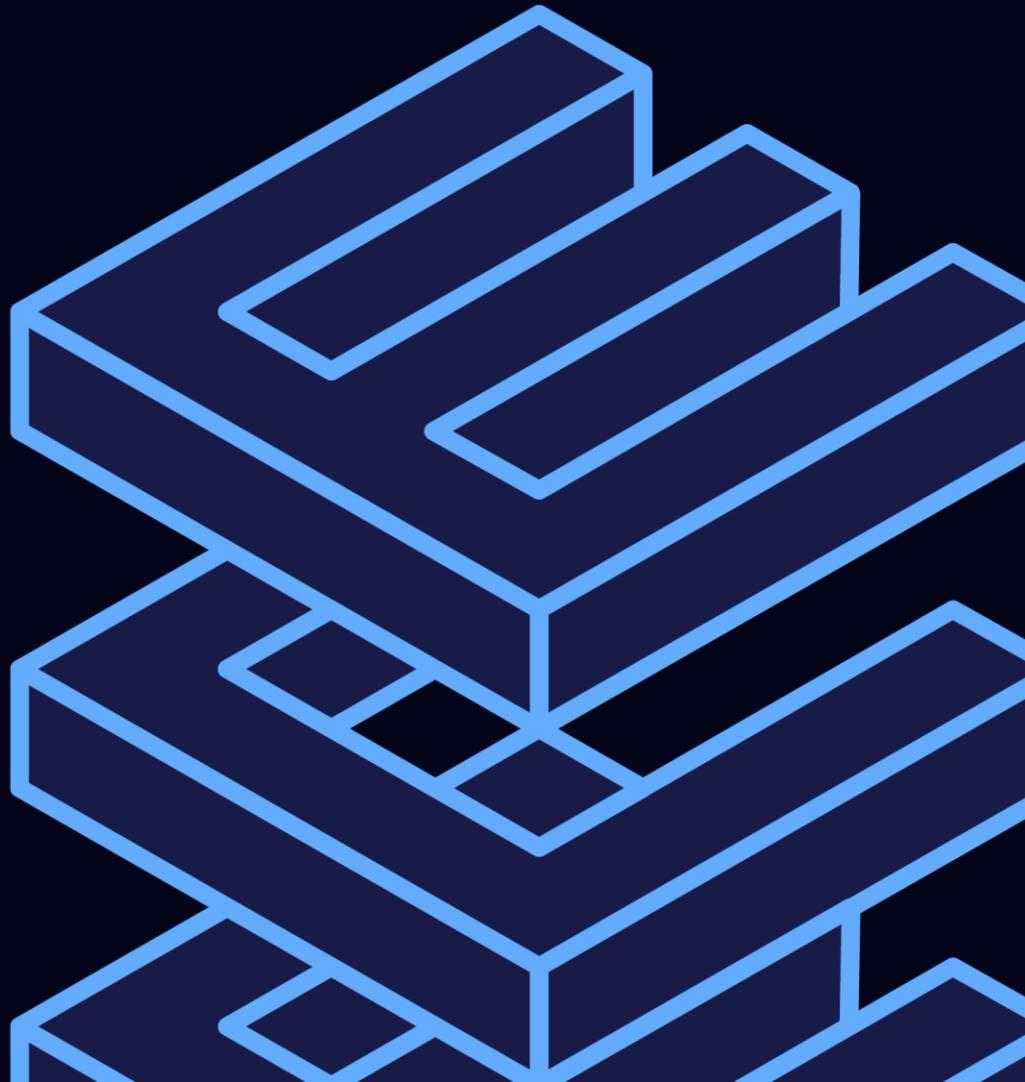


ECE Planning

MSDC Local Plan Examination: Hearing Statement – Matter 1

Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint

February 2026



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Project Name: Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint
 Location Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint
 Client: Danworth Farm Ltd
 File Reference: P2316

Issue	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement is prepared by ECE Planning on behalf of **Danworth Farm Ltd** for the Examination of the Mid Sussex District Plan Review.
- 1.2. The Hearing Statement responds to the relevant Matters and Issues identified by the Planning Inspector ahead of Examination, in order to assess the soundness of the draft District Plan.
- 1.3. Danworth Farm Ltd has been promoting the site **Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint**, for residential development during the plan-making process.



Figure 1 - Location Plan of Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint

- 1.4. The site is not allocated within the draft Plan, but has been assessed as *Suitable, Available and Achievable* within the MSDC Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA Ref 1075).
- 1.5. Representations on Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 have been made previously by Savills. These are appended for ease at Appendices A and B.
- 1.6. Pre-Application Meetings have also taken place with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Officers, and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Highways Officers. Positive feedback has been received from both parties, confirming that there are no 'showstoppers' for development at the site.
- 1.7. The SHELAA Pro-Forma, Pre-Application Submission, and Pre-Application Feedback (from both MSDC and WSSCC) are also appended to this Statement.
- 1.8. In this context, Land at Cuckfield Road represents a sustainable and deliverable omission site that can make an immediate and meaningful contribution to housing supply. Its allocation would assist in addressing identified unmet housing need, strengthen early-years

delivery and headroom, and improve the effectiveness and resilience of the spatial strategy.

- 1.9. Where relevant, reference is made to the site to demonstrate how alternative or additional sites could positively contribute to the soundness and deliverability of the Draft District Plan.

2. Matter 1 – The Housing Requirement

2.1. Whether the plan's housing requirement makes sufficient provision for new homes.

Matter 1a) Local Housing Need

2.2. Within the updated Housing Topic Paper (MS-TP2) Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) sets out an updated Local Housing Need (LHN) of **999 dwellings per annum**, equating to **18,981 dwellings over the plan period 2021–2040**.

2.3. The submitted District Plan identifies a total housing supply of **21,241 dwellings**, and the Housing Topic Paper states that this is sufficient to meet Mid Sussex's own LHN in full.

2.4. With regards to Matter 1a) Danworth Farm Ltd accepts that, in isolation, the Plan makes provision to meet Mid Sussex's minimum housing need as derived from the standard method.

Matter 1b) Unmet need from neighbouring authorities and its effect on the plan's housing requirement

2.5. However, the Plan does not make sufficient provision for unmet need from neighbouring authorities nor consider the effect of this on the housing requirement.

2.6. MSDC relies on a modest over-supply of **1,693 dwellings** above the LHN figure, which it suggests could contribute towards unmet needs arising elsewhere within the Housing Market Area (HMA).

2.7. This level of flexibility is insufficient. MSDC prioritises meeting the excess needs of the Northern West Sussex HMA, specifically Crawley. The below table sets out the level of unmet need in this HMA. (Figures taken from adopted Crawley Development Plan, and Horsham latest housing figures to Planning Inspector, following the pause of their Local Plan Examination).

Table 1 - Unmet Need in North West Sussex Housing Market Area

Housing Market Area Authority	Local Housing Need		Housing Requirement (Local Plan Housing Target)		Unmet Need
Crawley Borough Council	12,080	755 dpa	4,575	285 dpa	7,505
Horsham District Council	15,487	911 dpa	16,405	965 dpa	+918
Total:					6,587

2.8. Whilst the table shows Horsham's housing requirement (16,405 dwellings) exceeding its local housing need, this uplift has arisen following the pause of its Local Plan Examination due to delivery concerns. Horsham has indicated that it considers this level of provision achievable; however, the Plan remains under review and the deliverability of this figure is still being tested. Uncertainty therefore remains.

2.9. Accordingly, there is at least a residual unmet need of **6,587 dwellings** across the North West Sussex Housing Market Area. Therefore, the oversupply of **1,693 dwellings** is a very limited contribution towards the overall unmet need of the HMA.

2.10. Notwithstanding the above, MSDC has not made provision for unmet need arising from the Coastal West Sussex HMA, nor has it meaningfully considered unmet need from other neighbouring authorities, including Wealden, and Tandridge. Table 2 below summarises the scale of unmet need arising across these authorities.

Table 2 - Unmet Housing Need in Coastal West Sussex Housing Market Area and Neighbouring Authorities

Housing Market Area Authority	Local Housing Need		Housing Requirement		Unmet Need
			(Local Plan Housing Target)		
Brighton & Hove City Council	48,700	2,435 dpa	13,200	660 dpa	35,500
Lewes District Council	19,272	876 dpa	8,570	390 dpa	10,702
Adur District Council	10,940	547 dpa	3,718	177 dpa	7,222
Worthing Borough Council	13,584	849 dpa	3,672	229 dpa	10,488
Wealden District Council	23,749	1,457 dpa	16,609	889 dpa	7,140
Tandridge District Council	13,232	827 dpa	2,500	125 dpa	10,732
Total:					81,784

- 2.11. The above table is based on the objectively assessed housing need (Local Housing Need), calculated using the December 2024 Standard Method. This has been assessed against the proposed or adopted housing requirement for each authority, drawing on the most up-to-date evidence available, either from emerging local plan evidence bases or from adopted local plans, depending on the stage reached in each authority's plan-making process.
- 2.12. Clearly, the level of unmet housing need arising within the Coastal West Sussex HMA and surrounding districts is **significant**.
- 2.13. Particularly in Brighton & Hove, housing delivery is severely constrained by physical boundaries, with the English Channel to the south and the South Downs National Park to the north, leaving very limited scope for growth beyond the redevelopment of brownfield land, despite a growing population. This has resulted in a substantial unmet housing need of approximately 35,500 dwellings, creating a strong reliance on neighbouring authorities to accommodate displaced demand.
- 2.14. However, Adur, Worthing, and Lewes are failing to meet their own housing needs in full, and therefore cannot be relied upon to absorb displaced housing demand from Brighton & Hove's unmet need.
- 2.15. In this context, while MSDC places emphasis on its functional relationship with Crawley, there is an equally strong and well-established functional relationship with Brighton & Hove, evidenced by direct rail connections, the A23 corridor, and commuting patterns. These relationships demonstrate that Mid Sussex performs an important role in accommodating housing demand arising from Brighton & Hove and the wider south coast.
- 2.16. Therefore, MSDC's approach to housing vastly underplays the scale of housing pressure arising from neighbouring authorities.
- 2.17. This pressure is further compounded by unmet need arising from authorities beyond the immediate HMAs. For example, Tandridge District Council, where approximately 94% of the District is designated Green Belt, is consistently refusing residential development proposals pending a Green Belt review. Based on experience of recent decision-making, Tandridge is unlikely to meet its housing needs to any meaningful extent in the short to medium term resulting in an even greater shortfall than demonstrated above.
- 2.18. When considered cumulatively, the surrounding unmet housing need amounts to **88,371 dwellings** over the plan period. Against this backdrop, the proposed over-supply of **1,693 dwellings** within the Plan does not come close to addressing the scale of unmet need across neighbouring authorities that rely on Mid Sussex.

- 2.19. While it is not solely MSDCs responsibility to the provide for the severe housing crisis in the region, they should be seeking to provide a significantly greater headroom than currently proposed.
- 2.20. Furthermore, the submitted evidence base also underplays future housing pressures arising from employment growth associated with Gatwick Airport.
- 2.21. Since submission of the Plan, the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Development Consent Order has been granted by the Secretary of State. Gatwick Airport has estimated that the scheme will generate approximately 14,000 additional jobs. Based on the Council's own evidence that 8.2% of Gatwick's workforce resides within Mid Sussex, this equates to housing demand associated with approximately 1,148 additional jobs, notwithstanding the wider economic uplift generated by the Northern Runway expansion and the consequential increase in employment activity, population movement, and associated housing demand across the area.
- 2.22. The granting of the Northern Runway is not addressed within the Council's "Updates Since Submission" Topic Paper and has not been reflected in the housing requirement or supply strategy. However, this is a material change that must be considered, given the substantial level of growth and housing need that will arise from this development which is due to be operational by 2030.
- 2.23. In summary, with regards to Matter 1b), the Plan does not make sufficient provision for new homes when the scale of unmet need arising from neighbouring authorities is properly taken into account. The housing requirement has been set with only a limited over-supply, which is insufficient to address identified unmet needs from the Coastal West Sussex HMA, neighbouring constrained authorities, and confirmed future housing pressures arising from Gatwick Airport expansion.
- 2.24. As a result, the housing requirement does not adequately reflect the role that Mid Sussex is required to perform within the wider functional housing market area. The limited headroom proposed does not provide a realistic or effective response to cross-boundary housing pressures and therefore fails to ensure that sufficient provision is made for new homes over the plan period.

