Local Plan Hearing Statement

In Respect of Examination of Main Modification 89 and 91
to Draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039

Slaugham Parish Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Hearing Statement comprises Representations for and on behalf of Slaugham Parish Council (the 'Parish Council'), to the Examination Hearing in respect of the Main Modifications to the Draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 (the 'Draft Plan').

1.2. These Representations have been prepared following the submission of Representations by the Parish Council to the Consultation on the draft Main Modifications to the Draft Plan in September 2026.

1.3. These Representations relate to 'Matter 7 Continued: Sites Added by the Draft Main Modifications' and in particular, Site MM89: Land at Pease Field, Pease Pottage, and MM91: Land north of Former Golf House, Pease Pottage (the 'sites'), as set out by the Inspector in the Week 4: Hearings Agenda, due to take place on Wednesday 04th November 2026. They follow the format of the key matters to be discussed, as identified by the Inspector in the Agenda, and amplified in the associated 'Guidance Note from the Inspector'.

1.4. The Parish Council seek to supplement these Written Representations by attending and participating in the Hearings in relation to these Sites.

2. MM89: LAND AT PEASE FIELD, PEASE POTTAGE AND MM91: LAND NORTH OF FORMER GOLF HOUSE, PEASE POTTAGE

2.1. Representations in respect of Site MM89 and MM91 are presented under the following Matters to be discussed, as identified by the Inspector in the Hearing Agenda:

- Impact on the National Landscape;
- Access and Transport; and
- Site Location in Relation to Employment and Social Infrastructure.

2.2. These are addressed in turn below.

Impact on the National Landscape

2.3. It is noted that the Draft Plan is being Examined under the September 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The over-arching approach and guidance on development within designated National Landscapes is carried through to the latest version of the NPPF (August 2026). For these reasons, reference to NPPF guidance is in respect of the latest version.

2.4. The Parish Council concur with the conclusions of the LPA in their assessment of Site MM89[1], that given the quantum of development envisaged at the site, its setting and potential impact, the proposals represent 'major development' for the purposes of the application of NPPF guidance on development within Protected Landscapes.

2.5. Furthermore, it is considered that given the physical relationship of Site MM91 with MM89, that the former should be assessed with the latter, as a component of the totality of development on land north of Horsham Road.

[1] Major Development in the High Weald National Landscape - July 2026 (reference ENV22)

2.6. In this context, it is considered that site MM91 should also be considered part of a 'major development' site for the purposes of the application of NPPF guidance on development within Protected Landscapes.

2.7. It is considered that development of the sites would have a detrimental impact on their characteristics, and setting.

2.8. It is acknowledged that the sites currently have limited visibility from public vantage points, as a result of the residential development to the south and woodland blocks and belts around their periphery. They have a reasonable sense of enclosure.

2.9. In part as a result of its sense of enclosure, and relationship to woodland blocks and belts, it is considered that the site is generally not impacted by urbanising influences.

2.10. They are largely screened from urban landform to the north, east and west. The main relationship of the sites to built form is to the south, from the modern residential development, accessed off Horsham Road. This would include the proposed access to the sites, which for their predominant part is to be via Forester's Way.

2.11. The sites are bordered by, or in proximity of, 4 areas of designated Ancient Woodland. Of these, 2 are to the north of Site MM89. It also includes a broadly rectangular block in the southeast corner of the site (to the west of Whalebone Wood Road), and an asymmetric parcel that borders the south-western edge of Site MM89, and wraps around the north-east, north and western boundary of Site MM91.

2.12. At present, these areas of Ancient Woodland have connectivity as a result of adjacent areas of trees and scrub that border and substantively enclose Site MM89. It includes areas of deciduous woodland priority habitat that border the northern part of this land parcel.

2.13. Concerns are raised that the proposed development would create urbanising incursions and fragmentation of these woodland areas.

2.14. Overall, therefore, whilst it is considered the sites have reasonable containment, concerns are raised at the impact of development on the woodland characteristics that border and bound them, which are considered positive features of the protected landscape designation.

Access and Transport

2.15. The scheme proponents of Site MM89 indicate in their Landscape and Visual Technical Note[2], that vehicular access to the site would be via the existing residential cul-de-sac of Forester's Way, off Horsham Road.

2.16. The Draft Development Framework for the site[3] indicates this access would be extended to run north into the site to serve pockets of residential development.

2.17. The Proposed Residential Development Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for Site MM91[4], contains an Illustrative Proposed Layout. This indicates that the site would also be predominantly accessed via Forester's Way, with a secondary access directly off Horsham Road to the west (as existing), that would serve a modest part of the development in the south-west corner.

[2] dated March 2026
[3] Figure 6.1 of the Landscape and Visual Technical Note - March 2026
[4] dated March 2018

2.18. It is considered that in the interests of connectivity and placemaking, and to provide the best protection of existing areas of woodland, including ancient woodland, that both sites should be both accessed from a single point (i.e. Forester's Way).

2.19. Furthermore, the proposed secondary access to site MM91 does not presently benefit from a footway that connects the site along Horsham Road to Pease Pottage. On this basis, were this access to be relied upon to serve the development, without enhancement, it would be likely to result in future residents being significantly reliant upon access by private car.

2.20. The West Sussex County Council Interactive Rights of Way Map indicates that, at present, there are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that run through or directly connect to the sites. The nearest PRoW connects to Forest Road/ Horsham Road to the west of the sites and runs along an existing roadway in an initially north-westerly direction before then turning north-easterly and running past the eastern edge of Cottesmore School.

2.21. It is noted that Policy MM89(12) requires the development to improve this PRoW in order to improve connections to Buchan Country Park and improve paths within the Country Park, which is located to the north-west of the sites.

2.22. However, it appears that such improvements to connectivity to this PRoW would require private land that lies outside of the district (within Horsham District). Concerns are raised as to the effective mechanisms that can be employed to ensure delivery of this clause requirement.

2.23. It is also noted that the Draft Development Framework for Site MM89 indicates 'potential pedestrian access points', along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site.

2.24. It is unclear how these would be delivered. It appears that they would be reliant on land outside of the allocation (and which in part has already been developed), to facilitate access at these points.

2.25. In the absence of these eastern cycling and walking connection points, the sites are considered to have relatively poor accessibility, given the requirement to access them via Forester's Way and then travel along Horsham Road in an easterly direction to reach the services and facilities of Pease Pottage. This would include a requirement to cross Horsham Road onto the south side roadway to access the footway.

Site Location in Relation to Employment and Social Infrastructure

2.26. It is considered that Sites MM89 and MM91 are not locationally sustainable.

2.27. The Sites are not readily accessible to a range of services and facilities. In particular, access to a main service centre, primary school, and health service provision are relatively distant from the site. Access to a primary school is predicated on the use of an unattractive pedestrian route, given the requirement to cross the A23 via an overbridge.

2.28. Whilst the site is in reasonable proximity of formal play space south of Horsham Road (Hemsleys Meadows and Finches Field), these are not easily accessible from the site. It would be necessary to travel along Horsham Road, and then Old Brighton Road South, to reach these facilities. This is a distance of some 1km.

3. SUMMARY

3.1. It is considered that allocation of development on Site MM89: Land at Pease Field, Pease Pottage, and MM91: Land north of Former Golf House, Pease Pottage by virtue of their quantum, setting and potential impact represents 'major development' for the purposes of the application of the NPPF guidance on development within Protected Landscapes.

3.2. Whilst the sites have a reasonable sense of enclosure, concerns are raised that development would adversely impact the character of the site and its wider area, by reason of impact on trees and woodland within and adjoining the site. A number of these are designated Ancient Woodland. The development would be likely to adversely impact, and fragment these.

3.3. It is considered that the 2 sites vehicular access should be primarily from Forester's Way. This would maximise the benefit of connectivity and placemaking, and minimise impact on adjoining woodland.

3.4. The sites are not considered to be locationally sustainable, in relation to services and facilities. These concerns would be exacerbated if the access to the sites by pedestrians and cyclists was solely/ predominantly reliant on Forester's Way.