

Mr Jonathan Bore
Mid Sussex District Plan Inspector
c/o 260 Collingwood Road
Sutton
SURREY SM1 2NX

4 November 2016

Dear Mr Bore

**Mid Sussex District Plan Examination
Response to Inspector's initial questions of 15 September 2016**

We refer to your letter of 15 September 2016 setting out your initial questions to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) and in particular to their response of 29 September 2016.

(1) The Parish Council remains supportive of the District Plan, the Focused Amendments and further modifications as submitted in August 2016. We are committed to a plan-led process for delivering sustainable development and wish to see the District plan adopted. In addition to other benefits it would confirm the delivery of the required 5-year housing land supply. We have demonstrated our commitment to the process through the delivery of our own Neighbourhood Plan, where we were amongst the first 20 or so in the country, and where we have made provision for significant sustainable new housing, some of which is now under construction.

However, the District Council's response to you of 29 September 2016 has raised some concerns about their process towards the Development Plan Document (DPD) intended around 2020/21.

(2) In response to your question 3(i) The SHLAA: MSDC state (page 10) that 'broad locations and a location for a new settlement have been robustly assessed through the SHLAA process', which we would challenge. The identification of large strategic sites, either as urban extensions or new settlements, should be the subject of a comprehensive, District-wide, evidence-based assessment. The SHLAA process can be a component of this assessment, but only serves to evaluate a selection of sites that have been brought to the attention of the Planning Authority, usually by landowners and developers. The SHLAA process of April 2016 would raise questions as to why some potential locations had been evaluated, but not others.

(3) We object to MSDC's presentation (page 10) of 'west Burgess Hill' as an example for a new settlement or urban extension, along with Crabbet Park as another. The SHLAA (April 2016) includes site '740' in Hurstpierpoint parish as being 'not currently developable' but is nevertheless cited as a possible contribution through the DPD process. We have not been consulted on this suggestion, which we would have expected, as our Neighbourhood Plan sets out clear countryside protection policies for this area, supported by the District Council, the independent examiner, and by the Neighbourhood Plan referendum of February 2015, and which would have to be addressed if any westward extension of Burgess Hill into our Neighbourhood Plan area was to be considered.

We object to the use of this and any sites as examples until a more comprehensive District-wide assessment has been made for suitable locations, and a range of options are considered and tested. The scale and potential impact of new large sites should also be subject to thorough public consultation as part of the process. In addition, the Plan makes a case for cooperation with neighbouring planning authorities to the north (Crawley and Horsham) and the economic growth derived from these areas, which should lead to thorough searches in the north of the District for sustainable housing locations.

(4) Referring to your section 7. Conclusion, we would expect that following the District Plan Examination and hopefully its adoption, MSDC would set out a clear process by which site allocations would be made to meet those targets. We would expect this to take full account of made Neighbourhood Plans. MSDC's response does not make it clear how the DPD will be progressed and how extant Neighbourhood Plans will be accommodated in the search for additional housing sites. The District Council strongly supported the NP process, of which we were the second and most comprehensive in the district, and we would expect this cooperation to continue through the DPD development.

This Parish Council is committed to supporting sustainable growth through the local plan and neighbourhood planning process, and we very much hope to be able to continue working with the District Council in achieving our aims.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Hoyles
CLERK OT THE COUNCIL