Local Plan Hearing Statement

In Respect of Examination of Main Modification 60 to
Draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Hearing Statement comprises Representations for and on behalf of Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common 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 in response to the emerging Draft Plan, most recently, to the Consultation on the draft Main Modifications in September 2026.

1.3. These Representations relate to 'Matter 7 Continued: Sites Added by the Draft Main Modifications' and in particular, Site MM60: Land East and West of Malthouse Lane, Burgess Hill (the 'site'), as set out by the Inspector in the Week 4: Hearings Agenda, due to take place on Tuesday 03rd 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 this Site.

2. MM60: LAND EAST AND WEST OF MALTHOUSE LANE, BURGESS HILL

2.1. Representations in respect of Site MM60 are presented under the following Matters to be discussed, as identified by the Inspector in the Hearing Agenda:

- Movement;
- Landscape, Countryside and Heritage;
- Infrastructure, Delivery and Capacity.

2.2. Each of these are addressed in turn below.

Movement

2.3. The scheme proponents Vision Document[1] states that vehicular access into the eastern part of the development would be via a new roundabout junction on Jane Murray Way, whilst the western part would be via a new junction on Danworth Lane, accessible via the proposed land allocation to the west of Burgess Hill. It notes that the northern extent of Malthouse Lane may need to provide space for non-car modes to retain its rural character and encourage active travel.

2.4. The Parish Council are concerned at the impact of traffic from development to the south of the development, and in particular Danworth Lane and Malthouse Lane (that becomes College Lane).

2.5. These roads are rural in character, as acknowledged by the scheme proponents.

2.6. They are already the subject of significant use, as Chalker's Lane and Malthouse Lane are the primary routes of access serving Hurstpierpoint College. This provides education for some 1300 students, with associated

[1] Malthouse Lane - Vision Document - March 2026

staff. Access is by private car as well as minibuses. Use of College Lane to access the site is actively discouraged, due to the narrow width and poor alignment of the road, especially through Hurst Wickham. Malthouse Lane also experiences flooding where it is crossed by Herrings Stream.

2.7. Both Danworth Lane and Malthouse Lane are considered unsuitable in capacity terms for the significant material increase in traffic, that would result from the development. It also considered such an increase would detrimentally impact the character of these lanes, which is intrinsic to their wider rural setting.

2.8. On this basis, it is considered that the policy should set out a requirement for these lanes, south of the site, to be modified such that they are prioritised for active travel routes using non-car modes of transport only.

2.9. This will nonetheless need to consider alternative routing options for those accessing Hurstpierpoint College.

2.10. In parallel to this, the Parish Council are also concerned at the potential effect of the development increasing traffic in and around Hurstpierpoint centre.

2.11. As identified by the Inspector in his earlier Post Hearing Letter[2], in relation to other site allocations in the Draft Plan, there are concerns at the effect of development allocated in the Draft Plan on Hurstpierpoint High Street. This concern goes beyond matters of junction capacity.

2.12. This part of the local highway network is already the subject of significant traffic volumes. Approximately 6,700 vehicles a day travel through Hurstpierpoint High Street[3]. This includes significant numbers of HGV's despite the presence of a weight restriction.

2.13. Endeavours to ease long-standing congestion within Hurstpierpoint High Street has been the subject of extensive appraisal.

2.14. The key constraint of the High Street, is that it is of historic form with numerous listed buildings, and contains a number of 'pinch-points' where two-way flow of traffic is not practically possible. These constraints are a result of road width, geometry and buildings, not the layout of parking and unauthorised parked cars. The pinch points require vehicles to await clearance of vehicles travelling in the opposite direction to be able to pass. The High Street sets out priority signage, to control flows and minimise congestion within the High Street.

2.15. All practical measures to mitigate congestion and ease traffic flow have been investigated and implemented, as far as is practically possible, within the limitations of the extent of the public highway.

2.16. It is therefore submitted that any allocation of land at MM60, should be accompanied by a requirement to deliver measures to deter vehicular traffic heading southbound (along Danworth Lane/ Cuckfield Road or Malthouse Lane/ College Lane) from the development to, and through, Hurstpierpoint, and in particular the village centre.

[2] IDJB-12: Inspector's Post Hearing Letter
[3] Traffic and Transport Assessment - Obtrada Ltd - attached at Appendix 1 of the Parish Council's Main Modifications Representations - September 2026

2.17. Increased congestion, would adversely impact the existing resident community, and harm the vitality and viability of Hurstpierpoint High Street; an important local centre serving the resident community.

Landscape, Countryside and Heritage

2.18. The land allocated in MM60 is rural in character.

2.19. The northern edge of the eastern land parcel is in part influenced by the edge of the built-up area boundary of Burgess Hill. However, the land generally falls in a north to south direction, such that the land parcel has a greater connectivity with undeveloped land to the south.

2.20. This is reflected in the scheme proponents Baseline Analysis Framework Document[4] which acknowledges the ridgeline that both contains this part of the southern edge of Burgess Hill and results in the topography of the site having a closer visual relationship to undeveloped land to the south and west.

2.21. The land parcels are separated from the built-up edge of Burgess Hill by predominantly undeveloped land, including land that is identified as public amenity space.

2.22. The Public Rights of Way that adjoin the land allocation and/or cross it afford extensive views of the site, and beyond to the south, toward the South Downs National Park.

2.23. The scheme proponents Baseline Analysis Framework Document, acknowledges there are 'clear, open views' of the site from within the land allocation and beyond its boundaries, in particular to the south. It notes that the eastern and western edges of the site are more visible than the centre.

2.24. The development would represent a significant urbanising incursion of built form beyond the existing well defined southern edge of Burgess Hill. This has been planned and delivered to create a well-defined settlement edge to the town, delineated by the Jane Murray Way beyond which is undeveloped land, including the Green Circle Network comprised of publicly accessible open space and rural land uses.

2.25. The topography of the site, falling from north to south, reinforces the rural landscape character of the land parcels and provides visual connectivity to land to the south, which rises gently beyond the Herrings Stream.

2.26. The local topographic high point is delineated by land that is a short way to the south of the Jane Murray Way (and south of the B&Q store)[5].

2.27. Reflecting this, the scheme proponents Baseline Analysis Framework Document sets out a Landscape Strategy which advocates this highpoint, adjoining the Jane Murray Way, be reserved as undeveloped land for an extension to the Green Circle Network.

2.28. However, this appears to have been ignored in the Vision Document which envisages this part of the site being used as the main access point to the development, including the creation of a new roundabout, and development land east and west of this access.

[4] see for example Figure 10: Visual Analysis Plan
[5] Figure 2: Topography Plan of Baseline Analysis Framework Document

2.29. This underlines the concerns that a visually sensitive part of the site, that currently contains the urban edge of Burgess Hill, will be substantively developed. This would harm the landscape character of the site, its setting and contribution to containing urban development on the surrounding rural hinterland.

2.30. It would also effectively sever the Green Circle Network, that has been created over many years to the positive benefit of the spatial form of the town, its surrounding rural character, and local residential amenity.

2.31. It is considered that the site does not represent a logical urban extension of Burgess Hill.

2.32. It is also considered that the 2 discrete land parcels of MM60 do not relate well or integrate. They are effectively two stand alone sites, notionally connected by a Public Right of Way.

2.33. The western parcel is wholly divorced from the existing edge of Burgess Hill, and will remain so under the development envisaged in the Draft Plan. It would comprise an isolated residential development, poorly connected to existing and proposed development.

2.34. The significant majority of Site MM60 is located within the Parish of Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common. The residual part is located within the Parish of Hassocks.

2.35. The entirety of the site allocation, insofar as it falls within Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish, is located within the 'Local Gap' designated in the 'made' Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan. The aim of this designation is to prevent development that would individually or cumulatively result in coalescence and loss of separate identity of existing settlements.

2.36. At present, this gap is some 1.5km when measured from Jane Murray Way in a southwesterly direction to the rear garden of properties in Hurstbeech Close (north of Chalkers Lane).

2.37. However, this includes the built estate of Hurstpierpoint College. It covers land that is either side of Chalker's Lane and the demise extends as far north as the Herrings Stream. This is not considered to contribute to the openness of the gap.

2.38. The development of Site MM60 would effectively remove the 'gap' between the edge of Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint College.

2.39. On this basis, the residual 'gap' would be that between the south-western edge of Hurstpierpoint College and the properties in Hurstbeech Close. This is some 330m.

2.40. The proposed development would result in the effective coalescence of Burgess Hill with Hurstpierpoint.

2.41. Within and around the land allocation there are numerous viewpoints of the designated heritage asset of Hurstpierpoint College (Historic England Listing Reference 302590).

2.42. The scheme proponents Built Heritage Statement[6] acknowledges that the setting of the College, beyond the academic grounds, is comprised of an agricultural landscape, and that this makes a 'high contribution to the listed buildings' significance of their historic rural landscape'.

[6] Document JCH01785: Built Heritage Statement - September 2022

2.43. The report acknowledges that as a result of the topography of Site MM60, development of the western part of the site has the potential to impact on the significance of the designated heritage assets of the College. It recommends a number of prospective mitigation measures in conjunction with development, including limitations on building heights on the more prominent areas of the site.

2.44. It is considered that the proposed allocation would significantly increase the perception of built form in proximity to the designated heritage asset of Hurstpierpoint College.

2.45. This impact is exacerbated when considered in combination with other sites allocated within the Main Modifications to the Draft Plan.

2.46. Given the significant landscape and heritage impacts of site MM60, both alone and in combination within other sites in the draft plan in the local area, it is submitted that if the allocations are endorsed, they should only be brought forward in conjunction with the identification of a surrounding rural hinterland that is identified to be retained as an undeveloped landscape buffer.

2.47. It is submitted that areas of undeveloped 'local gap' should be expressly included as a policy allocation within the Local Plan, so that they are delivered as part of the development and endure well beyond the Plan period.

2.48. The landscape buffer settlement edge to Burgess Hill that was carefully planned and delivered will now be lost by the development. It is therefore considered that the designation of a local gap around the edge of the extended settlement, to endure for the long term, is required to prevent the further loss of identity of the settlement of Hurstpierpoint.

Infrastructure, Delivery and Capacity

2.49. Concerns are raised at the impact of development on water supply and waste water infrastructure.

2.50. The lived experience of local residents of the parish is that there are existing problems and failures of the water supply and waste water treatment systems in the area. The former includes low pressure and supply outages, whilst the latter includes an inability of the Waste Water Treatment Works at Goddards Green to manage existing waste water levels. There are frequent occurrences of queues of waste tankers at Goddards Green being used to remove waste water from the local system and transport out of the area for processing elsewhere.

2.51. The Parish Council consider that any further development within the area should be aligned to the delivery of additional water supply and waste water infrastructure capacity, prior to the construction/ occupation of additional dwellings. It is considered that this requirement should be embedded in the policy allocation of MM60.

3. SUMMARY

3.1. It is considered that Site MM60, comprising land east and west of Malthouse Lane should not be allocated for residential development.

3.2. The site is a core part of the existing designated Local Gap that separates Burgess Hill from Hurstpierpoint. It is wholly rural in character and is poorly related to the existing built up area. The site's topography reinforces its visual relationship to the undeveloped hinterland to the south.

3.3. The development would represent a significant urban incursion beyond the existing planned, and well-defined settlement edge.

3.4. The rural character of the site positively contributes to the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings that comprise part of Hurstpierpoint College. Individually and in combination with other sites allocated in the Main Modifications to the Draft Plan, the development will detrimentally erode the rural setting of the heritage asset.

3.5. If the site is to be allocated, it is considered substantial land should be defined as an undeveloped buffer to the south to retain both the separation of Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint, and the residual rural setting of the College.

3.6. The site is divorced from Burgess Hill by Jane Murray Way. It is therefore considered that any delivery of the site should include provisions to both enhance connectively to the town, and discourage vehicular travel patterns south of the site, including along Danworth Lane and Malthouse Lane. This is both to protect the character of these lanes, and to minimise the exacerbation of congestion on Hurstpierpoint High Street.

3.7. Concerns are raised at the impact of development on water supply and waste water infrastructure. The lived experience of local residents is of existing outages of water supply and sewage systems. Any development should be aligned to the timely delivery of improvements to deliver requisite capacity for both the existing and future resident population.