

Mid Sussex District Plan Review Examination

Our ref 65901/04/MS/RC
Date 17 February 2026
From Lichfields obo Berkeley Latimer

Subject Matter 7: Site Allocations DPSC3 (Land to the South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common)

This statement is made on behalf of Berkeley Latimer (BL) and relates to site allocation DPSC3. BL support the allocation of its site at DPSC3. As the promoter BL consider it is the party best placed to assist the Inspector, respond to matters raised in respect of the site itself and any matters of soundness which flow from that. This statement is provided in that context.

District Plan Policy DPSC GEN Part 1 requires development of DPSC3 to be in accordance with an allocation-wide Masterplan, Design Code and Phasing Plan which will be submitted to and approved by Mid Sussex District Council ('the Council'). Each planning application will then be determined in accordance with these documents. To address this policy requirement, the draft Sayers Common Masterplan Framework Document¹ (draft MFD) has been prepared by BL in consultation with the Sayers Common Liaison Group and has undergone public consultation. The draft MFD provides a holistic vision for the coordinated delivery of the site allocations proposed at Sayers Common, and includes specific proposals and an illustrative masterplan for DPSC3.

When referring to the draft MFD in this statement, it only relates to DPSC3 ('the Site').

1.0 Whether the plan adequately lays the framework for the sustainable development of each site.

1.1 The spatial strategy of the District Plan is to allocate significant growth and investment in infrastructure at Sayers Common to create a more sustainable community. As an overarching response to parts a) to j) of this question, the District Plan via Policies DPSC GEN (and by proxy the MFD to be approved by the Council) and DPSC3 will provide an adequate framework for the sustainable development of the Site. Future planning applications on the Site, and their acceptability for delivering sustainable development, will be assessed against both the development plan (including Policies DPSC GEN and DPSC3) and material considerations (including the MFD).

a) How good urban design would be created, including good building design, legible layouts, attractive streets and open spaces, active frontages, the integration of sustainable transport and climate change mitigation

¹ At the time of writing, the document is in the Examination Library but has no reference number. District Plan 2021-2039 Site Allocations Evidence Library - DPSC3: Masterplan Framework Document Consultation Final (Submitted - 16/02/26)

- 1.2 The requirements of Policy DPSC GEN Part 1 through the production of the MFD (to be approved by the Council), means design standards will be set via the development plan.
- 1.3 The MDF provides the design framework within which future detailed design will need to respond and ultimately address each of the items covered by this question. It will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and development proposals will be expected to broadly accord with it.
- 1.4 The draft MFD (submitted to this examination) describes five-character areas within the scheme and establishes the 'Character Precedents' for each. The land uses, building heights, housing typologies, building line and set-backs are all defined for each character area and this, along with the wider draft MFD, showcases how good urban design would be created with legible layouts, attractive streets, open spaces and active frontages.
- 1.5 Specifically, regarding the integration of sustainable transport, Policy DPSC GEN Part 7 requires delivery of a layout that prioritises sustainable and active modes of travel, providing safe and convenient routes for walking, wheeling and cycling through the development and linking with existing and enhanced networks beyond. DPSC3 Part 9 also requires "A layout which prioritises active and sustainable travel connections throughout the site".
- 1.6 Furthermore, the draft MFD has Active Movement as one of the five Place Pillars and seeks early delivery of active travel routes, shared surfaces and prioritisation of walking, cycling, and wheeling in all layouts. It also includes proposals for coordinated active travel connectivity between site allocations and the existing community and existing active travel routes. Furthermore, bespoke travel planning will encourage and embed sustainable travel habits as will investment in local transport services (see response to Question b) below).
- 1.7 Climate change mitigation is also addressed within the draft MFD. It identifies a range of measures to create low-carbon homes and places which are resilient to climate change including fabric-first approach, low-carbon technologies, energy and water efficient fittings and EV charging.

b) The implications for the wider transport network (including the impact on nearby communities) and how necessary mitigation measures would be delivered

- 1.8 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan December 25 (IV6) ('the IDP') identifies active and sustainable transport improvements including necessary junction and safety improvements to the highway network (informed by the Strategic Transport Assessment October 2024). As set out in the supporting Sayers Common SOCG (S1), these highway improvements and wider transport network improvements (as they relate to mitigating the demands from the Sayers Common development) will be funded on a proportionate basis across the Sayers Common allocations.
- 1.9 There are efforts to limit the number of vehicular trips on the wider transport network via the creation of 20min neighbourhoods with enhanced service provision. Furthermore, DPSC3 proposes site specific sustainable and active travel measures. The Evidence Library for this District Plan Review (DPR) includes for DPSC3: a Mobility Strategy dated August

2024². This sets out that not only is a Sustainable Travel Corridor through DPSC3 proposed to encourage active and public transport, off-site improvements are proposed. These include a new:

- 1 Cycle route between DPSC 3 and Burgess Hill, which can also be route via DPSC 1;
- 2 A financial contribution to deliver a cycle connection between Sayers Common and the existing cycle route through Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks;
- 3 Improvements to the existing cycle route following the A23 north towards Hickstead, Project Newton and the Northern Arc Sports Centre;
- 4 Improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities within Sayers Common; and
- 5 A potential new bus service between Burgess Hill and the site via DPSC1 providing a regular connection to the town's railway station, services and amenities.

1.10 In addition, discussions are taking place with the local bus operator in relation to how the proposed development at Sayers Common can support improvements to the existing bus service between Sayers Common, Crawley, Hassocks (including the railway station) and Brighton.

1.11 As such, the requirements of Policy DPSC3 means the delivery of measures, or financial contributions towards wider transport network improvements, will be set via the development plan.

c) The implications for the impact on, and provision of, social and community facilities (such as schools and health facilities) and how necessary new facilities would be funded and provided

Nursery

1.12 The IDP identifies a need for 476 additional early years places to address the need arising from development proposed in the District Plan Review, including from significant sites (including DPSC3). It assumes part of this need will be met by DPSC3 via a 100-place and a 30-place full-daycare nursery and that sites DPSC4-7 will make proportionate financial contributions.

1.13 Policy DPSC3 requires (under 'Infrastructure') the delivery of "*Space for the provision of full-day care nursery*". The draft MFD states the Site can deliver a nursery as part of a neighbourhood centre. It is also likely that nursery provision will be included in the proposed all-through school setting.

Primary and Secondary schools

1.14 The IDP identifies that 7,000 additional homes will generate a significant need for new primary and secondary school places. It assumes this will partly be met at Sayers Common to support the development of DPSC3-7 with an all-through school of 2.5FE at Primary

² At the time of writing, the document is in the Examination Library but has no reference number. District Plan 2021-2039 Site Allocations Evidence Library - DPSC3: Mobility Strategy (Submitted - 02/10/24)

(expandable to 3FE) and 4FE at Secondary (expandable to 6FE), with Special Support Centres.

- 1.15 Policy DPSC3 Part 6, requires the delivery of “*New all-through 2FE (expandable to 3FE) primary and 4FE (expandable to 6FE) secondary school with provision of Early Years and Special Support Centre Provision and associated playing pitches.*”
- 1.16 The draft MFD states the development of the Site will deliver an all-through school with 2FE (expandable to 3FE) at Primary and 4FE (expandable to 6FE) at Secondary.
- 1.17 As such, the requirements of Policy DPSC3 means the need to deliver an all-through school via the development plan. This in turn supports the Plan to meet its future schooling needs. The provision at Sayers Common will also serve other nearby settlements (Albourne, Hickstead, Henfield) in a part of the district where pupils currently travel to either Hassocks or Burgess Hill: improving local access to education and supporting sustainable travel.

Health

- 1.18 The IDP states developer contributions (direct build provision by the development and/or financial contributions to extend GP practices) will be used for the provision, improvement and/expansion of premises. Policy DPSC3 does not stipulate delivery of a GP Surgery is required at the Site. It requires (under ‘Infrastructure’) the delivery of “*Financial contributions towards the provision of ... Health*” which can be addressed via planning obligations.

Library

- 1.19 Policy DPSC3 requires (under ‘Infrastructure’) the delivery of a “*Self-service Library*” and Part 3 also requires a Neighbourhood Centre include a library. The IDP clarifies this will be a Tier 7 library. The draft MFD shows the Site can deliver a library as part of a Neighbourhood Centre. Therefore, the delivery of a library within DPSC3 is stipulated by the development plan.

Community Building

- 1.20 Policy DPSC3 requires (under ‘Infrastructure’) the delivery of a “*Community building*”. The draft MFD shows the Site can deliver a community centre (the need for which is identified in the IDP). Therefore, the delivery of a community building within DPSC3 is stipulated by the development plan.

d) The implications for access to retail and employment centres

- 1.21 Policy DPSC3 Part 3 requires a Neighbourhood Centre to be delivered towards the eastern part of the site including retail, co-working space and employment. A local centre should also be provided in the western part of the site offering further community facilities.
- 1.22 The draft MFD includes provision for a new eastern neighbourhood centre offering retail, community uses and co-working space. Provision is also made for employment uses next to this. It also identifies that the development can deliver employment space and a local centre

in the western Character Area ‘High Cross Gardens’ where there is potential to provide additional employment and community space (i.e. at the existing High Cross light-industrial estate).

1.23 One of the Place Pillars set out in the MFD is ‘Connected Living’. The Site empowers the community to achieve a 20-Minute Neighbourhood lifestyle. The proposed new community, retail and employment facilities have been located to enable all residents of the development, as well as existing residents, to be within a 10-minute walk of existing and/or proposed facilities within the Site. Additionally, DPSC3 is located in close proximity to existing major employment locations, such as those to the north of Reeds Lane, giving people opportunities to live and work locally.

1.24 The requirements of Policy DPSC3 to deliver retail and employment means this will set via the development plan.

e) The effect on the appearance of the area including the character of the countryside, taking into account any mitigation measures

1.25 Stantec have undertaken a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)³ of the site on behalf of BL which has informed the draft MFD. The LVA has:

- Analysed published landscape character assessments at district and county level.
- Assessed the site’s landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity.
- Identified key visual receptors through field survey work – including from the South Downs National Park and High Weald National Landscape.
- Examined existing landscape features, settlement pattern, landform, vegetation structure and intervisibility.
- Considered seasonal variation and a range of representative viewpoints.
- Identified mitigation opportunities, embedding the site’s physical characteristics.

1.26 The LVA concludes that the Site does not form part of a designated or valued landscape and is visually contained by existing vegetation, surrounding built development and local landform. While the introduction of residential development would alter the immediate landscape character (from open farmland to new settlement) the effects would be localised and limited. The wider character of the surrounding countryside would remain largely unaffected due to the Site’s contained nature. Subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures – including the retention and reinforcement of existing internal and external boundaries and vegetation, supplementary tree and hedge planting, sensitive layout and landscape led design – development could be integrated into the Site and assimilated with its surroundings: avoiding unacceptable harm to the area’s appearance and the character of the countryside.

1.27 The draft MFD has been informed by the findings of the LVA, with mitigation embedded within the design from the outset. Key principles include:

³ At the time of writing, the document is in the Examination Library but has no reference number. District Plan 2021-2039 Site Allocations Evidence Library - DPSC3: LVIA (Submitted - 12/01/24)

1 Retention and Reinforcement of Existing Landscape Features

- Retention of key landscape and ecological assets (including a buffer to ensure long-term sustainability).
- Retention of established boundary hedgerows/trees where possible (internally and on boundaries).
- Reinforcement planting to strengthen visual containment.
- Delivery of 'green curtains' forming a north / south and east / west landscape grid: extending, enhancing and connecting key landscape and ecological assets on Site with the surrounding landscape; providing a strong green canopy to assimilate development and minimise its influence on views from the SDNP.
- Protection of key landscape and ecological features through layout design.

2 Sensitive Site Layout

- Built form positioned to respect existing settlement edge character and existing landform.
- Appropriate boundary setbacks to provide for buffer planting.
- Use of lower density or landscaped buffers at sensitive edges.
- Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy and framework to serve as a multi-functional landscape, accommodating: SuDS enhanced to provide amenity and ecological value; existing PRow and active travel routes connecting the Site to adjacent settlements and routes to the SDNP; along with formal and informal areas of open space.
- Sensitive assimilation of development with parcels, open space, active travel routes and key streets distributed to retain strong views of the SDNP escarpment across the Site.

3 Structural Landscaping

- New native tree/hedgerow planting to frame and filter views.
- Creation of green corridors and public open space.

4 Integration with Local Settlement Patterns

- Development designed to reflect the scale and grain of the adjoining built form in Sayers Common and nearby village typologies.
- Gradual transition from countryside and settlement edge.

5 Visual Mitigation

- Orientation and massing of buildings to minimise visual prominence.
- Use of appropriate materials and rooflines to reduce landscape contrast.

1.28

The allocation is therefore supported by a robust and proportionate landscape and visual evidence base which has informed the site masterplanning.

- 1.29 The requirements of Policy DPSC GEN Part 1 through the production of the MFD (to be approved by the Council), means the effect on the appearance of the area and any mitigation measures is appropriately safeguarded set via the plans policies.

f) The protection of wildlife and biodiversity and opportunities for enhancement

- 1.30 Aspect Ecology produced an Ecological Feasibility Appraisal⁴ for the Site in September 2022. There are no statutory ecological designations within or bounding it. The nearest statutory designation is Wolstonbury Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (c.3.2km to the south-east). The Site is well separated from this statutory designation and the proposed development of the site is unlikely to result in adverse effects on any such designations.
- 1.31 Similarly, no non-statutory designations are located within close to the Site, whilst the nearest area of Ancient Woodland is separated by the adjacent B2118. As such, ecological designations are not considered to pose any particular constraints to the development.
- 1.32 Priority Habitats are located within the Site. Recommendations to retain these hedgerows, treelines, established woodland, and ponds have been incorporated into the draft MFD.
- 1.33 The site offers potential for faunal species and further surveys will be undertaken at the appropriate stage. Following implementation of a sensitively designed masterplan, together with provision of appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, these faunal species can be safeguarded.
- 1.34 One of the Place Pillars set out in the draft MFD is 'Nature in Harmony'. A range of bat and bird boxes are to be installed along with hedgehog highways, invertebrate features, log piles and hibernacula. Habitat enhancements, to include native species planting, and the provision of wildflower meadow and SuDs, would work in tandem with linear features to form ecological corridors and buffers. SuDs will provide seasonally wet habitats to increase species diversity and provide additional habitat for aquatic/semi-aquatic species. The landscape treatments will include amenity grassland for recreational use and areas of wildflower meadow to increase biodiversity. Native species-rich hedgerows will be specified to infill and enhance existing site boundaries.
- 1.35 The requirements of Policy DPSC GEN Part 1 are met through the production of the MFD (to be approved by the Council), meaning that the protection of wildlife and biodiversity and ensuring opportunities for enhancement are taken is secured via the development plan.
- 1.36 BL object to the current requirement of DPSC GEN to secure a 20% minimum biodiversity net gain, but support the Inspector's suggestion to modify it to match the statutory minimum (10%).

g) The protection of heritage assets

⁴ At the time of writing, the document is in the Examination Library but has no reference number. District Plan 2021-2039 Site Allocations Evidence Library - DPSC3: Ecological Feasibility Appraisal (Submitted - 12/02/26)

- 1.37 The Site does not contain or lie in the immediate vicinity of any designated archaeological assets (i.e. Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites or Registered Battlefields). Consequently, there are no Cultural Heritage constraints that would preclude the overall suitability and deliverability of the site for residential development.
- 1.38 The Site does not contain any listed buildings or conservation areas. One Grade II listed building (Wellington Cottage) lies close to the south-western boundary of the northern parcel on Henfield Road. Four other Grade II listed buildings lie within around 250m of the site, and the Albourne Conservation Area lies around 280m to the south-east of the site.
- 1.39 Policy DPSC3 part 11 requires the development to be *“Informed by a Heritage Statement, provide a layout and design which preserves the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings Wellington Cottage, North Pottersfield and South Pottersfield Cottages.”* Furthermore, the draft MFD specifies it will *“preserve key views, heritage settings and landscape patterns”*.
- 1.40 Therefore, the development plan has an adequate framework for the development of the Site while protecting heritage assets.

h) The funding and delivery of necessary infrastructure and other necessary mitigation measures

- 1.41 The preceding responses to questions b) and c) provide commentary on this matter.
- 1.42 Broadly speaking, Policy DPSC3 provides the list of infrastructure the scheme is expected to deliver and financial contributions it is expected to make. The funding and practical delivery, including trigger points, for DPSC3 are set out in the Sayers Common Infrastructure Delivery Strategy within the MFD and the updated Sayers Common SoCG.
- 1.43 To fund shared infrastructure (i.e. beyond the needs of DPSC3), the Council and West Sussex County Council will secure proportionate financial contributions from all Sayers Common sites, and potentially from other sites in the district. These contributions will be pooled to support delivery of shared infrastructure on Site DPSC3 or in the wider local area as set out in the MFD and Sayers Common SOCG.

i) The position regarding the existing condition of the site and its deliverability

- 1.44 The Site is undeveloped and there are no known remediation works that would impact the scheme viability. All of the land which is required to deliver the proposed development on the Site is controlled by BL.

j) Whether the Council’s assumptions are realistic in respect of densities, start dates, number of suggested outlets and build out rates, and hence the delivery trajectory

- 1.45 Via M66, M73 and M94 to Policies DPH1, DPSC GEN and DPSC3 the Site is assumed to deliver approximately 2,000 new homes by 2040; including provision for an extra care facility.

- 1.46 There is agreement between the Council and BL about the overall quantity of residential development, and therefore the assumed densities within this.
- 1.47 In terms of start date, number of outlets and annual build-out rates, this is set out in agreement with the Council within the Sayers Common SOCG (S1) with annual build rates of up-to 200 homes per annum considered achievable on the basis of there being four outlets across two developers delivering on site. The delivery trajectory for the Site is agreed with the Council and is set out within Appendix 1 of the updated Sayers Common SoCG (2026).

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