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College Lane, Hurstpierpoint
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Mid Sussex District Plan 2021–2039: Further Examination Hearings, 3–6 November 2026

Hearing statement: MM72 Land east of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint

Thursday 5 November 2026, 11:45 session (with MM73 and MM75). Written statement; I cannot attend.

I live on College Lane and cannot attend, so I ask that this statement be taken as my evidence on MM72 under the Inspector's agenda for Hurstpierpoint. It addresses only MM72 and does not repeat my earlier representation.

Why MM72 is unsound

The Secretary of State has already refused this land. In decision APP/D3830/V/14/2211499 (4 September 2014) he refused 81 homes on land that includes this site (Council ref. 13/01250/FUL), finding that the gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks "continues to serve a useful and much valued planning purpose" and was "already particularly narrow and vulnerable". A shortage of housing land does not change what this gap does, and nothing in the Main Modifications explains what has changed.

The Council's own assessment rejected it. SHELAA Site 19 was rejected for its potential to contribute to coalescence. The Plan then allocates it anyway.

The traffic has nowhere to go. At Stonepound Crossroads the Council's own study has the B2116 arm at 100% of capacity before a single MM72 car is added. Its own model calls the junction severe and too constrained to mitigate. MM72 offers nothing there.

It sends working traffic up a lane with no pavement. Journeys to Victoria Business Park, Panattoni Park, Bolney Grange and the A23 will go north along College Lane, through about 365 metres where only one car can pass and there is no pavement. No evidence tests it.

It is the wrong test applied to the wrong unit. MM72 is one of five Hurstpierpoint allocations adding 419 homes, yet every policy is written as if its site stood alone.

My request: find MM72 unsound and delete it in full.

Considering the sites together

The Inspector's agenda groups MM72 to MM76, and its questions about roads, separate identity and utilities can only be answered for the sites as a whole. MM72, MM73 and MM75 are contiguous, share one lane and total 119 homes (more if MM72 rises to 100). They sit beside MM74, MM76 and the DPSC1 and DPSC3 allocations in the same parish. Yet no evidence tests their combined effect on College Lane, the High Street, Stonepound Crossroads or the Goddards Green sewerage system. National policy asks whether residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. That is a test of the total, not of each site.

The Council's Regulation 19 plan itself records that "small scale, sometimes piecemeal development" has increased population but "not reached a critical mass to support new facilities and services". Splitting this area into small allocations repeats that pattern. Policy DPH2 sees the risk. It supports expansion beyond built-up area boundaries only where it meets identified needs and is shown to be sustainable, and it requires developers to satisfy the Council that "a larger site is not brought forward in phases that individually meets the threshold but cumulatively does not". The threshold is 10 dwellings. Judging each site on its own numbers does exactly what the policy warns against.

(a) Movement

The number is already rising. MM72 allocates 75 dwellings. An application for 100 homes (DM/26/2433) is now before the Council, a third more than the Plan allocates. The developer's website describes it as "up from 75". No transport, drainage or heritage evidence has been tested at 100 homes, and nothing in MM72 caps the number, so the 75 in the Plan is not a limit in practice. This land has been here before. A scheme of 93 homes (HP/12/03972/FUL) was refused by the Council in March 2013 and the appeal was withdrawn. Thakeham Homes then applied for 81 homes (13/01250/FUL), which the Secretary of State refused in 2014. The Plan allocates 75 for the site, and the application is now for 100 on the same land.

Where the traffic goes. The access is the Track, which joins the east side of College Lane just south of Wickham Farmhouse, close to Wickham Hill. Traffic can turn south, then west along Hassocks Road to the High Street, or east along Wickham Hill to Stonepound Crossroads. It can equally turn north, and that is the route many working journeys will take.

Going north: the jobs and the A23. Many journeys from MM72 will go north, not south. Residents working at Victoria Business Park, at Panattoni Park (The Hub) beside the A2300 at Goddards Green, or at Bolney Grange Business Park near the A23, will take that route. So will those heading for the A23 at Hickstead, for Brighton or Gatwick Airport. They will take College Lane north, past the end of the pavement at Bankside, through about 365 metres of single-car width, and on up Malthouse Lane, the road that DPSC1's 1,350 homes depend on. These are daily journeys at the busiest hours. They coincide with the school run, when I see queues of five to ten minutes on that stretch and children and parents walking in the carriageway. The Council's own assessment of MM60 records existing problems at the A23/A2300 junction, which is another reason drivers will look for the quickest route, and these lanes are it. At 75 homes, never mind 100, even a modest share of working trips is a steady stream of vehicles in both directions through a lane where two cars cannot pass and pedestrians have no pavement. I have seen no MM72 requirement for College Lane north of the site, and the Council's transport report does not assess it. DPSC1 then loads the same lanes with its own traffic.

Stonepound Crossroads. The Council's transport study records the B2116 Hurst Road arm at 100% volume-to-capacity in the morning peak, before this site adds anything. The Scenario 7 report finds the junction severe and too constrained for capacity mitigation, and offers only more walking, cycling and public transport. MM72 contains no measure at the junction and no evidence of what its homes would add, at 75 or at 100.

Hurstpierpoint High Street. The Obtrada assessment for the Parish Council records about 6,700 vehicles a day, including HGVs despite the weight restriction. The text of the Scenario 7 report does not assess the High Street or College Lane, and the Inspector has already found the Council's paper MS-13 largely about junction capacity. There is no evidence that the High Street can take more traffic and no mitigation proposed. The policy's contributions to "highway works" and "sustainable transport measures" are unspecified, so they cannot be shown to address either problem.

Sustainable travel does not remove the problem. Hassocks station lies on the west side of Hassocks, so the site is relatively close to it. That closeness is the very pressure on the gap. The Council relies on walking, cycling and rail to get round a junction it admits cannot be mitigated, but MM72 specifies no route, no works and no figure. The Inspector has already noted limited parking at the station, so drivers and drop-offs will add to the same roads. Everyday journeys to shops, schools and work elsewhere will still be made by car, through the same crossroads and the same High Street.

Traffic from DPSC1 is on top of this. DPSC1, Land West of Burgess Hill, is allocated for about 1,350 homes at the end of Malthouse Lane. Malthouse Lane leads into College Lane, and from there south to Wickham Hill, Hassocks Road and Stonepound Crossroads. Journeys

to Hassocks station, Brighton and the A23 from those homes will naturally use the same lanes, the same crossroads and the same High Street that the Hurstpierpoint sites rely on. I have seen no evidence that the assessment of this site adds those trips to the lanes and junctions concerned. The Plan treats DPSC1 as part of the background. For the lanes, the crossroads and the High Street, it is the largest single addition of all.

(b) Village character, heritage and countryside

Separate identity. MM72 lies in the gap between Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks and would move the village boundary out to Belmont Lane. The 2014 Inspector's report records the gap as some 0.9 km, measured in a straight line from the rear gardens on College Lane to the rear gardens on London Road, Hassocks. I have seen nothing to suggest it has widened. The application's location plan (drawing H119-THA-PD2-ZZ-D-A-1001, 1:2500) shows a site of about 5.4 hectares that is up to about 280 metres wide from the rear of the College Lane gardens to Belmont Lane. Taken from 0.9 km, development across that width would leave about 600 metres between the new edge and Hassocks, in a gap the Secretary of State already found "particularly narrow and vulnerable". The same plan marks a further 2.6 hectares as "additional ownership", adjoining the site along the Track and Belmont Lane. It is outside the application and the allocation, but under the same control and next to the site, it is plainly the land for a later phase. I expect it to come forward in stages, each looking modest on its own. Policy DPH2 exists to stop exactly that, yet the Plan has no mechanism to apply it to land that is not yet in an application. The Inspector should treat the allocation as the first step, not the last. The Secretary of State found that development here would cause "a small but nevertheless significant diminution of openness" and "undermine the purposes of the Local Gap". Neighbourhood Plan Policy Hurst C3 protects local gaps, and the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 1) protects the other side of the same gap.

A gap that is used and valued. The 2014 record shows the land's role. Belmont Lane is "a single width private access road and public bridleway", lined by mature trees (report 2.4). Objectors raised the effect on the public footpath (7.5). The parties agreed a 50 to 60 metre wildlife and landscape corridor along Belmont Lane (6.1). In 1973 an Inspector noted the open view from College Lane towards the break between the two settlements (9.4), and the land was designated white land in 1967 to remain largely undisturbed (9.3). The made Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan says land in the gaps "retains a strong rural character" (para 4.13). The Council's own site assessment is against this land, and the Main Modifications point to no later assessment that says otherwise.

Heritage. The Track joins College Lane immediately south-east of the Grade II listed Wickham Farmhouse (list entry 1025662), across the lane from it. Every vehicle serving the new homes, including construction traffic, would pass through that setting. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to the setting of a listed building. MM72 has no heritage criterion and I have seen no heritage assessment of the site or the access. The Plan cannot be sound while that duty is unaddressed.

Wildlife. The policy asks only that the watercourse and ponds be "considered". That shows that no assessment has been made that would justify allocating the site.

(c) Infrastructure

Foul drainage. Hurstpierpoint drains to the Goddards Green works. Southern Water's own data (BRAVA and its Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan) identify that system as at risk. In 2014 Southern Water confirmed the local sewer lacked capacity for this land. I see regular tanker movements on Malthouse Lane and nearby lanes, and sewer failures locally. MM72 has no foul drainage criterion at all, and MM39 deletes the sewerage phasing safeguard, so nothing would stop homes being occupied before capacity exists.

Delivery. A site whose traffic must pass a crossroads the Council's own model finds severe and unmitigable, with no demonstrated sewer capacity and no heritage assessment, has not been shown to be deliverable. The Plan should not rely on it to meet the housing requirement.

My request to the Inspector

Find MM72 unsound, because it is not justified, effective or consistent with national policy, and delete it from the Plan in full. I suggest no conditional or alternative form of allocation, because these constraints cannot be resolved by rewording.