

Local Plan Hearing Statement

In Respect of Examination of Main Modification 90 to
Draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039

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Contents **Page**

1. Introduction 1

2. MM90: Land to the West of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage 1

Impact on the National Landscape 1

Access and Transport 2

Site Location in Relation to Employment and Social Infrastructure 4

3. Summary 4

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 MM90: Land to the West of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage (the 'site'), 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 this Site.

2. MM90: LAND TO THE WEST OF WOODHURST FARM, OLD BRIGHTON ROAD SOUTH, PEASE POTTAGE

2.1. Representations in respect of Site MM90 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 the site[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. As noted by the LPA, the development would have a significant adverse impact on the designated High Weald Protected Landscape. It would result in the development of an extensive area of substantively undeveloped land of a verdant rural character which is reflective of the core character components of the High Weald, including by virtue of its woodland and fieldscape.

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

2.6. Whilst the site is in proximity to the A23, the existing edge of the site provides an effective screen and boundary buffer, supplemented by the existing settlement edge of the south side of Pease Pottage including extensive areas of woodland and mature hedgerows. The site is essentially of rural undeveloped character.

2.7. The effect of development would be significant. The proposed access route to the north-west of the site onto Grouse Road, would also result in a significant adverse effect beyond the main built-up core of the site. Grouse Road, at the point of the proposed access, is a rural lane bounded either side by indigenous hedgelines with a number of mature trees.

2.8. There are extensive views from this public highway across predominantly undeveloped land. The new access would result in a significant urbanising change in the character of this highway and in views within and around it.

Access and Transport

2.9. It is considered that the allocation of site MM90 is not locationally sustainable.

2.10. The site is not readily accessible to a range of services and facilities. This is acknowledged by the LPA, in particular in relation to access to a main service centre, primary school, and health service provision. These are all located in excess of a 20 minute walk away from the site, and in respect of access to a primary school is predicated on the use of an unattractive pedestrian route, which crosses the A23 via an overbridge.

2.11. As a result of these distances, future residents are likely to be heavily reliant on access to services and facilities by use of private car.

2.12. Policy MM90(1), requires the development to provide suitable access from Old Brighton Road South.

2.13. Notwithstanding this, the scheme proponents Masterplan[2] indicates the intent for access to the site to be primarily from the north-west via Grouse Road.

2.14. This proposed access route is reliant on a new roadway that is on land that falls outside of the district. Concerns are raised above in respect of the landscape effect of this proposed access route.

2.15. Concerns are also raised having regard to the effect of such development in proximity of the proposed allocations MM89 and MM91. These would result in additional traffic accessing Horsham Road in proximity to Grouse Road.

2.16. Policy MM90(2) requires the development to provide bus access and emergency access from Old Brighton Road South. Policy MM90(16) requires the development to enhance the walking and cycling environment along Old Brighton Road South to improve connections and safe access to bus stops and Pease Pottage Village.

2.17. It is considered that these policy clauses may be undeliverable in conjunction with the requirement of policy MM90(1), that the main vehicular access to the site be via Old Brighton Road South.

2.18. Old Brighton Road South has limited width and extent as it passes through existing development to the north, close to its junction with Horsham Road. This section of the public highway is already the subject of

[2] Drawing No. H121-THA-PR-ZZ-D-A-1010

congestion. Having regard to the proximity of existing buildings and curtilages, there is no apparent ability to widen or improve this section of the public highway.

2.19. The Parish Council are therefore concerned how the main access to Site MM90 will be delivered from Old Brighton Road South (which is considered to be important rather than Grouse Road, inter alia on landscape grounds), whilst also ensuring bus, emergency access, pedestrian and cycling improvements along this route of the public highway.

2.20. It is considered that there are cogent reasons why access should be via Old Brighton Road South, but this section of the public highway, particularly immediately south of Horsham Road, is of a form that is unlikely to be suitable for significant development for use by cars, and non-car modes of transport (bus, cycling and walking), as the main point of access.

2.21. The Parish Council are therefore concerned that access to the site that is safe and sustainable, and which preserves the landscape character of the High Weald Protected Landscape may not be achievable.

2.22. Policy MM90(15) requires the development to improve the existing Public Right of Way network, including footpath COL/1545/2 that provides connection to Buchan Country Park. This Public Right of Way runs north from the junction of Forest Road/ Horsham Road with Grouse Road.

2.23. The allocation does not present a way in which future residents of the scheme could safely and conveniently access this Public Right of Way.

2.24. There is no footway along Horsham Road that connects the southern point of the COL/1545/2. Therefore, in the alternative, the means of accessing this Public Right of Way from the site would be in a westward direction along PROW SLA/2/S, which then becomes COL/2796, to connect to Grouse Road. This road also has no footway.

2.25. It is questioned how the improvement of a largely inaccessible Public Right of Way would be beneficial to occupiers of the development.

2.26. It is respectfully submitted that the improvements to the Public Right of Way network would be better to focus on those which are deliverable and likely to be meaningfully beneficial to the resident community.

2.27. Clause MM90(19) requires the provision of active travel routes. For the reasons set out above, it is questioned whether active travel routes are deliverable in conjunction with this development. It would either require improvements to a constrained section of Old Brighton Road South to the north of the site, for which improvements do not appear to be deliverable, or the delivery of a new access onto Grouse Road, with associated adverse landscape impacts, and which, in any event, would remain unconnected to the wider Public Right of Way network.

2.28. Whilst the provision of active travel routes is supported in principle, it is questioned how deliverable in practice these would be in relation to this proposed development.

2.29. Clause MM90(20) requires the scheme to provide bus service improvements. This includes consideration of rerouting or extending services to serve the site.

2.30. For the reasons set out above, the Parish Council question how such rerouting along Old Brighton Road South could be meaningfully delivered in conjunction with the development, having regard to the constraints and limitations of the public highway network immediately to the north of the site, prior to its connection with Horsham Road.

2.31. Clause MM90(18) requires upgrades to the pedestrian and cycle network along Old Brighton Road South, in part in order to improve accessibility to Woodgate Primary School, which is located to the east of the A23/ M23.

2.32. The Parish Council's concerns in respect of the practical viability of improvements to the pedestrian and cycling network north of the site along Old Brighton Road South have been set out above.

Site Location in Relation to Employment and Social Infrastructure

2.33. The Parish Council are concerned at the distance of the site from Woodgate Primary School (in excess of 20 minute walk), and its route via an overbridge to the A23/M23.

2.34. Even if improvements in walking and cycling connectivity of the site northward could be delivered, the distance to Woodgate Primary School, and its route over the A23/M23 mean that access to this school by active travel means are unlikely to be attractive to residents of the development.

2.35. Policy MM90(23) requires the development to provide an enclosed 4G pitch and 2 covered Padel courts that are to be gifted to Slaugham Parish Council. Policy MM90(24) requires the provision of a new cricket square on the existing playing field at Finches Field. Policy MM90(25) requires the provision of additional car parking for the upgraded sports provision.

2.36. The Parish Council are supportive of the provision of improved sports facilities in conjunction with the development in and around Finches Field and Hemsleys Meadow. This includes the gifting of the facilities upon their completion to the Parish Council for their ongoing ownership and maintenance.

2.37. It is respectfully submitted that this should also include a financial sum to contribute to their long-term maintenance.

2.38. Policy MM90(26) requires an upgrade to MacNaughton Hall with the creation of an access from Old Brighton Road South and car parking improvements.

2.39. This clause is reliant on land and building that falls within the ownership of the Parish Council. The Parish Council are supportive of measures to upgrade their existing facilities that serve the community. Such upgrades would need to be viable in the longer term. It is submitted that in respect of the provision of improvements to car parking, this should be accompanied by a financial sum to enable their maintenance in the longer term.

3. SUMMARY

3.1. It is considered that allocation of development on Site MM90: land to the west of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage, by virtue of its 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. It would result in the development of an extensive area of substantively undeveloped land of a verdant rural character which is reflective of the core character components of the High Weald, including by virtue of its woodland and fieldscape. The adverse impact would be exacerbated by the proposed provision of an access route onto Grouse Road, to the north-west.

3.3. The site is not considered to be locationally sustainable. Future residents are likely to be heavily reliant on access by the private car.

3.4. Whilst Policy MM90 seeks a range of measures to improve non-car modes of transport, concern is raised at their deliverability in conjunction with the requirement for the main vehicular access to the site to be from Old Brighton Road South. (The alternative main vehicular access via Grouse Road is considered to be unacceptable in landscape impact terms).

3.5. It is considered that notwithstanding aspirations to improve active travel connections to the site, the distance and location (beyond the A23/ M23) of Woodgate Primary School means access to this school is likely to be predominantly by private car.

3.6. The Parish Council support the Policy aspirations to deliver improved social and community infrastructure in conjunction with the development. It is important that such facilities are evidentially viable in the long term.