Mid Sussex District Plan Examination: Inspector's Matters and Issues

Crawley Borough Council Hearing Statement

October 2026

Matter 7: Site Allocations

MM89: Land at Pease Field, Pease Pottage

MM91: Land north of Former Golf House, Horsham Road, Pease Pottage

1.1 Crawley Borough Council (CBC) submitted formal representations to the submission draft Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) Main Modifications Consultation in respect of these proposed allocations. This Hearing Statement seeks to provide further clarification in relation to the Inspector's Matters and Issues.

b. Impact on the National Landscape

- degree of wider visibility / sense of enclosure
- existing urbanising influences
- effect on ancient woodland and protected trees
- effect on water bodies
- effect on wildlife
- proposed land use arrangements including open space and buffering

1.2 The Crawley Borough administrative boundary extends south into the High Weald National Landscape and includes properties within Pease Pottage village. These two combined sites lie immediately on the Mid Sussex and Crawley administrative boundaries (with Land at Pease Field sharing the boundary). The insert map shows the boundary with Horsham district but not the boundary with Crawley borough. CBC requests that this is included for clarity and accuracy.

1.3 The land to the north of the site is in use as a cemetery which retains the open nature of the area. There are areas of ancient woodland immediately to the north of the site within Crawley borough, within Pease Pottage Forest and at Little Trees Cemetery. These should be referenced in the policy, paragraph 4, to ensure appropriate buffers are maintained.

1.4 The proposed sites are on currently open land which is outside the existing settlement boundaries of both Pease Pottage and Crawley and within the High Weald National Landscape. These two sites would combine to deliver a total of 239 dwellings (196 at Pease Field and 43 at Land north of Former Golf House). This would result in a significant change of the character, and the proposed amendment of the settlement boundary is noted.

c. Access and transport

- Access points and impact on the highway network

1.5 CBC confirms it will support housing development where it can be shown that the cumulative infrastructure needs are identified and programmed for delivery and the proposal would not result in severe cumulative impacts for existing residents in Crawley, including in terms of traffic and transport.

1.6 CBC raises concern that further incremental development is now proposed to the south of Crawley. The proposed dwellings at these two sites plus the 700 dwellings West of Woodhurst Farm (MM90) would add over 900 dwellings at Pease Pottage, close to the

boundary with both Crawley and Horsham. The Scenario 7 Modelling and Results Technical Note confirms the inclusion of an assessment against the adopted Crawley Borough Local Plan, including Gatwick Green Strategic Employment Site allocation, and Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Development Consent Order. However, the Mid Sussex District Plan sites have not been fully tested or understood with the developments proposed in Horsham district through the Horsham District Local Plan in relation to their cumulative impacts on Crawley's highway network.

1.7 Developments at Pease Pottage are likely to use the employment offer, services and facilities within Crawley borough, as the closest large town. This will inevitably generate additional private car traffic on the borough's existing highway network, where key junctions are already at known to be at full capacity or over-capacity.

1.8 The impacts on the Crawley highway network from the Mid Sussex development sites is not clear in the Transport evidence. The modelling results shown in Figures 1 and 2 in Chapter 4 do not consider junctions outside of the Mid Sussex district boundary. CBC considers this additional assessment to be essential and raises concern if this has not been adequately understood ahead of the allocations for an additional 900 dwellings.

- Bus connections
- Cycling and walking arrangements

1.9 CBC notes the proposed Policy Requirement 13, in relation to active and public transport. CBC requests this is expanded to include further reference to delivering schemes relevant to the site including those in neighbouring authority LCWIPs, as is required by modified DPT3.

1.10 CBC has an adopted Transport and Access Plan for the borough: New Directions for Crawley 2020 which establishes the vision, presents issues and options and identifies opportunities for sustainable transport and access solutions for Crawley. In addition, CBC is currently in the process of updating its adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2021.

1.11 Improvements should be made to the existing bus services to Crawley Town Centre and the main employment opportunities, particularly Gatwick Airport and Manor Royal, and to Three Bridges station in order to minimise the desire to use the private car.

1.12 Should the sites at Pease Pottage be progressed, these should be physically connected from the sites, and through contributions towards improvements for cycling and pedestrian connections through into Crawley, to Crawley Town Centre and the leisure (such as K2 Leisure Centre and Tilgate Park) and educational services within the southern part of the borough.

d. Site location in relation to employment and social infrastructure

- connections to employment, retail, social and community facilities
- impact on Crawley infrastructure

1.13 CBC confirms it will support housing development in such locations where it can be shown that the cumulative infrastructure needs are identified and programmed for delivery and the proposal would not result in severe cumulative impacts for existing residents in Crawley, including in terms of town centre and community and social facilities.

1.14 CBC raises concern that further incremental development is now proposed to the south of Crawley within the High Weald National Landscape. The cumulative impacts of these sites, along with the large Land West of Woodhurst Farm site within Pease Pottage,

Crabbet Park, the developments proposed in Horsham district through the Horsham District Local Plan and the Gatwick Northern Runway project have not been fully tested or understood in relation to their impacts on Crawley's infrastructure services and facilities.

1.15 CBC is unclear how the proposed allocations would be served in terms of access to local-scale essential services, suitable for providing a 'top-up' offer capable of meeting the day-to-day needs of residents. Whilst noting that proposed allocation MM90 (Land to the West of Woodhurst Farm, Old Brighton Road South, Pease Pottage) would incorporate a small cafe/community shop, given that just over 900 dwellings are proposed across sites MM89/90/91, CBC seeks assurance that future residents will have sustainable access to essential services consistent with Crawley's neighbourhood principle (for example, pharmacy).

1.16 CBC note that MM91(10) makes reference to employment use, but it is unclear as to the scale and form of this offer.

1.17 Developments at Pease Pottage are likely to use the services and facilities within Crawley borough, as the closest large town. This will include those located in Crawley Town Centre and at K2 Crawley Leisure Centre, as well as accessing employment opportunities provided in Crawley Town Centre, Three Bridges corridor, Manor Royal and Gatwick Airport, and the educational and health facilities within the borough.

1.18 Education and health are both known to be at capacity, based on the Crawley Borough Local Plan developments alone, with unmet need for secondary education having been identified through the Crawley Infrastructure plan July 2023 (pages 22 to 24), and most GP practices in Crawley have capped lists (pages 28 to 30). The policy requirement for financial contributions towards education and health are noted, and these should be directed towards the area where capacity enhancements are needed to accommodate the development, even they are outside Mid Sussex.

1.19 The policy requirement for on-site natural, semi-natural and amenity green space along with a play area is noted, along with financial contributions towards the provision of other outdoor provision and outdoor sports. The Crawley Indoor_Sports_Facilities_Assessment_January_2021.pdf confirms K2 Crawley Leisure Centre is one of the most popular leisure centres in the south east (with more than 1.3 million people using it every year) (paragraph 4.27). The leisure provision at K2 Crawley has been identified as at capacity. The sports halls are at 100% use and the pool is known to be at capacity particularly at peak times and when competitive galas are programmed mainly on weekend days either the whole or half the main pool can be closed for public pay and play use (paragraph 4.102). The pool has been identified as needing refurbishment from 2025 to 2030 (paragraph 4.97). The Crawley Playing Pitch Assessment (PPS_Stage_D_strategy_action_plan_March_2021.pdf) identified capacity constraints across the borough for many of the main sports, including football, rugby, cricket and hockey. This assessment was carried out on the basis of the anticipated population increase associated with Crawley Borough Local Plan developments alone. The additional developments located close to Crawley, including these proposed at Pease Pottage, will exacerbate the demands placed on the existing facilities within the town.

1.20 Please also note CBC's representations in relation to MM33 and housing mix, and MM34 regarding affordable housing and the Viability Update Note. CBC strongly contends that the housing mix for developments adjacent to Crawley should be in the form of a blended mix, based on evidence from both Mid Sussex and Crawley and set out in the respective local plan. This reflects the critical nature of sites adjacent to Crawley in

meeting the unmet needs arising from Crawley borough in a location close to the borough boundary, should they be allocated. Whilst development across Mid Sussex district can meet Crawley's overall housing needs, this is restricted to market housing and the more affluent residents. Crawley's unmet affordable housing needs will primarily be met at the locations closest to Crawley. As these sites are located immediately adjacent to Crawley borough, should the principle of development in this location within the High Weald National Landscape be agreed, and subject to the mitigation of infrastructure impacts on Crawley, this is the best place to meet the housing requirements for the borough's residents, in particular for affordable and intermediate or lower cost housing.

1.21 CBC strongly contends that there should be a 40% affordable housing requirement for these sites, which would bring them in line with the requirements of the Crawley Borough Local Plan and that proposed in the Horsham District Local Plan for the West of Ifield site. The Viability Study has not indicated that these sites would suffer from viability constraints in this location, and, as smaller individual sites, they do not have to incorporate significant infrastructure as do the Strategic Sites, which have anyway been shown to be viable in this part of Mid Sussex close to Crawley. This would be consistent with the other housing developments within Crawley borough and the West of Ifield site within Horsham District on Crawley's western boundary.