

**Mid Sussex District Plan 2021- 2039**  
**Matter 2: Housing Supply and Headroom**  
Statement on behalf of A2Dominion

February 2026

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**Client**

A2Dominion

**Our reference**

A2DS3001

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of A2Dominion to the Mid Sussex District Plan Review Examination (Matter 2: Housing Supply and Headroom).

## 2. Matter 2: Housing Supply and Headroom

- 2.1 The Topic Paper (MS-TP2) presents a the distinct lack of any evidence to substantiate the Council’s claims. There is no explanation as to how sites will deliver, lead in times, build out rates and no detailed explanation as to the contribution different sources will make each year or the number of dwellings expected each year.
- 2.2 A2Dominion submit that the Council’s material simply does not provide the evidence to address these issues.
- 2.3 We note that MSDC published an updated trajectory (Document H8) on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (one day before Statements were due). Whilst this may provide some of the site delivery trajectories, it still fails to provide any evidence or explanation to support those figures.

**Whether enough housing land has been allocated to ensure that, along with existing permissions and commitments, enough housing land will come forward to meet the housing requirement through the life of the plan and that a 5 year housing land supply will be maintained.**

**a) Anticipated housing supply over the plan period**

**b) The amount of potential supply headroom over and above the housing requirement**

- 2.4 Topic Paper ‘MS-TP2: Housing’ is particularly relevant Other material has been provided but that this is now of some age given the pause to the Examination and is approaching two years old and is entirely unreliable.
- 2.5 The Topic Paper suggests that at the point of submission, MSDC claimed a total supply of 20,616 dwellings during the Plan-period. Table 4 of the Topic Paper claims that there have been 4,324 dwellings delivered between 2021 – 2025 (four years), alongside commitments of 7,991 dwellings (in combination, 12,315).
- 2.6 The Topic Paper suggests (Table 6) 7,262 dwellings will be achieved during the Plan-period from allocations (compared to 6,687 at submission) with 1,664 dwellings from windfall sources.
- 2.7 That Topic Paper now claims (in Section 3) that the LHN results in an overall figure of 18,981 dwellings.

2.8 The table below compares the level of supply now anticipated, with the requirement of the Plan (with the extended Plan-period (so an additional 1,090 dwellings added)) and the requirement proposed in Document MS-TP2.

	Requirement as submitted but extended to 2040	Requirement in MS-TP2
	20,710 dwellings	20,674 dwellings
Anticipated Supply (MS-TP2)	21,241	21,241
Difference	531 2.5% of the requirement	567 (as per MS-TP2) 2.74% of the requirement

2.9 We note the following:

- Conclusions about supply headroom over and above the requirement can only be made once the Inspector is satisfied with the requirement and the evidence on the sources of supply, including potential allocations, and the extent to which these various sources will deliver during the Plan period.
- Against the requirement as submitted, this assumes no adjustments are made to the level of growth planned for (for example due to unmet needs, affordable housing).
- The requirement in MS-TP2 assumes the Council succeeds in reducing the requirement based on a reduced LHN, that the provision for unmet needs is appropriate and that no other adjustments are required.

2.10 A 'headroom' of 2.5/2.74% is limited and does not provide flexibility, but this is further reinforced when no evidence on deliverability has been presented.

### **c) The supply trajectory over the plan period**

2.11 The Topic Paper refers to an updated housing trajectory being found at Appendix 2 of that document. Appendix 2 is presented as a bar chart and does not include details of the precise overall number of dwellings anticipated in each year, or the precise contribution from different sources.

2.12 Paragraph 3.16 of the Topic Paper relates to the 'Delivery Trajectory' and Table 12 is intended to provide details of delivery in years 1-5 (as an average), 6-10 (as an average) and for years 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. The Topic Paper does not indicate what years (i.e. 2025 – 2026) those relate to, but we note the data presented in Table 12 does not appear to be consistent with Appendix 2.

2.13 Whilst the Topic Paper seeks to provide some explanation of the status of certain sites, and presents (via Appendix 4) information on the claimed housing land supply position, the expected delivery rates throughout the Plan-period, on a site-by-site basis is not presented.

- 2.14 The information presented by MSDC does not enable a realistic analysis to be undertaken as to the extent to which the claimed housing supply is achievable.
- 2.15 This information is critical, not just to the overall level of housing achieved during the Plan-period, but to understand the extent of headroom which might be achieved, whether the Council’s lead in times and build out rates are achievable having regard to a variety of factors (including any site specific issues) and whether / how the Plan might address unmet needs.
- 2.16 The Planning Practice Guidance addresses the matter of housing land supply beyond 5 years (and demonstrating a reasonable prospect of delivery in that context) and has been unchanged since 2019. For ease, we include an extract of the PPG at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.17 In response to those examples of where it might be demonstrated that there is a reasonable prospect that sites are developable (regarding supply beyond 5 years), we note:

PPG Example	Comment
Written commitment or agreement that relevant funding is likely to come forward within the timescale indicated, such as an award of grant funding	No such evidence, or statements from developers or land promoters has been provided.
Written evidence of agreement between the local planning authority and the site developer(s) which confirms the developers’ delivery intentions and anticipated start and build-out rates	No such evidence has been provided. There are no updated Statements of Common Ground with developers or site promoters, and as far as we can establish, only one SOCG was agreed with such parties in advance of the previous examination sessions.
Likely buildout rates based on sites with similar characteristics	Topic Paper H4 (July 2024) did consider build out rates, however that is approaching two years old and there is no analysis as to how that evidence informs the trajectory assumed by MSDC.
Current planning status - for example, a larger scale site with only outline permission where there is supporting evidence that the site is suitable and available, may indicate development could be completed within the next 6-10 years	The latest Topic Paper does present the latest planning position for the proposed allocations, but in doing so highlights the lack of progress of both a significant number of those sites, and a significant number of the dwellings derived from that source.

- 2.18 As it is currently presented, the lack of detailed evidence fails to justify the housing trajectory and therefore cannot be robustly analysed or found sound.

**d) The potential for lower than anticipated supply arising from delivery impediments, longer lead in times and slower build out rates**

2.19 The Inspector’s Initial Letter (IDJB-01) sought information on the current position on housing supply and the anticipated supply trajectory over the plan period, taking into account committed and allocated sites, recent planning permissions, resolutions to grant, and anticipated commencement and delivery rates.

2.20 In our submission, MSDC has not provided the level of information (particularly as any earlier information is no longer reliable) for this analysis has been undertaken. We note that in the Topic Paper:

- Paragraph 2.15 refers to the updated ‘site yields’ for three sites, showing how additional dwellings are now expected during the Plan-period;
- Paragraph 2.16 refers to the fact that site DPA12 is no longer represented by a site promoted by the Council continues to consider it an appropriate and sustainable site for development, but in paragraph 2.17 decreases the contribution it makes to supply by 90 dwellings;
- Table 5 is said to set out the latest position on draft allocations and it is clear that a number of those sites are not subject to any planning application. There is no information within the Topic Paper to explain when MSDC now expects those applications to be submitted, the anticipated form (outline / full) of those applications, whether they are likely to be subject to additional requirements which might influence the delivery.

2.21 The table below lists the sites identified in Table 5 of the Topic Paper where no application has been submitted and combines this with the updated yield from Table 6 of the Topic Paper.

Ref	Site	Revised Yield
DPSC1	Land to the West of Burgess Hill and North of Hurstpierpoint	1,350
DPSC2	Land at Crabbet Park	1,950
DPSC3	Land to the South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common	2,000
DPSC7	Land at LVS Hassocks, Sayers Common	200
DPA2	Land south of Apple Tree Close, Janes Lane, Burgess Hill	25
DPA3	Burgess Hill Station	375
DPA4	Land off West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead	45
DPA5	Land at Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath	36
DPA6	Land at Junction of Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane, HH	30
DPA7	Land east of Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath	60
DPA8	Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath	100

DPA10	Hurst Farm, Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down	37
DPA11	Land rear of 2 Hurst Road, Hassocks	25
DPA12	Land west of Kemps, Hurstpierpoint	0
DPA13	The Paddocks, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood	8
DPA15	Ham Lane Farm, Ham Lane, Scaynes Hill	30
DPA16	Land west of North Cottages and Challoners, Ansty	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,371</b>

2.22 Notwithstanding the fact that no information has been presented on lead in times for delivery sites (beyond that which can be interpreted from Appendix 4 of the Topic Paper), in general a figure of 6,397 represents around 89% of the total supply from the proposed allocations.

2.23 We urge particular caution on the reliance of the Topic Paper as the basis upon which the deliverability of sources of supply through the Local Plan is to be assessed. Our analysis above relates to just one part of the overall supply, but highlights how the Council does not have credible (and up-to-date) evidence as to when, and how, those sites will deliver.

#### **e) The resilience of the plan against such contingencies**

2.24 For the reasons given in this Statement, the Plan is not resilient against such matters.

#### **f) The 5 year housing land supply position at adoption**

2.25 Our response to this question is also based on the Council's latest Topic Paper (namely Appendix 4), given the age of any previous material submitted to the Examination. Appendix 4 relates to the five-year supply position for the year 2025/2026 onwards.

2.26 The Topic Paper appears to be confused in this sense, as paragraph 4.2 states "The housing land supply is calculated with a base date of 1st April 2025", but goes on to state "This calculation assumes the adoption of the District Plan in monitoring year 2026/27 and accounts for anticipated delivery rates on proposed site allocations". If the Plan were adopted in 2026/2027 then our view is that housing land supply should be considered at that point. This highlights the concerns we express elsewhere regarding the lack of any information regarding the expected completions in any particular year.

2.27 However, we note that Table 18 of the Topic Paper appears to be presented in order to address the Inspector's request in the Initial Letter [IDJB-01]. Table 18 claims a deliverable supply for the five-year period 2025 – 2030 of 5,632 dwellings, with this including sites from Category A, and Category B sources.

- 2.28 431 dwellings are from Category B sources, being Draft District Plan Allocations with no applications submitted. These 431 dwellings are expected from 11 sites, with all but one of those (The Paddocks, Lewes Road, Ashurst Wood) being for more than 10 dwellings (see Appendix 4 of the latest Topic Paper).
- 2.29 We note the NPPF definition of ‘deliverable’ refers to Category B sites as follows:
- “where a site has outline planning permission for major development, has been allocated in a development plan, has a grant of permission in principle, or is identified on a brownfield register, it should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.”*
- 2.30 Notwithstanding the assessment of any other sources of supply, if MSDC wishes those 431 dwellings to be included in the deliverable supply once the Plan is adopted, then it will be for the Council to demonstrate how there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years. There is no such evidence in the latest Topic Paper, and any other material before this Examination which the Council may wish to rely on is now of some age.
- 2.31 That concern then leads to our main, fundamental issue in this respect. Appendix 4 of the Topic Paper relates to housing land supply and (in sharp contrast to the concerns expressed elsewhere in this Statement) does seek to inform the reader about which sites will deliver and at what rate, during the five-year period. However, that is as far as the explanation goes and the Council has not presented any material to explain those delivery rates.
- 2.32 The only reference to such evidence existing is in paragraph 4.13 of the latest Topic Paper which states: *“In accordance with the NPPF and PPG the Council has engaged with the site promoters and developers to gain a robust understanding of anticipated build out rates.”* Either the Council has not presented recently gathered information upon which it now relies, or it relies on aged material (which we doubt, given the comments made elsewhere in this Statement regarding the differences between the figures in the latest Topic Paper compared to that from the summer of 2024 (Document H4).

#### **g) The ability to maintain a rolling 5-year housing land supply**

- 2.33 As with other issues dealt with in Matter 2 and through this Statement, the ability, or otherwise, of this Plan to maintain a rolling 5-year supply cannot be addressed by the material recently submitted to the Examination by MSDC.
- 2.34 It is not possible to establish, from the Topic Paper, when specific sites are expected to deliver in each year. Aside from the information presented in Appendix 4 of the Topic Paper, there is no information at all as to when sites will commence or delivery rates thereafter, nor is there any scrutiny of such matters.

- 2.35 Table 20 of the Topic Paper is intended to relate to the issue of the ‘Rolling Five Year Supply’ and we note that for each monitoring year, the Council presents its understanding of the 5-year supply (i.e. the deliverable supply) at that point (i.e. 5,632 dwellings for 2025/26 and so on). For 2025/26, the supply identified in Table 20 is consistent with the data in Appendix 4. However, the Topic Paper does not provide any explanation as to where the ‘5-year supply’ entries for the subsequent years are derived from. Put simply, what evidence does the Council point to claim that 6,167 dwellings will be available, as deliverable supply in 2026/27?
- 2.36 The Council did publish a ‘Housing Supply and Trajectory Topic Paper’ (Document H4), however that is dated July 2024. That document included (at Appendix 6), a trajectory for proposed District Plan allocations and, at Appendix 5, a ‘Summary Housing Trajectory Table’. Given the age of that Topic Paper, now approaching two years old, it cannot provide an evidential basis to the reconvened examination. This point is demonstrated by the fact that the 2024 Topic Paper claimed 6,613 dwellings would be developed in the five years from 2025/26 onwards, whereas the latest Topic Paper (MS-TP2) now claims a five-year supply from 2025/26 of 5,632 dwellings. Similarly, in 2024, MSDC expected 6,676 dwellings to be delivered in the five years from 2026/27, with the latest Topic Paper claiming a five-year supply for that period of 6,167 dwellings.
- 2.37 There is no evidence before this examination to explain how, in 2026 (not the summer of 2024), the Council expects sites to deliver. This is not to say that the evidence in 2024 painted a full picture (a detailed trajectory was only available for proposed allocations), or that the information from two years ago was robust.
- 2.38 We also note that Table 20 of the latest Topic Paper is premised on the reduced housing requirement being accepted, and on the basis that the requirement is not increased due to any of the reasons set out in the Inspector’s questions for Matter 1 (for example unmet needs, affordable housing etc).
- 2.39 Furthermore, Table 20 of the latest Topic Paper explains (paragraph 4.19) that:
- “The Council can demonstrate a rolling five year supply until year 10 by which time the majority of the smaller District Plan allocations would have been delivered. This calculation is made on the assumption that a 5% buffer is added to the requirement and that there is no under delivery. By this time, in accordance with current planning regulations, the Plan would be subject to a review.”* Our emphasis
- 2.40 As the Inspector will be aware, this is an Examination where the LPA now asks the Inspector to support a reduction in the housing requirement (based on the Plan being examined against the December 2023 NPPF). This is, of course, in the context of very high affordable housing needs, significant unmet needs (including a very significant affordable housing need which is not addressed in Crawley Borough) and in the context of a plain direction that if a Plan for this District were produced now, it should plan for significantly more, not less, housing.
- 2.41 We note that as of December 2024, the LHN for MSDC was 1,356, in March 2025 it was 1,333 dpa and that as of May 2025, this had increased to 1,358 dpa to reflect the latest information on affordability.

- 2.42 As it was submitted, the Plan required 19,620 dwellings, or 1,090 dpa.
- 2.43 MSDC now asks (via the latest Topic Paper), to reduce the provision for housing in Mid Sussex to 18,981 (999 dpa).
- 2.44 That represents less than 80% of the LHN from December 2024, March 2025 and May 2025.
- 2.45 If the Plan were adopted, then from July 2026, a 20% buffer should be applied, rather than a 5% buffer, in line with the NPPF.

## Appendix 1: Planning Practice Guidance Extract

### *“Demonstrating a housing land supply beyond 5 years*

#### **Is it essential to identify specific developable sites or broad locations for housing growth, beyond 5 years?**

*As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, local planning authorities should identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. Local plans and spatial development strategies may be able to satisfy the tests of soundness where they have not been able to identify specific sites or broad locations for growth in years 11-15. However, if longer-term sites are to be included, for example as part of a stepped requirement, then plan-makers will need to demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect that they are likely to come forward within the timescale envisaged.*

*Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 68-019-20190722*

*Revision date: 22 07 2019”*

#### **“How can plan-making authorities demonstrate there is a reasonable prospect that housing sites are ‘developable’?**

*Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework defines what constitutes a developable site. In demonstrating that there is a ‘reasonable prospect’ plan-makers can use evidence such as (but not exclusively):*

- written commitment or agreement that relevant funding is likely to come forward within the timescale indicated, such as an award of grant funding;*
- written evidence of agreement between the local planning authority and the site developer(s) which confirms the developers’ delivery intentions and anticipated start and build-out rates;*
- likely buildout rates based on sites with similar characteristics; and*
- current planning status - for example, a larger scale site with only outline permission where there is supporting evidence that the site is suitable and available, may indicate development could be completed within the next 6-10 years.*

*A pragmatic approach is appropriate when demonstrating the intended phasing of sites. For example, for sites which are considered developable within 6-10 years, the authority may need to provide a greater degree of certainty than those in years 11-15 or beyond. When producing annual updates of the housing land supply trajectory, authorities can use these to provide greater certainty about the delivery of sites initially considered to be developable, and those identified over a longer time span.*

*Further guidance is provided in the plan-making chapter about how authorities can demonstrate that strategic matters can be delivered within a particular timescale. Plan-makers can use the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment in demonstrating the developability of sites.*

*Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 68-020-20190722*

*Revision date: 22 07 2019“*

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