



Post Hearings Site Selection Methodology Review

Consultation Response

REPRESENTOR

Catesby Strategic Land

DATE

March 2026

Introduction

This consultation response has been prepared on behalf of Catesby Strategic Land in response to the post hearing Site Selection Methodology Review (MS-12) document. Catesby Strategic Land were represented by DHA Planning at the Examination in Public (EiP) hearing sessions in relation to Matter 5 (Spatial Strategy) and Matter 6 (Site Selection) on 4 and 5 March 2026.

During the hearing sessions, concerns were raised on Catesby's behalf in relation to:

- A lack of consideration of changes to the development context, both within and outside of MSDC's administrative area, which have occurred since the Site Selection Conclusions Paper was published in November 2023;
- The rigid application of certain considerations within the SHELAA, for example with regard to sustainability;
- The lack of consideration of the potential for mitigation of certain impacts.

MSDC have responded through the publication of MS-12 which sets out the Council's understanding of the discussions and outlines the steps that will be taken to assess and re-assess both new and existing, previously discounted sites. Catesby wish to comment on the proposed methodology, as invited.

Catesby welcome MSDC's commitment to consider whether allocation in the plan and/or progress in neighbouring authority plans may have a bearing on the sustainability of a location within Mid Sussex. This is considered crucial in respect of the Lunce's Hill location at the southern edge of Haywards Heath, which will benefit from the mixed-use committed development at Hurst Farm which will include the delivery of a primary school. This emerging infrastructure is already recognised by Lewes District Council (LDC) whereby site allocations are proposed on the settlement edge, primarily within the LDC boundaries but



featuring sites which are cross-boundary in nature. Taking this more considered approach will unlock important opportunities on the edge of a Category 1 settlement.

Catesby also support the commitment to taking a more positive approach to planning to be integrated into the planning balance where the potential benefits of sites are clearly articulated and weighed. The site assessments to date appear weighted towards the negative impacts without consideration to mitigation and without apparent application of an appropriate planning balancing exercise. This also links to a wider appreciation of the emerging context both within MSDC and within adjoining areas.

MSDC state that equal weight will be given to the principles set out in the spatial strategy, rather than applying the cascade approach during plan preparation, where principle 3 (growth at existing sustainable settlements) was favoured over principle 4 (growth at settlements to improve sustainability) subject to the provision of appropriate services and facilities. Catesby are concerned with this approach which seems to apply that the most sustainable, Category 1, settlements, will not be looked at first. As set out at the hearings, opportunities at Haywards Heath have not been fully exploited, and this Category 1 settlement is allocated just 226 dwellings, considerably lower than the allocation of 1708 to Burgess Hill, the 1500 allocated to Copthorne (category 2) and the 2393 allocated to the category 3 settlement of Sayers Common. Catesby understand the need for flexibility and recognise that there are likely to be opportunities beyond the category 1 settlements, but these most sustainable locations must be considered first.

MSDC confirm that the potential for impacts to be mitigated will be re-considered. Catesby strongly support this as this recognises what was considered to be a significant weakness of the original site selection process. Catesby welcome the opportunity to provide more evidence on mitigation and this will be done before the deadline of 20th March.

As a point of clarification, MS-12 notes that MSDC will re-appraise sites previously discounted at Stage 2(a). Catesby seek clarification that all previously discounted sites will be re-considered, including those discounted at the later 2(c) stage.

MS-12 states that MSDC will consider how a site, or collection of sites, may contribute to meeting unmet needs, taking into account the location of site(s) in relation to where the unmet need arises. Catesby strongly supports this on the basis that there are current and emerging opportunities to take positive steps on cross boundary opportunities to enable unmet needs to be met in the right locations. This includes opportunities adjacent to the administrative boundary with Lewes District Council.

Finally, Catesby welcome the mention of potential meetings with promoters of sites to be included on a future long list. Such engagement is considered vital to ensure that full understanding of sites can be gained, particularly with regard to mitigation opportunities, reflecting also the fact that proposals on some sites are evolving through current applications. Site promoters should be able to provide regular updates which should be factored into the further site selection process. This will help avoid a too rigid matrix style approach to the assessment of sites.