

Answers to Inspector's Matters and Issues Arising - Section 7

When writing generally, I am referring generically to all following Sayers Meadow sites:- DPSC3, DPSC4, DPSC5, DPSC6 and DPSC7

7a) How good urban design would be created, including good building design, legible layouts, attractive streets and open spaces, active frontages, the integration of sustainable transport and climate change mitigation.

- Respectfully, "urban" pertains to towns and cities. Albourne and Sayers Common are small villages from Saxon times, sustainable for centuries. We are rural, not urban. Sayers Common has a pub, church, church hall, village hall, community shop, sports fields and walking routes - fully sustainable; Albourne also has a Primary School. Being subjected to "sustainable planning" is highly patronising.
- Coalescing two separate communities disrespects villagers.
- Plans are unconnected, illogical, duplicated islands forming visual ghettos.
- Design must account for ancient woodland running through sites, allowing room to give woodland / wildlife requisite space for survival. (Local Nature Recovery Scheme). Environmental treasures must be protected and respected. We don't want artificial open spaces, what we have must be preserved.
- Regarding DPSC5 - Density of 37 dwellings per hectare and three storey buildings are inappropriate for end of village locations. Coombe Farm is sited high up, three storey houses are visible for miles. These eyesores would be seen from the South Downs where views Northwards have been praised by creatives. Constable called the view from "Devil's Dyke", "The grandest view in the world". Such designs in elevated positions knock that on the head. This is a mini Tower Hamlets. Designs disrespect local people and the local environment, being a rural visual extrusion. Looking from London Road pavements/pathways this constitutes an abomination, significantly damaging characteristic local landscape.
- Sayers Common Village Society held exit polls following Berkeley's exhibition on 30th January 2026. Of 125 contributions, 108 objected; 3 people supported, the rest were unsure. In order of polling, concerns were traffic and flooding, damage to Nature, Infrastructure (Doctors) and Lifestyle Impact. Berkeley consulted Hurstpierpoint/Sayers Common Parish Councillors - only two are from the area affected. Our District Councillor has become "The Invisible Man"; Berkeley never properly consulted local residents. We believe most people support the views of WILD, more locally SCVS and they both generally reflect Public Opinion.
- Brochures typify suburban mass-produced housing at its worst; we live in countryside alongside fragile wildlife.
- Arguably this level of house building cannot be delivered and is not needed
- Climate change has been ignored.
- 20 minute neighbourhoods are irrelevant here.
- Other than Coombe Farm, developers have still not fully shared details with villagers
- Development was always supposed to be proportionate to existing settlements. Sayers Common has already been recently tripled in size and now you are

seeking to quadruple the tripled amount - around 1,200% - surely crazy, irresponsible planning and massively disproportionate.

7b) The implications for the wider transport network (including the impact on nearby communities) and how necessary mitigation measures would be delivered

- Burgess Hill bus services are poor, ending around 6pm. Working in London is impossible if relying on buses.
- Burgess Hill station is the most accessible - nearer to London than Hassocks. If travelling any distance, cars are needed to access stations. To reach Hassocks you travel through Hurstpierpoint, a complete bottleneck, adding to extremely bad pollution at Stone Pound.
- Evidence exists of speeding motorists in Sayers Common on London Road / Reeds Lane. With increasing traffic, potentially totalling 8,000-10,000 individual car journeys a day - as workers are invariably commuters.
- Serious traffic issues occur regarding the A23. A major trunk road, used by commuters to London and those working to the North or Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath. The nearer to London, the higher the salary, intensifying use of A23 Northbound. When reaching the A23 you have to join the A Road proper. If turning right at Hickstead you exit the A23 immediately on a slip-road leading to a roundabout. Traffic for Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath and the Station turn right. A serious potential tailback problem back to the A23 persists at peak times, blocking one lane on that road. This is dangerous and potentially will cause serious accidents.
- We live East of the B2118 on the dangerous Berrylands-Goldcrest Drive crossroads; traffic is frequently so bad we need to turn left Southwards, go around Reeds Lane roundabout 180 degrees to head North, clogging up traffic.
- When bad accidents occur on A23 or A272, traffic is routed through Sayers Common, doubling or tripling vehicles
- Many heavy vehicles use the Henfield Road then divert through Sayers Common to A23 and then Northwards.

7c) The implications for the impact on, and provision of, social and community facilities (such as schools and health facilities) and how necessary new facilities would be funded and provided

- Doctors are overloaded already
- Placing children in schools is already an issue
- Nothing will be funded
- Why did the MidSussex Plan not focus on sites with proper infrastructure in stead of dumping on a flood plain?

7d) The implications for access to retail and employment centres

- The nearest Big 4 Bank is in Haywards Heath. The nearest supermarket is Burgess Hill or Haywards Heath; the nearest large Retail Centres are Brighton and Crawley. All these destinations (unless you use rail) need cars to manage food shopping trips. If by train, cars will be needed. The weekly shop there and back, totals 4,000-5,000 separate road trips.a week. With the likely 40,000-50,000 weekly commuter journeys this totals 44,000-55,000 additional road trips. What about School runs?
- Nearest Post Offices are Hurstpierpoint or Burgess Hill, likely necessitating cars.

- Most higher salaried employment centres lie North. If you work South, access to the A23 at Muddleswood is too short and dangerous. When travelling South we go North on the A23, round the roundabouts at Hickstead and South down the opposite carriageway.
- People working normally are unlikely to use buses, particularly when working in London, Crawley or Haywards Heath, as services finish around 6pm.
- Productivity levels drop when home working; the Private Sector has pressured staff to return to workplaces. Public Sector show productivity reductions and encourage workers not to work-from-home.
- Cars are essential to live here

7e) The effect on the appearance of the area including the character of the countryside, taking into account any mitigation measures

- Wholesale destruction of countryside decimates local wildlife; building houses too close destroys ancient woodland and habitats..
- This is an enforced urbanisation pogrom against people's wishes
- The appearance and nature of the area will be utterly changed and look like a suburban housing estate. Berkeley's presentation made clear the presenters did not comprehend rural Sayers Common.
- Climate change has been ignored, further increased flooding will be inevitable
- Comments by Berkeley on Nature insult people's intelligence.
- Mitigation measures are negligible. Wild flower meadows including alien species are offensive. Preserve and conserve what we already have; constructing Wildlife corridors is meaningless - we must preserve existing ones. Here today gone tomorrow Developers don't know better than the wildlife itself.

7f) The protection of wildlife and biodiversity and opportunities for enhancement

- On DPSC5, development cuts into ancient woodland to East, West and South. Designated part of the Local Nature Recovery Scheme, if developers cut trees down they pay fines. It is not just lost trees, but whole ecosystems; interdependent plants, funghi, amphibians, mosses, insects, birds, bats and animals which live there. All ancient woodland is different, special and individual, developing over hundreds/thousands of years. Only 2.5% of UK is classified "ancient woodland", recognised as our richest, most diverse land habitat; they are irreplaceable. Species in ancient woodlands are extremely slow colonising new areas. They are unique, distinctive and peculiar to their locality. Once what little we have is gone, it is gone for eternity, crushed by developers, who pay lipservice to diversity, treating it as box-ticking exercises. You don't put developments near ancient woodland.
- On 26th November 2025, land encompassing Coombe Wood was designated LNRS, "an area of particular importance for Biodiversity." The surrounding land is listed as "an area which could become important for Biodiversity". It needs space to exist; too many houses are planned to satisfy this requirement. We have an extremely fragile environment, should be recognised and cherished, not destroyed.
- Cats and dogs are introduced, killing voles, mice and birds. The latter serve as prey for predators such as Barn Owls. Take away the surrounding hunting

grounds - Barn Owls, predators and Bats will be decimated or wiped out. No food for hatchlings; eventually they will be extinct locally.

- Dog mess harms fragile habitats.
- Yellow bellied grey wagtails come here, a bird rarely seen in the South.
- Deer cross London Road near Coombe Wood site and should be protected against speeding drivers.
- Furze field off Reeds Lane is important, ecologically rich, valuable ancient Woodland subject to nature projects/initiatives. DPSC7 and DPSC6 are both very close to this, nearly encircling it. Most of it is designated "an area which could become important for Biodiversity". Ancient Woodland cannot survive on its own - the land round it is vital; this dependency is critical. Otherwise large reductions in numbers and range of fauna and flora will result. Developers cynically build as close as possible to woodlands; new adults, children and pets contribute to this wanton destruction. Attempts at mitigation by Councils are never monitored long term; biological and ecological wonders are trashed by phillistines who don't understand them.
- Sayers Common has the majority of biodiverse ecologically rich land within Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common. The value to local people of the importance of habitats built up over hundreds/thousands of years is ignored - Council planners disrespect wildlife. Once gone, it's gone; no opportunity exists to improve, only destroy.
- Regarding DPSC3 and DPSC4, while not as rich as the previous sites, valuable wildlife habitats will be trashed. The Woodland Flora & Fauna Group set up conservation areas 20 years ago for Barn Owls and these sites are included; land suitable for finding prey. Many Councils have protected areas, but Mid Sussex lack Green Credentials or any appreciation of wildlife. The Council are happy to destroy everything, dumping housing needs into one lump, ignoring local wishes. 2,500 houses built in this area with no infrastructure will cause local extinctions because of lazy planning.
- You cannot "enhance" fragile environments. A developer chucking flower seeds down, many alien, saying I'm biodiverse, here's your flower meadow, is missing the point; ancient biodiversity arks cannot be replaced. There should be a proper Protection Policy for these Low Wealden wildlife treasures - not obliteration.

7g) The protection of heritage assets

- DPSC5, Coombe Farm, possesses Listed Buildings, badly encroaching on surrounding land, overshadowing them. Agricultural assets need space around them to give them meaning, underlining their original purpose. With five ineffective attenuation ponds and three storey mini-skyscrapers, the overall effect is like a failed moated children's Theme Park.
- Very near DPSC7 is Kingscot, a Listed Building hundreds of years old; low-lying with a large Pond. Because of issues with flooding coming from DPSC7, moving on towards London Road and Central Sayers Common, more space should be allowed around this building to protect it.
- Sayers & Aymers are two Listed ancient cottages on B2118 near Goldcrest Drive. They have past flooding issues, being well below the main road level.

- Climate change and increased flooding, due to massive development, threaten these low-lying buildings.

7h) The funding and delivery of necessary infrastructure and other necessary mitigation measures

- There is no point listing these - we know the Council/Developers will never deliver them. We have flooding, sewage, potential health issues, water supply, traffic, travel, infrastructure issues (eg. not enough Doctors). Local wildlife is already partly destroyed by development cutting into Furzelds Wood. The Council does precious little, struggling to even provide routine maintenance. 2,500 new houses, with widespread concreting makes matters considerably worse.
- No proper work has been done assessing the impact of these risk variables - traffic, travel, concreting, flooding, water input, sewage output, damage to wildlife. Many changes that may make development truly sustainable are not in Developers' or Council's control and are too expensive. If unresolved, development becomes completely unsustainable. Most of these variables are inter-dependent, making outcomes unpredictable. The Council is subjecting us to an experiment in Chaos Theory, with no clue as to results. Are they careless, incompetent or irresponsible?

7i) The position regarding the existing condition of the site and its deliverability

Flooding

- Examine the Topography and Geology; Central Sayers Common is a saucer with developments encircling it. Soil is impermeable clay, criss-crossed by streams, waterways/drainage ditches. DPSC5, Coombe Farm, slopes down a hill Westwards to London Road which floods in bad weather. Excess water from concreting/bricking over this site cascades down the slope onto London Road, low-lying Wintergreens and Furzelds Way, then proceeds down London Road and drainage ditches North to Central Sayers Common. The Coach-house and nearby cottages have histories of flooding, still regularly putting sandbags out in rainy weather. Five "attenuation basins", not self-balancing ponds, are proposed to hold excess water on non-porous clay. In heavy rain they first retain water, then flood surrounding land to the West. Excess water will flow down slopes towards London Road, Wintergreens and Furzelds Way, then Central Sayers Common. Mid Sussex Council cannot even afford to maintain Sayers Common Village Pond properly - enveloped in new development 30 years ago. Maintenance must be done by volunteers. The Council does not maintain the water sump in Dunlop Close. What chance is there the Council will maintain five attenuation basins long-term? Slim or none; there is an established pattern. "Attenuation ponds" cannot be sustainable and present dangers to young children.
- The Council were advised by an expert the silted-up Village Pond needed dredging; Council refused on cost grounds, resulting in an increased risk of flooding.
- DPSC3 slopes North, excess water due to concrete/2000 new houses will run North flooding Reeds Lane, already susceptible to flooding, and Linden Homes, which floods so much it should never have been built. Just taking 27th January

2026, there was heavy rain and the recently completed Linden Homes development was virtually surrounded by flooding and swollen water courses to North, West and South. The one road accessing this, to the East, was completely flooded with water near the Care Home. This is not unusual and will repeat in anything like normal rainfall this Winter. Remaining water flows onto Reeds Lane, B2118 and Central Sayers Common. We had droughts Autumn/early Winter; rainfall is much less than normal. Hosepipe bans operated until February 5th 2026. With climate change, 2,500 houses, losing land absorbing moisture increases flooding. The North-western Quadrant of Sayers Common lies several feet below London Road, regularly flooding, a major risk.

- DPSC4 is on low lying land near Central Sayers Common. It will lose soakaway; in heavy rain excess water adds to the flooding of Central Sayers Common.
- DPSC7, LVS, gently slopes South. With heavy rain, excess water flows South towards Linden Homes swelling its water courses because of concreting/bricking over land which currently absorbs water. Excess water will reach London Road and run South downwards towards Central Sayers Common.
- DPSC6, near Kings Business Centre is on marshy land even lower than Linden Homes. Cotton grass grows extensively - sure sign of bogs. It collects excess rainwater from other sites, making bogs worse. This fails any flooding test; selling houses would be difficult.
- Local Councils don't manage existing assets. Drainage ditches around the Pond should be maintained by either West Sussex or Mid Sussex Council - nothing happens, each passing the buck. Clearance and maintenance of drainage ditches are essential to ensure Sayers Common is not seriously flooded. Some are to be found on DPSC5 - I doubt they are maintained. If the village triples or quadruples in size the whole plan looks unsustainable - causing more issues with flooding.
- A disastrous event occurred on 16/17 November 2022, when The Coach-house and cottages near the Duke of York in London Road and a garage in Berrylands Farm were flooded. Other houses in Berrylands Farm and The Chestnuts were almost flooded out, missing by about an inch. This is not an isolated event. The Duke of York's cellars regularly flood. As recently as 27th January 2026, London Road houses deployed sandbags as did at least one house in Berrylands Farm. That day, there were massive floods across Goldcrest Drive.
- The B2118 coming into Sayers Common regularly floods after heavy rain, both sides of the Road.
- Because of climate change, the topography and geology of the area, building houses on this scale will likely result in significant parts of Central Sayers Common, especially the low lying North-Western Quadrant, becoming unsustainable for human habitation. Ironic, as it has been sustainable since Saxon times. Excess rain/floodwater has to go somewhere, you cannot magic it away; reverting to pumping is prohibitively expensive.

Sewerage pipe systems

- Sewer pipes are small diameter, dating back to Victorian times, designed to cope with sewage from 100-200 houses in Sayers Common. The village has more than doubled/tripled and now it is planned to increase three or four-fold on top. When

heavy, rainwater mingles with sewage to leave foul deposits with sewage emanating from drains. Residents have had homes and garages fouled. With planned changes, these instances will increase; residents will be exposed to greater health risks.

- Southern Water manages sewerage and are in Special Measures, we have little confidence in them.
- In heavy rain, toilets behave strangely, filling up almost to the bowl, giving a foul stench; sometimes after flushing, sewage is imported.

Supply of Water Incoming

- South East Water imposed hosepipe bans from Spring/Summer until February 5th 2026. It implores us to reduce water consumption, collect water and informs us reservoir levels are low; and housing stock is being quadrupled! Will we run out of water? We have little confidence they could cope with future demand. Are new reservoirs needed?
- Tanya Sephton, South Eastern Water, emailed us 28th January 2026, apologising for interrupting water supply to numerous sites in Sussex. Emergency works are being carried out, but not here. During the recent Storm, drinking water storage tanks could not be refilled quickly enough to meet demand. How will they cope with quadrupling demand? We lack confidence they could, doubting their ability to deliver new reservoirs. They are in Special Measures, correctly so.

7j) Whether the Council's assumptions are realistic in respect of densities, start dates, number of suggested outlets and build out rates, and hence the delivery trajectory

- The assumptions look unrealistic in terms of impact, densities are far too high, building intrudes on LNRS designated areas. We do not want rabbit hutches with postage stamp gardens built.
- The prevailing Income / House price gap seriously dampens demand
- Such ill-formulated planning policies will likely have disastrous results - extreme flooding events exacerbated by climate change, traffic gridlock, meltdown of wildlife, risks to residents, sewage failures, running out of water. What a proud legacy for the Council!
- In summary, Mid Sussex Plan looks illogical, completely and utterly unsustainable.
- I recall a quote from Lord John Redwood who said the issue with Planning Policy is that houses always end up in the wrong places