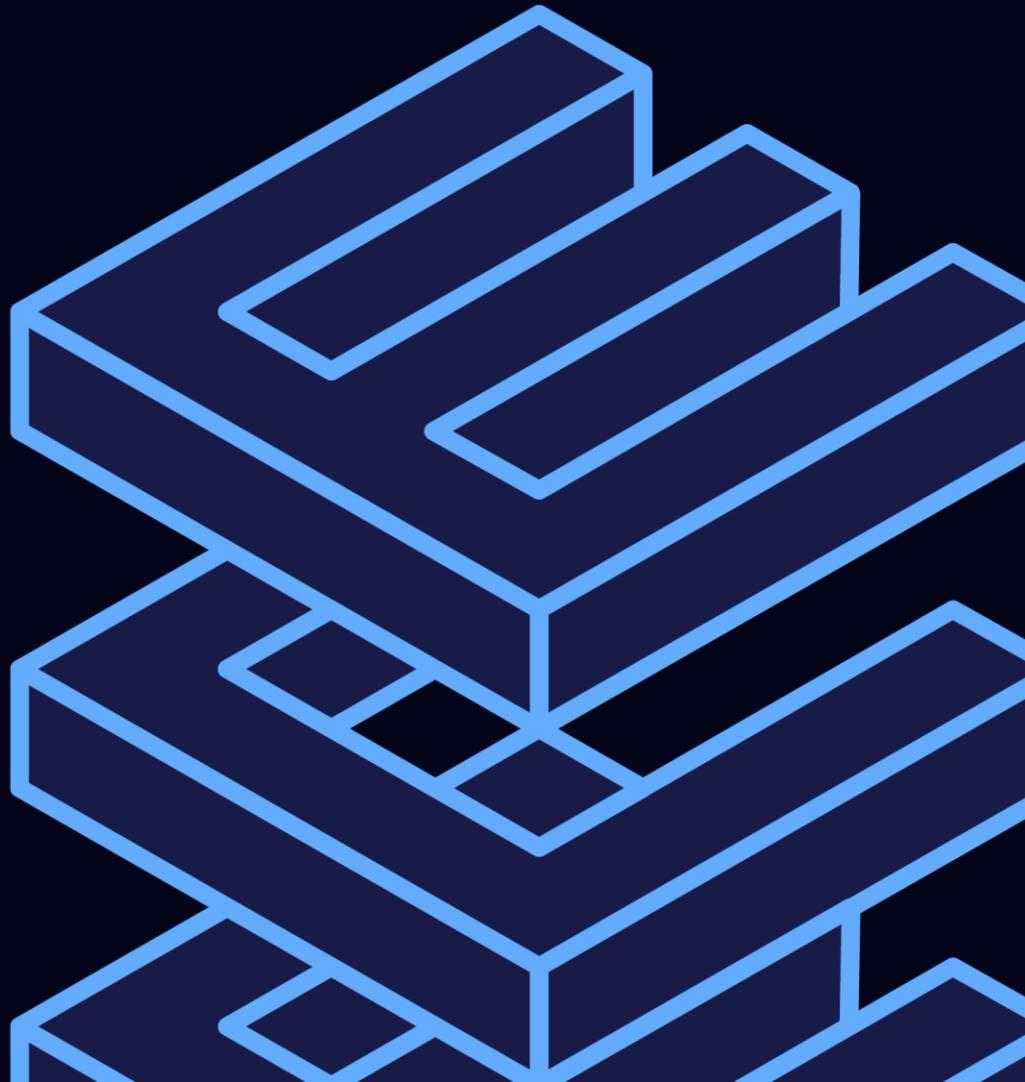


ECE Planning

MSDC Local Plan Examination: Hearing Statement – Matter 5

Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint

February 2026



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Project Name: Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint
 Location Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint
 Client: Danworth Farm Ltd
 File Reference: P2316

Issue	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
A	11/02/2026	M Smith	S Sykes	Final issue

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement is prepared by ECE Planning on behalf of Danworth Farm Ltd for the Examination of the Mid Sussex District Plan Review.
- 1.2. The Hearing Statement responds to the relevant Matters and Issues identified by the Planning Inspector ahead of Examination, in order to assess the soundness of the draft District Plan.
- 1.3. Danworth Farm Ltd has been promoting the site **Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint**, for residential development during the plan-making process.



Figure 1 - Location Plan of Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint

- 1.4. The site is not allocated within the draft Plan, but has been assessed as *Suitable, Available and Achievable* within the MSDC Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA Ref 1075).
- 1.5. Representations on Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 have been made previously by Savills. These are appended for ease at Appendices A and B.
- 1.6. Pre-Application Meetings have also taken place with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Officers, and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Highways Officers. Positive feedback has been received from both parties, confirming that there are no 'showstoppers' for development at the site.
- 1.7. The SHELAA Pro-Forma, Pre-Application Submission, and Pre-Application Feedback (from both MSDC and WSSCC) are also appended to this Statement.
- 1.8. In this context, Land at Cuckfield Road represents a sustainable and deliverable omission site that can make an immediate and meaningful contribution to housing supply. Its allocation would assist in addressing identified unmet housing need, strengthen early-years

delivery and headroom, and improve the effectiveness and resilience of the spatial strategy.

- 1.9. Where relevant, reference is made to the site to demonstrate how alternative or additional sites could positively contribute to the soundness and deliverability of the Draft District Plan.

2. Matter 5 – The Spatial Strategy

2.1. The effectiveness and soundness of the proposed distribution of new development in meeting social, economic and environmental objectives, whether it will achieve more than the sum of its parts and whether it will amount to positive planning.

Matter 5a) Whether the plan's apportionment of development to larger and smaller settlements and freestanding allocations, and to different sizes of site, is effective in ensuring delivery and in meeting community needs

2.2. The spatial strategy within the Draft District Plan is heavily focused on a small number of large strategic allocations to meet housing need. While such sites contribute to local housing need, this approach has resulted in insufficient provision being made within existing, highly sustainable settlements, where development could come forward earlier, more flexibly, and with closer alignment to existing infrastructure and services.

2.3. Hurstpierpoint is identified within the Council's Settlement Hierarchy as a Category 2: 'Larger Village'. As defined in the Draft Plan, Larger Villages act as Local Service Centres, performing a key role in supporting surrounding rural areas and accommodating sustainable growth.

2.4. Hurstpierpoint is one of the most sustainable settlements within this tier, benefitting from a wide range of local services and facilities, including a GP practice, primary school, pre-school provision, places of worship, shops, restaurants, public houses, and recreational facilities. Additional services and facilities are also available in nearby Hassocks.

2.5. Notwithstanding these sustainability credentials, the level of development proposed at Hurstpierpoint is very limited. The Plan allocates only 90 dwellings at the settlement under Policy DPA12 (Land west of Kemps), which is markedly lower than other settlements within the same tier. By comparison:

- **Copthorne:** 1,500 dwellings allocated
- **Crawley Down:** 387 dwellings allocated

2.6. This distribution demonstrates a clear imbalance within the Category 2 settlements, with growth concentrated in a small number of locations and limited opportunity for sustainable Larger Villages such as Hurstpierpoint to contribute meaningfully to meeting housing needs.

2.7. The Council's approach appears to place disproportionate emphasis on parish-wide totals, rather than assessing the sustainability, capacity, and role of individual settlements.

2.8. This is evident within Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish which includes large, strategic allocations at Sayers Common (DPSC3, DPSC4, DPSC5, DPSC6, DPSC7 - 2,393 dwellings) and Land West of Burgess Hill (DPSC1- 740 dwellings). However, these allocations are not within or close to the settlement of Hurstpierpoint, which is also capable of accommodating additional development.

2.9. Furthermore, the deliverability of the single allocation at Hurstpierpoint is itself uncertain. As acknowledged by MSDC within the Housing Topic Paper (paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17), the allocation at Land west of Kemps (Policy DPA12) is no longer subject to an active promotion agreement, and there are significant access constraints. This raises clear concerns regarding the effectiveness and certainty of delivery at this site. It is notable that, for the purposes of calculating the updated housing supply position for the Submitted District Plan, MSDC has removed this site from its supply calculations. This is considered further in Matters 6 and 7 of this Statement.

2.10. In this context, the spatial strategy would be more effective if it incorporated additional smaller and medium-sized sites within sustainable settlements such as Hurstpierpoint. Such

sites are typically closer to existing services and infrastructure, have shorter lead-in times, do not rely on provision of new infrastructure, and are capable of delivering housing earlier in the plan period, as discussed under Matter 2.

- 2.11. Smaller sites can be accommodated with acceptable impacts on existing infrastructure and provide opportunities to secure targeted improvements through Section 106 contributions, enhancing local services rather than relying on the delivery of new strategic infrastructure associated with the larger allocations at Sayers Common at Land West of Burgess Hill.
- 2.12. Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint is sustainably located, has been subject to detailed technical work and pre-application engagement, and is capable of contributing to housing delivery in a manner that aligns with the role of Hurstpierpoint as a Larger Village.
- 2.13. A spatial strategy that makes better use of sustainable settlements such as Hurstpierpoint, through the allocation of additional deliverable sites, would be more effective in ensuring delivery, meeting community needs, and achieving positive planning outcomes in accordance with Matter 5a.

Matter 5b) The relationship between the spatial strategy and transport objectives, transport infrastructure and transport constraints

- 2.14. An effective spatial strategy should prioritise sustainable locations where reliance on the private car can be reduced, active travel is realistic and attractive, and additional traffic can be accommodated without requiring substantial new infrastructure investment.
- 2.15. The draft consultation version of the NPPF places increased emphasis on locating development in proximity to existing railway stations and established public transport corridors. However, several of the proposed strategic allocations, for example those at Sayers Common, are located approximately 7km from Hassocks Railway Station, equating to over an hour's walk. Such locations are inherently more reliant on private vehicle use and are less aligned with the direction of national policy seeking to reduce travel demand and support modal shift.
- 2.16. By contrast, Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint is a sustainable and deliverable location. It lies within reasonable cycling distance of Hassocks Railway Station, aligning with the draft NPPF's emphasis on development close to existing rail infrastructure. The site adjoins the settlement boundary, enabling trips to local services by foot or cycle and offering opportunities to enhance local connectivity.

Amenity	Walking Distance (from the centre of site)	Walking Time (80m per minute)	Cycle Time (250m per minute)
Willow Way Bus Stop	340m	4 minutes	1 minute
The Young Actors Group	340m	4 minutes	1 minute
Fairfield Recreation Ground	450m	6 minutes	2 minutes
Hurstpierpoint Cricket Club	450m	6 minutes	2 minutes
St Catherine's Church	1.1km	14 minutes	4 minutes
Hurst Butchers	1.3km	16 minutes	5 minutes
No.1 Coffee Shop	1.37km	17 minutes	5 minutes
Crossways Fish and Chips	1.37km	17 minutes	5 minutes
St Lawrence C of E Primary School	1.4km	18 minutes	5 minutes
Hurstpierpoint Library	1.4km	18 minutes	5 minutes
Morleys Bistro	1.4km	18 minutes	5 minutes
Co-op Food	1.58km	20 minutes	6 minutes
Post Office	1.6km	20 minutes	6 minutes
Hurstpierpoint Health Centre	1.6km	20 minutes	6 minutes
Hassocks Train Station	4.2km	-	17 minutes

Table 1: Local Facilities and Amenities

Figure 2 - Table from WSCC Highways Scoping Note demonstrating walking and cycle distance to local services from Land at Cuckfield Road

- 2.17. Pre-application engagement with West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority raised no concerns regarding highway capacity or wider network impacts, and there are no identified transport constraints affecting delivery, as demonstrated within Appendix F.

