Hearing Statement

MM60: East and West of Malthouse Lane (Site 1105)

Mel Madge

Introduction: As a resident of Burgess Hill (who lives near the eastern parcel), I object to MM60 as I do not believe that current evidence demonstrates MM60 to be a safe, sound and sustainable development of 750 homes for the reasons described below .

A. **Movement:**

<u>Form of access from Jane Murray Way -</u>

The instalment of two additional roundabouts or junctions on Jane Murray Way (allowing vehicular access to MM60) would greatly ***increase the volume of traffic and the likelihood of traffic queues*** on this road, particularly at peak times. This would be exacerbated by the relatively short distance between the 'Tesco roundabout' and the proposed new roundabout near B&Q. ((Currently, at Christmas and at other peak times, traffic queues can build up from Jane Murray Way (near B&Q), extending past the 'Tesco roundabout' and into the Tesco car park)).

Remedial work which has taken place to address flooding on Jane Murray Way (near B&Q) now seems to have shifted the flooding to different parts of the road (towards the Burial Ground and Coulstock Road), but the flooding remains in relatively close proximity to the proposed siting of one of the proposed new roundabouts / junctions which would allow vehicular access to MM60. ***This flooding would also impact traffic flow.***

Additionally, the proposed new roundabouts / roads from Jane Murray Way allowing access to MM60 intersect with the Green Circle. The Green Circle is currently a traffic free stretch, which is used by cyclists, horse riders, runners, dog walkers (like myself) and families with young children. ***There are considerable concerns that the community's enjoyment, activity and safety when using the Green Circle will be compromised by the new roundabouts / access roads to MM60. Indeed, MM60 would diminish the benefits of the Green Circle to the community, and therefore, MM60 should not be considered sound.***

<u>Effect on the surrounding road network and highway safety for all users, including school children and horse riders, taking into account mitigation measures -</u>

In addition to safety concerns regarding the proposed new roundabouts / access roads which intersect the Green Circle, ***MM60 would bring a greatly increased volume of traffic*** not only into the locality of Jane Murray Way, but also Stone Pound Cross, College Lane, Malthouse Lane, Danworth Lane and the wider Burgess Hill road network. ((Malthouse Lane and Danworth Lane are very narrow, country lanes with 'blind bends' and without pavements. Pedestrians (including school children), cyclists and horse riders are already at ***risk of accident*** when travelling on these lanes. The risks will increase concomitantly with the increased traffic volume from MM60)).

Increased traffic volume due to MM60 will be compounded by DPSC1 which comprises of a development of a further 1350 homes, whilst development is also taking place at other sites in Burgess Hill (such as Brookleigh with 3500 homes).

I believe that the cumulative effect of 2000 homes (MM60 + DPSC1), plus Brookleigh, upon the existing local road structure would be unsustainable. Indeed, the Council needs to model the cumulative effects of MM60, DPSC1 and other developments, on local roads that residents use, including at peak and school times, walking / cycling routes and highway safety.

It must be noted, however, that ***the Council previously rejected Site 1105 for development primarily due to the risk of traffic impacts at the A23 / A2300 junction, and potential cumulative negative traffic impacts caused by DPSC1.*** Whilst this previous rejection may not preclude reconsideration, it does raise a question as to ***what evidence there is that the concerns which originally led to the rejection of Site 1105 have now been resolved?*** After all, DPSC1 remains the secondary access for MM60, with primary access being from Jane Murray Way.

Proposals for buses, cycling, wheeling and walking and connectivity between the two parcels, the town centre and the station + availability of, and distance to social and community facilities

The proposed connection between the eastern and western parcels of MM60 currently consists of a very narrow lane linking the site to Malthouse Lane. (This lane is also a public footpath). I understand that there may be ***legal and other constraints upon any proposals to widen this lane*** to safely accommodate two way traffic and pedestrians / vulnerable users. There are also concerns that this lane could be used by non-MM60 residents as a ***'through road'*** between Burgess Hill and Malthouse Lane. ***If these fundamental matters are not resolved satisfactorily, MM60 cannot be considered a safe and sustainable development.***

In terms of connectivity with local services / amenities, MM60 was initially promoted as a ***"15 minute neighbourhood"*** including a new primary school, but the school has been excluded from the current version of MM60. It is now unclear where children from MM60's 750 households will attend school.

MM60 greatly exceeds the Government's defined reasonable walking distance from Burgess Hill Railway Station. ***The only possible genuinely 'walkable' amenities are Tesco, B&Q and Pets at Home***, with restaurants, pubs, social and sports facilities etc. being much further afield than a "15 minute" walk from MM60.

My experience evidences that ***the existing infrastructure of Burgess Hill is already under great pressure, even without the addition of 750 households.*** Supermarkets, schools and health care facilities are already operating at full capacity and present as struggling to meet the needs of the existing local community. Furthermore, Burgess Hill town centre is currently in a state of 'neglect'.

The Council should model the number of car journeys which would result from the additional 750 households from MM60, as these households would need to travel in order to access the railway station, schools, shops, health care, restaurants and other amenities not just in Burgess Hill, but also in neighbouring towns where a greater range of amenities / community facilities might be available. ((I believe that the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (17/08/26) states that developments should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car)).

In terms of ***active travel***, if routes for walking or cycling are made less safe or less appealing by the volume of traffic generated by MM60 itself (in addition to traffic generated by other local developments), this would in-turn increase the car dependency of MM60 residents. ***Therefore, MM60 could not be considered to be a sustainable development.***

B. Landscape, countryside and heritage:

<u>Effect on the countryside and access to it, trees, woodland and wildlife –</u>

One of the reasons Site 1105 was previously rejected for development was because the Council's Sustainability Appraisal noted potential impacts or net losses concerning local green space and the Green Circle Network. These potential impacts and net losses have not changed, but do not currently appear to be being given due consideration.

The Council / publicly owned open spaces adjacent to Site 1105 and the privately owned fields at Site 1105 are interrelated, and do not exist in isolation from each other.

Changes made to the privately owned fields will impact upon the public open spaces (and public footpaths).

In addition to safety and other concerns relating to the new roundabouts / access roads to MM60 intersecting the Green Circle (discussed above), the MM60 development would result in ***public open spaces*** (***Green Circle Network –*** including Hammond's Ridge Meadows and Malthouse Lane Meadows) being partially surrounded / bordered by MM60 houses and roads, subject to a greatly increased footfall and losing their quiet natural rural character. This would constitute a ***huge loss,*** particularly to the existing community who live on estates near to the eastern parcel. ***Indeed, Hammond's Ridge Meadows would no longer be a place that other local residents and I can retreat to for peaceful walks and to maintain our mental wellbeing. (MM60 would diminish the benefits of the Green Circle to the public, and therefore, cannot be considered sound).***

Additionally, the MM60 development would extend south-westerly into the countryside inevitably resulting in ***loss of hedgerow, trees, green landscape (mainly privately owned fields – some with public footpaths) and views of the South Downs.***

The Green Circle, privately owned fields, hedgerows, woodlands, ponds and Herrings Stream **together** ***provide connected wildlife corridors / habitats.*** I regularly walk my dog on the Green Circle and public footpaths at Site 1105, and have seen deer, badgers, birds, reptiles (slow worms) and bats here. ((Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre also notes the presence of protected butterfly species at Hammond's Ridge Meadows and associated fields.))

The Council should carry out ecological surveys to identify which protected or priority species are present on Site 1105, and demonstrate that development MM60 itself and proposed new roads or 'access' roundabouts (which intersect with the Green Circle) would not impact upon wildlife habitats / corridors. Without these actions, MM60 could not be considered sound.

Effect on the separate identity of settlements taking into account landscaping and planting buffers -

The loss of Maltings Farm and other stables / grazing areas on eastern parcel of ***Site 1105, will erase the historic equestrian and rural character of the area.***

With the MM60 development extending south-westerly into the countryside, the ***green buffer separating Burgess Hill from Hurstpierpoint (a historic village) will be significantly eroded.*** Whilst the MM60 development itself requires landscaping (such as

screening houses with plants / trees) to minimise the perception of coalescence between settlements, this is not an acceptable substitute for retaining genuine countryside.

The Council should demonstrate that the separation, distinct identities and characteristics of Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint will be preserved, rather than merely attempting to screen MM60 from view.

C. Infrastructure, delivery and capacity:

Utilities and any potential impediment to delivery -

There are ongoing issues with water supply in Burgess Hill, as well as ongoing concerns about the level of water at the Ardingly Reservoir. There are also regular outages of water supply, often due to burst water mains in Burgess Hill and / or the surrounding areas.

During the last 4.5 years that I have lived in Burgess Hill, every year there have been electricity power outages, with there being several outages during the winter months in some years (and with some of the outages lasting for several hours).

There are serious concerns about how sustainable water and electricity supplies will be during and after the construction of MM60 (comprising of an additional 750 households), together with the cumulative impact of other local developments and climate change, which will put further pressure upon the water and electricity supply. ***Therefore, I do not believe that MM60 can be considered to be a sound and sustainable development.***

Flood risk -

In addition to the above mentioned flooding on Jane Murray Way (near a proposed new roundabout), Malthouse Lane and the surrounding fields (particularly near Herrings Stream) already experience significant flooding outside of the summer months. This would constitute a material threat to the homes of MM60 residents, as well as causing severe difficulties with vehicular movement and access for MM60 residents.

Indeed, ***the Council's own Sustainability Appraisal (July 2026) gives Site 1105 a significant 'negative assessment' for flooding and surface water.*** Before allowing the building of 750 homes, roads and other hard surfaces here, ***the Council should demonstrate that the area can be adequately drained without increasing flooding on Jane Murray Way, Malthouse Lane or Herrings Stream, particularly considering the cumulative impact of other developments in the area and climate change.***

Conclusion:

For the above stated reasons, I do not believe MM60 to be a safe, sound and sustainable development when considering traffic, highway safety, the Green Circle, loss of countryside and heritage, ecology, separation of settlements, flood risk, utilities and infrastructure capacity. I would respectfully ask the Inspector not to recommend MM60 in its present form. Further extensive investigations and actions would be required to establish and secure the soundness of this allocation.

12/10/26