

Cllr Robert Eggleston – Leader – Opening remarks - Tuesday 24 February 2026

On behalf of the District Council, we would like to welcome you back to Mid Sussex. As most participants in this Examination will know, you were (of course) the Inspector who examined the last District Plan, which has served us well over the last 8 years.

As Mr Bore and the other participants will know this Council takes plan making seriously and believes in a plan led system to support sustainable growth.

Our methodology for the allocation of housing sites has been tested, not once, but twice in Examination and has been found to be sound both times. Our challenge, with 60% of the District designated as National Landscape or in the South Down National Park, is how we continue to meet our legal obligations for plan making.

So, all the political groups in this Council have together taken brave decisions including changing our spatial strategy to ensure we continue to be the only council in the area able to meet our housing needs as well as providing for our neighbours. Applying, the same proven site selection methodology we are more than fulfilling our obligations in this Plan providing much needed housing.

I am proud that our Plan protects communities as much as possible and is sensitive to the pressures that development has on them and our treasured landscapes. Our plan does as much as it can to support development within the context of community and landscape protection.

In preparing this Plan we have worked closely with our communities particularly town and parish councils affected by development going beyond any statutory requirements to consult with them, to deliver the best results for them.

Indeed, between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 officers held 56 hours of meetings with parishes potentially impacted by this Plan to attempt to reflect their concerns. Since submitting this Plan for examination this work has continued. For example, at Sayers Common we have continued to work together with all stakeholders on all the sites to ensure we are developing a sustainable community that supports the needs of the community.

We are meeting our housing need. We will also make a contribution to our neighbour's unmet needs. But this District Plan is much more than a number. It contains a suite of policies that will guide and control development in the district.

It's a Plan about people, people who want somewhere to live and work in the district, who want to get on the housing ladder, raise families, get off the housing waiting list or enjoy their later years of life, possibly with assisted living. Homes for people who need homes appropriate to their needs.

It is about Place, providing safe and sustainable communities which can provide for our everyday needs, whilst ensuring that essential, sustainable connections are provided between places or building those centres where people live.

It is about investment, securing financial contributions to ensure the places where people live are rich in the infrastructure they need as well as providing resources to the wider community.

And finally, it is about our environment. This District is 88% rural. I make no apology for stating that as a Council we value our precious landscapes, nature, and the environment around us. The district will still be 86% rural when all the allocated sites are developed.

Our plan is robust. It is evidence based. It is well considered with strong defensible policies. It is a plan that enjoys cross party support. It is a good plan.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you at the start of this Examination and wish you all the very best in your deliberations.