

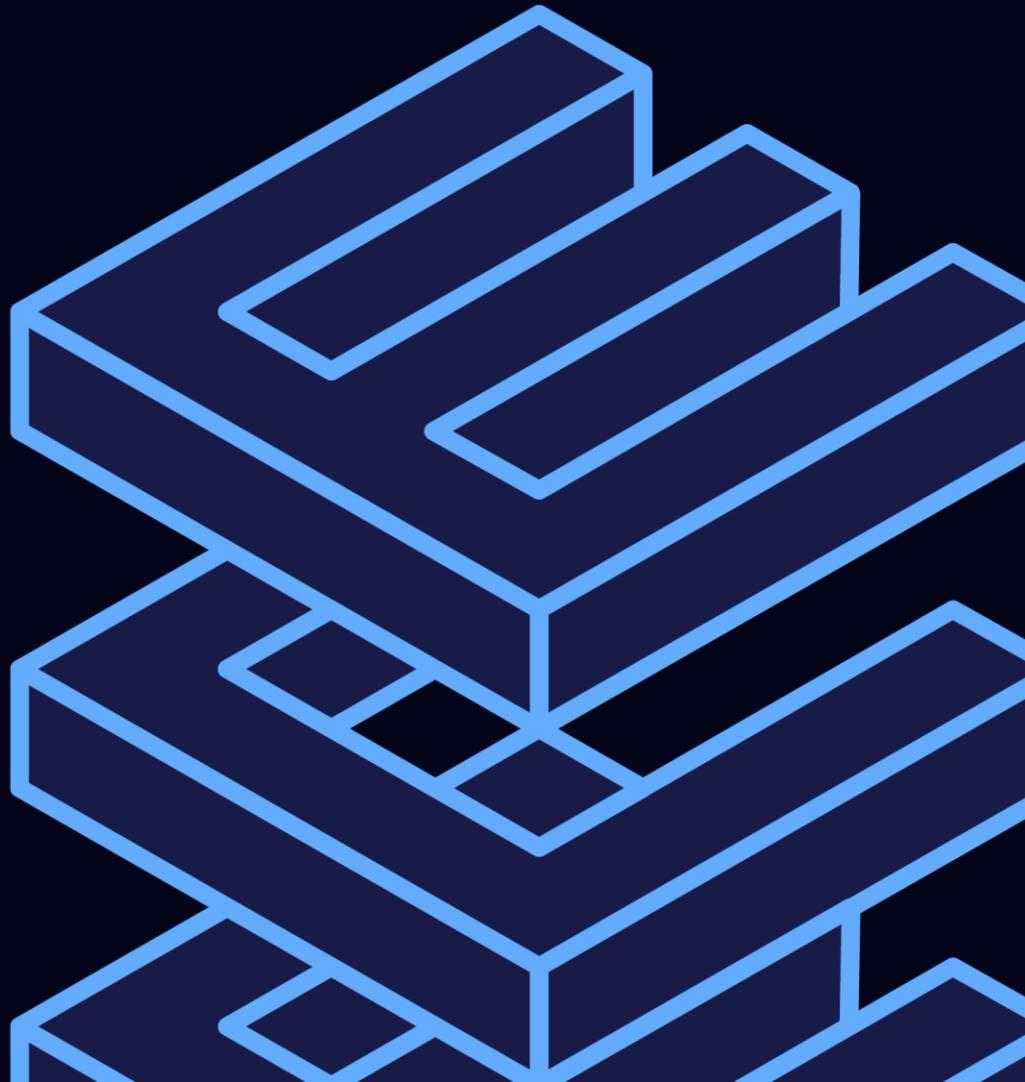


ECE Planning

MSDC Local Plan Examination: Hearing Statement – Matter 2

Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint

February 2026



ECE Planning
64 – 68 Brighton Road, Worthing
West Sussex, BN11 2EN

www.eceplanning.com

info@eceplanning.com

01903 248777

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

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Matter 2 - Housing Supply and Headroom.....	6

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 2 - Housing Supply and Headroom

- 2.1. Whether enough housing land has been allocated to ensure that, along with existing permissions and commitments, enough housing land will come forward to meet the housing requirement through the life of the plan and that a 5 year housing land supply will be maintained.
- 2.2. The following responds collectively to Matters 2a-2g concerning anticipated housing supply over the plan period, the level of headroom, the supply trajectory, risks of lower-than-anticipated delivery, the resilience of the Plan, the five-year housing land supply position at adoption, and the ability to maintain a rolling five-year supply.
- 2.3. The Plan's housing supply strategy is heavily reliant on a limited number of large strategic allocations to deliver the majority of new dwellings across the plan period. Whilst these sites make a significant contribution to overall supply, their scale and complexity inevitably result in longer lead-in times, substantial infrastructure requirements, viability considerations, and slower build-out rates.
- 2.4. The Council's Housing Supply and Trajectory demonstrates that the majority of dwellings from the principal strategic allocations are anticipated to be delivered from 2029 onwards. Approximately 73% of proposed allocations are concentrated within three strategic sites (DPSC1, DPSC2 and DPSC3), all forecast to begin delivering from year 6 of the Plan period. This results in a markedly back-loaded trajectory.
- 2.5. As a consequence, housing delivery in the first five years of the Plan is dependent predominantly on extant permissions and sites carried forward from the adopted Site Allocations DPD, rather than on new allocations within the emerging Plan. Whilst the Council may be able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply at the point of adoption, this position is inherently fragile. It is heavily reliant on existing commitments performing precisely as anticipated and provides limited contingency should delivery rates slow, infrastructure delivery be delayed, or market conditions change.
- 2.6. The modest level of headroom above the identified housing requirement further reduces flexibility within the supply strategy. As set out under Matter 1, the Plan includes only limited over-supply despite significant unmet need arising from neighbouring authorities. Given both the acknowledged unmet need and the concentration of future delivery within a small number of strategic sites, the degree of headroom proposed does not provide a meaningful buffer against under-delivery.
- 2.7. There is a clear and recognised risk of lower-than-anticipated supply arising from delivery impediments commonly associated with large strategic sites, including extended lead-in periods, infrastructure dependencies, land assembly complexities, funding constraints, viability pressures, and slower absorption rates. The Plan does not sufficiently mitigate these risks through the allocation of a broader range of smaller or medium-sized sites capable of delivering earlier and more consistently across the plan period. Nor does it provide a clear mechanism within the trajectory to respond if delivery from strategic sites is delayed.
- 2.8. Market conditions further expose this vulnerability. Sites acquired in stronger market cycles can stall where values soften and costs rise, delaying delivery despite having planning permission. A strategy heavily reliant on a small number of large, phased sites is therefore inherently more susceptible to market downturns.
- 2.9. National policy provides clear direction in this regard. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF states that small and medium-sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for SME housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built out relatively quickly. A diversified supply portfolio, incorporating a broader mix of site sizes, improves choice and competition in the market, reduces over-reliance on individual large sites, and strengthens delivery resilience.

- 2.10. In addition to larger strategic sites, smaller, sustainable and well-advanced sites are capable of contributing meaningfully within the first five years of the Plan and providing additional headroom in the early years, when resilience is most critical. An example of this, Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint, is a deliverable omission site capable of delivering up to 130 dwellings. The site has been subject to detailed technical work and pre-application engagement and is capable of early delivery within the plan period.
- 2.11. The allocation of a modest number of comparable small-to-medium sites would:
- Strengthen the early-years housing trajectory;
 - Increase headroom above the housing requirement;
 - Reduce the Plan's over-reliance on a small number of large strategic allocations;
 - Improve resilience to delays, infrastructure constraints and market fluctuations; and
 - Provide greater certainty in maintaining a robust rolling five-year housing land supply throughout the plan period.
- 2.12. In summary, the Plan's housing strategy is overly concentrated and heavily back-loaded, with limited early-years flexibility and only modest headroom above the housing requirement. Although a five-year housing land supply may be demonstrated at adoption, this position is dependent on existing commitments and historic allocations continuing to perform as forecast and is therefore vulnerable to disruption.
- 2.13. The inclusion of a broader mix of smaller to medium-sized, deliverable and well-advanced sites, including Land at Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint, would materially strengthen early-years delivery, increase supply headroom, diversify delivery sources, and improve the overall resilience and effectiveness of the Plan in meeting housing needs consistently across the plan period.

