

**Hearing Statement on behalf of the residents of Marwick Close,
Upton Drive and Crouch Fields, Ansty**
2021-2039 Mid Sussex District Plan Examination
(Update for 2026 Hearings)

**Objection to the Proposed Site Allocations DPA 16 – Ansty Fields &
DPA 17 – Land to the West of Marwick Close.**

Introduction

Rural Planning Group Ltd have been instructed by the residents in Marwick Close, Upton Drive and Crouch Fields to prepare a Hearing Statement for the 2021-2040 Mid Sussex District Plan Examination.

The Statement relates to Matters 5 (Spatial Strategy) and 6 (The Selection of Sites for Allocation in the Plan) of the Matters and Issues for Examination. It should be read alongside our Hearing Statement produced for the previous Hearing Sessions and the extensive representations that were prepared for both the regulation 18 and regulation 19 consultations.

We believe that the Plan as it currently stands is not sound under these Matters. The errors identified in the Spatial Strategy contribute directly to the flawed site selection process and vice versa, so we believe that the matters should be looked at together.

Matter 5: Spatial Strategy and Matter 6 The Selection of Sites for Allocation in the Plan

The overarching spatial strategy for the District as set out in the Draft Plan is considered a generally logical approach and based on proportionate evidence including the settlement hierarchy and an assessment of settlements and their growth potential. The hierarchy for development that drives the spatial strategy is clear.

However, despite the proposed strategy being clear there are glaring anomaly's in the application of it that contradicts the settlement hierarchy and the overall aim of the strategy.

The inclusion of housing allocations for a total of 75 dwellings in Ansty is one such anomaly. Ansty is a category 4 settlement with limited services and facilities and low growth potential and yet it has the eighth largest quantum of growth by allocation of new sites in the District. The spatial strategy has not been followed for Ansty and it is unclear how that has happened when the spatial approach is so clearly set out in the Plan.

The adopted District Plan 2018 sets out a settlement hierarchy for the District dividing settlements into categories for the purpose of development. This has been brought forward into the current District Plan at page 40 and reinforced again in the recently published (December 2025) Position Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development in Mid Sussex (page 10 – 11). The hierarchy is set out in the table below.

Category	Settlement characteristics and function	Settlements
Category 1 - Town	Settlement with a comprehensive range of employment, retail, health, education leisure services and facilities. These settlements will also benefit from good public transport provision and will act as a main service centre for the smaller settlements.	Burgess Hill East Grinstead Haywards Heath
Category 2 - Larger Village	Larger villages acting as Local Service Centres providing key services in the rural area of Mid Sussex. These settlements serve the wider hinterland and benefit from a good range of services and facilities, including employment opportunities and access to public transport.	Copthorne Crawley Down Cuckfield Hassocks Hurstpierpoint Lindfield
Category 3 - Medium Village	Medium sized villages providing essential services for the needs of their own residents and immediate surrounding communities. Whilst more limited, these can include key services such as primary schools, shops, recreation and community facilities, often shared with neighbouring settlements.	Albourne Ardingly Ashurst Wood Balcombe Bolney Handcross Horsted Keynes Pease Pottage Sayers Common Scaynes Hill Sharphorne Turners Hill West Hoathly
Category 4 - Small Village	Small villages with limited services often only serving the settlement itself.	Ansty Staplefield Slaugham Twineham Warninglid
Category 5 - Hamlets	These small settlements have very limited or no services.	Hamlets such as: Birch Grove Brook Street Hickstead Highbrook Walstead

As can be seen from the table Ansty is classed as a small village with limited services serving only that of the existing settlement itself. Ansty only has a small petrol station, and an irregular bus service with all other services and facilities including schools a significant distance away. Most services and facilities need to be accessed via private car. The inclusion of Ansty within category 4 the hierarchy is therefore justified and correct.

Further to the settlement hierarchy the draft Plan provides the table on page 33 (below) that shows the Council's assessment of settlements and their growth potential to help support the spatial strategy.

Limited Further Growth Potential	Potential for Proportionate Growth	High Growth Potential
Ansty	Burgess Hill	Copthorne (Crabbet Park)
East Grinstead		
Haywards Heath	Cuckfield	Sayers Common
Hassocks	Crawley Down	
Hurstpierpoint	Ashurst Wood	
Lindfield	Albourne	
Ardingly	Bolney	
Balcombe	Pease Pottage	
Handcross	Scaynes Hill	
Horsted Keynes		
Turners Hill		
West Hoathly		
Sharpthorne		
Twineham		

	Settlement within the High Weald AONB
	Settlement contains a "Significant Site" with potential

Based on the position within the settlement hierarchy and the lack of access to services and facilities Ansty is identified in this table as a settlement with limited further growth potential, which is again justified and correct.

The baseline evidence for the settlement in the spatial strategy therefore points towards a low/no development allocation.

Ansty has been allocated two housing sites in the Plan totalling 75 dwellings. This number runs counter to the settlement hierarchy position and is inconsistent with the revised spatial strategy, particularly in relation to directing *“Growth at existing sustainable settlements where it continues to be sustainable to do so”* and *‘Opportunities for extensions, to improve sustainability of existing settlements’*.

Out of the 32 settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy, Ansty has the eighth largest quantum of growth by allocation of new sites. This is shown in the table below, based on Table 2a of the Reg 19 MSLP, which indicates that Ansty is being proposed to accommodate more than any small village, and rates higher than settlements in higher order categories.

Settlement	Commitments (at 1st April 2023)	District Plan 2021 – 2039 Allocations	Settlement Category (number)
TOTAL	9,921	6,687	
Sayers Common	85	2,393	Medium Village (3)
Burgess Hill	5169	1,708	Town (1)
Copthorne	260	1,500	Larger Village (2)
Crawley Down	124	387	Larger Village (2)
Haywards Heath	1005	226	Town (1)
Bolney	40	200	Medium Village (3)
Hurstpierpoint	13	90	Larger Village (2)
Ansty	16	75	Small Village (4)
East Grinstead	1408	45	Town (1)
Scaynes Hill	21	30	Medium Village (3)
Hassocks	726	25	Larger Village (2)
Ashurst Wood	99	8	Medium Village (3)
Albourne	88	0	Medium Village (3)
Ardingly	42	0	Medium Village (3)
Balcombe	33	0	Medium Village (3)
Cuckfield	85	0	Larger Village (2)
Handcross	71	0	Medium Village (3)
Hickstead	0	0	Hamlet (5)
Horsted Keynes	55	0	Medium Village (3)
Lindfield	224	0	Larger Village (2)
Pease Pottage	217	0	Medium Village (3)
Sharpthorne	47	0	Medium Village (3)
Slaugham	8	0	Small Village (4)
Staplefield	1	0	Small Village (4)
Turners Hill	64	0	Medium Village (3)
Twineham	10	0	Small Village (4)
Warninglid	5	0	Small Village (4)
West Hoathly	5	0	Medium Village (3)

To illustrate this further the table below shows the allocations and commitments in just category 4 settlements. Ansty is the only category 4 settlement that has been allocated housing in the Draft Plan despite being assessed as having low growth potential alongside these other settlements.

Settlement	Commitments (at 1st April 2023)	District Plan 2021 – 2039 Allocations	Settlement Category (number)
Ansty	16	75	Small Village (4)
Slaugham	8	0	Small Village (4)
Staplefield	1	0	Small Village (4)
Twineham	10	0	Small Village (4)
Warninglid	5	0	Small Village (4)

To expand on this point even further the table below refers to the District Plan's spatial strategy assessment of settlements in relation to their growth potential. The table from page 33 of the plan shows all of the settlements that have been assessed as having low growth potential. As can be seen only Haywards Heath and Hurstpierpoint, both significantly larger and sustainable settlements have a higher allocation in the plan. Below Ansty are East Grinstead and Hassocks, which are also significantly larger and sustainable settlements.

Settlement assessed as having low growth potential	District Plan 2021 – 2039 Allocations	Settlement Category (number)
Haywards Heath	226	Town (1)
Hurstpierpoint	90	Larger Village (2)
Ansty	75	Small Village (4)
East Grinstead	45	Town (1)
Hassocks	25	Larger Village (2)
Ardingly	0	Medium Village (3)
Balcombe	0	Medium Village (3)
Handcross	0	Medium Village (3)
Hickstead	0	Hamlet (5)
Horsted Keynes	0	Medium Village (3)
Lindfield	0	Larger Village (2)
Sharpthorne	0	Medium Village (3)
Slaugham	0	Small Village (4)
Staplefield	0	Small Village (4)

Turners Hill	0	Medium Village (3)
Twineham	0	Small Village (4)
Warninglid	0	Small Village (4)
West Hoathly	0	Medium Village (3)

In addition to this the table below shows Ansty as a settlement assessed as having low growth potential when compared to a number of settlements that have been assessed as having potential for proportionate growth (a step up in the growth potential assessment). Again, the list contains larger more sustainable settlements that have been assessed as having higher potential for growth than Ansty in the spatial strategy, but have all been allocated far less housing.

Settlement	District Plan Assessed Growth Potential	District Plan 2021 – 2039 Allocations	Settlement Category (number)
Ansty	Low	75	Small Village (4)
Scaynes Hill	Proportionate	30	Medium Village (3)
Ashurst Wood	Proportionate	8	Medium Village (3)
Albourne	Proportionate	0	Medium Village (3)
Cuckfield	Proportionate	0	Larger Village (2)
Pease Pottage	Proportionate	0	Medium Village (3)

It would be expected that if the principles underlying the spatial strategy are applied logically and consistently that larger settlements with higher assessed growth potential would accommodate the greater proportion of growth compared to those settlements lower down the hierarchy, such as Ansty. However, that doesn't seem to be the case when it comes to Ansty.

No evidence has been presented at this stage to demonstrate that the continued focus on Ansty would improve the sustainability of the settlement. It is unclear how the strategy has influenced or informed the distribution of growth proposed across the settlements in the hierarchy. Accordingly, the distribution of growth to Ansty does not

accord with the revised settlement hierarchy and accordingly is not soundly-based nor is it justified.

Given the lack of justification for the overall strategy and the approach taken specifically at Ansty, and the exceedance in supply to the meet the district-wide requirement, the allocation of 75 dwellings to Ansty is not justified or necessary to meet the development needs of the village or Mid-Sussex in the wider sense.

To compound this, it should also be noted that the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in 2017, produced a plan for sustainable growth of the village to 2031. This was based on meticulous evidence and the access to services and facilities that are currently present within the village. The plan allocated 3 sites for development - Crouch Fields (8 dwellings), Marwick Close and Upton Drive (20 dwellings) both of which have been built out, and a yet to be built allocation for 10 dwellings at Ansty Cross Garage. To reiterate, these sites were planned to the needs of this small category 4 village to 2031. The Council need to justify within their spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy why they have assigned a disproportionate number of dwellings to Ansty. Without a reasonable and evidenced justification the proposed allocation sites identified should be removed from the plan on adoption.

Conclusion

The Council need to justify within their spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy why they have assigned a disproportionate number of dwellings to Ansty. Without a reasonable and properly evidenced justification the proposed allocation sites DPA 16 & DPA 17 should be removed from the plan on adoption.