



# Submission to the Inspector

## Mid Sussex District Plan Review Examination

### Site allocations at Sayers Common: DPSC3, DPSC4, DPSC5, DPSC6 and DPSC7

Submitted by: Sayers Common Village Society (SCVS)

Hearing Matter: 7. Site allocations (Inspector's Matters and Issues, 13 January 2026)

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## Purpose of this submission

To explain why the proposed Sayers Common allocations are not suitable in their current form, because the Plan does not yet “adequately lay the framework” for the sustainable development of these sites against the Inspector’s requested framework under Section 7(a-j).

SCVS does not oppose housing in principle. The issue is whether the Plan provides sufficient certainty, coordination and enforceable infrastructure triggers to ensure sustainable development.

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## 1. Strategic Context for Section 7

The Inspector asks whether the Plan adequately lays the framework for sustainable development of each site across matters (a)-(j).



This question is particularly critical at Sayers Common because:

- DPSC3 is treated as the enabling “Significant Site”;
- DPSC4–7 rely on infrastructure and facilities delivered via DPSC3;
- The five allocations collectively form a single functional growth package.

If DPSC3 stalls, de-scopes infrastructure, or delivers later than assumed, the sustainability assumptions for the dependent sites become fragile.

The framework must therefore be robust at Plan stage — not deferred to later planning applications.

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## **2. Cross-Cutting Framework Deficiencies (Relevant to 7a–7j)**

### **2.1 Catchment Hydrology and Basin Flood Risk (7h, 7i)**

Sayers Common sits within a defined topographical basin. The central and north-western quadrants of the village lie materially lower than the surrounding allocated sites.

The area is characterised by:

- Clay-based, low permeability soils;
- A network of drainage ditches and minor watercourses;
- Known ponding along London Road, Reeds Lane and the B2118;



- Recorded flood events (including November 2022 and January 2026).

The allocation pattern places substantial development on elevated parcels (notably DPSC3 and DPSC5). Additional impermeable surfaces will increase runoff toward lower-lying parts of the village.

While attenuation basins are proposed in principle, their long-term performance on impermeable clay substrates under climate-adjusted rainfall intensities requires catchment-scale modelling.

The Plan does not yet require:

- A single hydrological model covering DPSC3–7 collectively;
- Independent certification of drainage functionality before occupation thresholds;
- Defined long-term maintenance governance and funding;
- A contingency mechanism if drainage capacity underperforms.

Without these safeguards, the Plan does not adequately address Matters 7h (infrastructure delivery) and 7i (existing site condition and deliverability).

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## **2.2 Wastewater Capacity and Foul Flooding (7h, 7i)**

The sewer network includes legacy pipework of limited capacity. Residents have experienced surcharge events during heavy rainfall.

DPSC3 references pumping and off-site wastewater treatment works improvements. However:

- The Plan does not specify enforceable occupation triggers;



- There is no confirmed phasing alignment between infrastructure delivery and peak occupation;
- Provider confirmation of network adequacy is not embedded as a precondition.

Given the scale of proposed growth, wastewater infrastructure may become critical path infrastructure. Without explicit triggers and provider-confirmed capacity, deliverability cannot be assumed under Matter 7i.

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## **2.3 Water Supply Resilience (7h, 7j)**

The region has recently experienced extended hosepipe restrictions and emergency supply interventions. The cumulative growth across Sayers Common, Hassocks and Burgess Hill materially increases potable demand.

The Plan does not presently require:

- Confirmation from the water undertaker of bulk supply adequacy;
- Identification of required augmentation infrastructure;
- A phasing programme aligned to occupation;
- A contingency if supply upgrades are delayed.

This omission directly affects delivery realism under Matter 7j.

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## **2.4 Strategic Transport Network and A23 Interface (7b)**



The B2118 connects to the southbound A23 junction at the north end of Sayers Common. Peak-hour exit movements from the A23 already generate queueing extending back down the slip road towards the A23 exit.

Given the commuter profile of the area and cumulative housing growth, additional traffic flows would materially affect safety and congestion at the A23 interface.

The Plan does not require:

- Strategic modelling of A23/Hickstead and Sayers Common junction performances under cumulative growth scenarios;
- Safety auditing of queue back risk;
- Defined mitigation triggers.

Without such modelling, the implications for the wider network (Matter 7b) are insufficiently evidenced.

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## **2.5 Rail Access Viability and Station Parking (7b, 7h)**

Sayers Common has no railway station. Access to Hassocks and Burgess Hill stations is largely car-dependent.

Hassocks station parking reaches practical capacity early on weekday mornings, resulting in overspill parking on surrounding streets. Haywards Heath is also heavily utilised.

Without:

- Enhanced bus frequency aligned to peak train times;
- Demand management and station access mitigation;



- Active travel infrastructure linking to services;

growth risks reinforcing car dependency rather than enabling modal shift.

The Plan does not currently require a Rail Access & Station Parking Mitigation Strategy. This weakens the sustainable transport framework under Matters 7b and 7h.

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## **2.6 LNRS Designation and Ecological Network Integrity (7f)**

Land encompassing Coombe Wood has been identified within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy framework as an area of particular importance for biodiversity, with surrounding land capable of becoming important.

Ancient woodland and associated habitats function as ecological systems dependent upon buffer land and foraging territory. Fragmentation or encirclement can degrade functionality even if woodland cores are retained.

The Plan does not require:

- A landscape-scale ecological connectivity strategy across DPSC3–7;
- Defined buffer widths and lighting controls;
- Long-term stewardship governance;
- Assessment of functional habitat (e.g., foraging land for protected species).

Site-by-site biodiversity net gain calculations are insufficient in this context.

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## 2.7 Ground Conditions at DPSC6 (7f, 7i)

Observational evidence indicates marsh-like conditions in parts of DPSC6.

If confirmed, such conditions may:

- Indicate high groundwater;
- Increase construction complexity;
- Exacerbate flood risk;
- Support wetland habitat.

The Plan should require ground investigation confirmation prior to density and phasing assumptions.

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## 3. Site-Specific Section 7 Responses

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### 3.1 DPSC3 – Significant Site

#### (a) Urban design and integration

The Plan requires a Masterplan and Design Code. However, it does not embed non-negotiable parameters for:

- Bus penetration;
- Mode share targets;
- Continuous active travel links from first occupation;



- Landscape-led settlement edge definition.

## **(b) Wider transport impacts**

Requires:

- A23/Hickstead modelling;
- Rail access mitigation strategy;
- Explicit occupation-linked mitigation triggers.

## **(c) Social/community facilities**

Occupation thresholds should be linked to delivery of education and community infrastructure.

## **(e) Countryside character**

Elevated topography means this site defines the village edge for decades. Three-storey elements at higher densities require landscape capacity testing.

## **(f) Biodiversity**

Must form part of a joined-up ecological network across all five sites.

## **(h) Infrastructure delivery**

Wastewater and drainage upgrades must precede occupation beyond defined stages.

## **(i) Deliverability**

Provider confirmation (water, wastewater, highways) should be embedded as milestones.

## **(j) Trajectory realism**



Phasing assumptions must align with infrastructure consentability and confirmed delivery.

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### **3.2 DPSC4**

Dependent upon DPSC3 infrastructure. Occupation should be conditional upon delivery stages of strategic infrastructure.

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### **3.3 DPSC5 – Coombe Farm**

Elevated site with visibility implications. Proximity to LNRS-designated woodland increases ecological sensitivity. Down-slope runoff toward London Road requires hydrological modelling.

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### **3.4 DPSC6**

Potential marsh conditions require ground investigation confirmation. Ecological and hydrological sensitivity requires phasing safeguards.

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### **3.5 DPSC7**

Interface with wider network and rail access patterns. Must be bound by the Rail Access & Station Parking Mitigation Strategy and wastewater phasing triggers.

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## **4. Modifications Requested**

SCVS respectfully requests Main Modifications requiring:



1. A single coordinated Infrastructure Delivery Programme for DPSC3–7.
  2. Occupation-linked triggers for wastewater, drainage, bus provision and community facilities.
  3. A Rail Access & Station Parking Mitigation Strategy.
  4. Catchment-scale hydrological modelling across all five allocations.
  5. A landscape-scale ecological connectivity strategy reflecting LNRS sensitivity.
  6. Provider confirmation of water supply and sewer capacity prior to key occupation phases.
  7. Strategic modelling of A23/Hickstead junction performance.
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## 5. Conclusion

In their current form, the Sayers Common allocations do not adequately lay the framework required under Section 7(a–j).

With targeted Main Modifications — particularly around enforceable infrastructure triggers, rail access viability, catchment hydrology, ecological connectivity and strategic transport modelling — the Plan could provide a credible pathway to sustainable development.

Absent those modifications, the framework remains insufficiently robust to ensure deliverability and environmental protection at the scale proposed.

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