

**MID SUSSEX**  
**DISTRICT COUNCIL**

# **Statement of Common Ground**

**MSDC and Lewes District Council**

**July 2024**

### 1. List of parties involved

Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC)  
Lewes District Council (LDC)

### 2. Signatories



Date: 24/07/2024

Mid Sussex District Council

Ann Biggs – Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainable Economy



Nadeem Din

Date: 12/08/2024

Lewes District Council

Head of Planning Policy

### 3. Strategic Geography

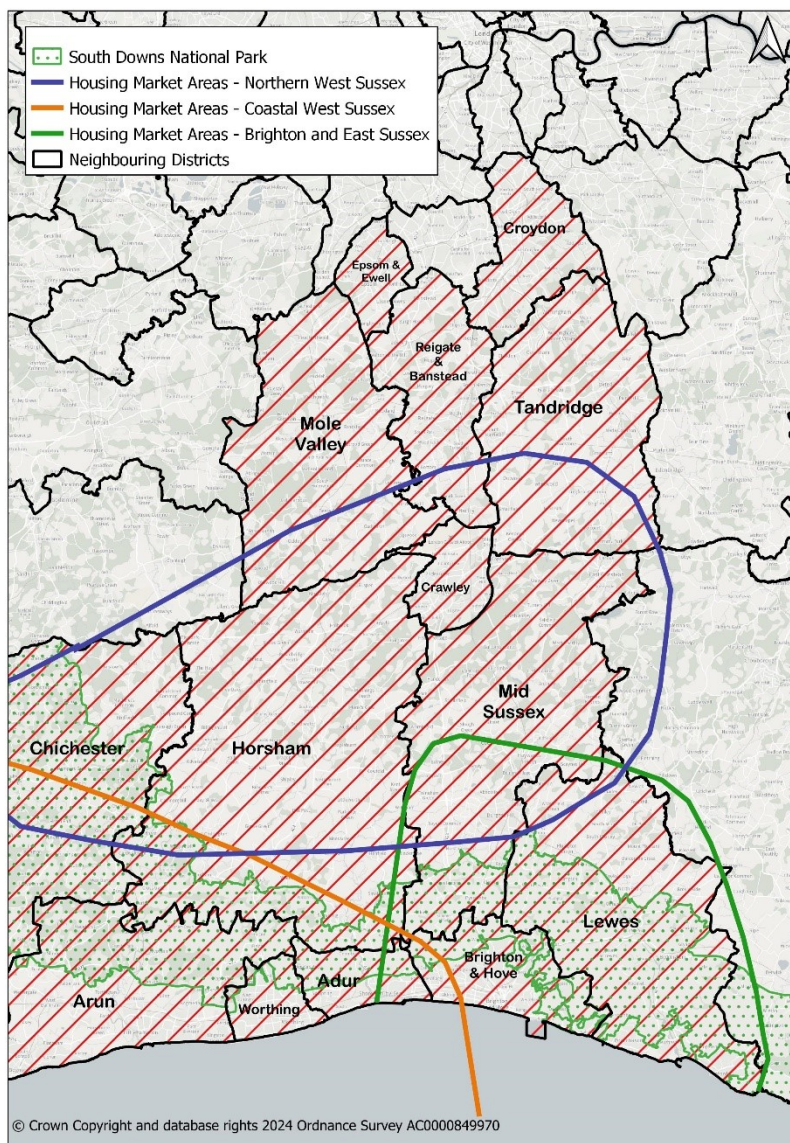
Mid Sussex district is within the county of West Sussex, adjoining East Sussex county at its eastern boundary. This boundary is shared with Lewes and Wealden District Councils, both in East Sussex.

MSDC and LDC are within the Greater Brighton City Region, along with Arun, Worthing, Adur, Crawley, and Brighton & Hove. Both MSDC and LDC are members of the West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board, which has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding and a Local Strategic

Statement (LSS). The LSS sets out strategic objectives and spatial priorities to support regeneration and sustainable growth.

The local authorities are also in different housing and functional economic market areas, with Mid Sussex primarily falling in the Northern West Sussex Housing Market Area (HMA), other than an overlap with the Coastal West Sussex HMA in the south of the district. This was confirmed by an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2021. Lewes is in the Coastal West Sussex HMA.

Parts of both districts are within the South Downs National Park, though this applies to a far greater proportion of Lewes than Mid Sussex. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is responsible to plan-making in this area.



MSDC and LDC are at different stages in their Local Plan preparation. LDC are reviewing their Local Plan Part 1 (adopted 2016) and Part 2 (adopted 2020), and

carried out Regulation 18 consultations in 2021 and between November 2023 and February 2024. LDC has yet to determine the strategy for growth over the new plan period (2020-2040) or to identify potential new site allocations. LDC has produced a Local Plan Scoping Report (February 2024), outlining the proposed approach to meeting the Duty to Cooperate during the preparation of the Lewes Local Plan, which LDC aims to submit for examination in Spring 2025.

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared to demonstrate how the Duty to Cooperate has been met during the preparation of the Mid Sussex District Plan Review. It will be updated when necessary, to support the examination of each district's local plan.

#### 4. Strategic Matters

This Statement of Common Ground should be read in conjunction with the MSDC Duty to Cooperate Statement of Compliance, which sets out the wider context of strategic matters pertinent to the District Plan and provides details of ongoing and effective engagement with neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies.

For their respective areas, MSDC and LDC have identified the following strategic matters during the preparation of previous (adopted) and current (emerging) local plans:

- Housing development at neighbouring settlements
- Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Transport impacts
- Ashdown Forest impacts

Matters relating to transport and Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA are the subject of separate Statements of Common Ground and are not discussed further in this Statement.

#### Housing

MSDC has an objectively assessed housing need for 19,620 dwellings over the District Plan period (2021-2039). In addition to completions since 2021 and commitments (existing allocations and permissions), this need will be met through the creation of three sustainable communities, a range of smaller housing sites, and an evidence-based windfall allowance. The District Plan provides an oversupply of 996 dwellings, adding resilience to housing delivery in Mid Sussex, should any commitments not be delivered as expected.

Since Regulation 19, the standard method housing need figure has changed to reflect the updated affordability ratios. MSDC will put forward a proposed modification at submission to update the housing need figure in DPH1. A modification will also be proposed to extend the Plan period to 2040 to ensure compliance with the NPPF. These modifications, should they be accepted by the Inspector, will slightly increase the over-supply.

LDC is at an earlier stage of plan preparation, having carried Regulation 18 consultations in 2021 and February 2024, with further consultations anticipated during 2024 and submission to the Secretary of State for examination in spring 2025.

LDC's Land Availability Assessment (LAA, 2023) indicates that Lewes district will likely not have enough suitable land available that can be allocated to meet its housing needs. There may be a shortfall of between 2,675 and 6,628 dwellings, which may need to be provided by neighbouring local authorities under the Duty to Cooperate. LDC wrote to MSDC to request assistance on 7 February 2024.

The parties agree:

1. Lewes District is within the Coastal West Sussex HMA. Mid Sussex primarily falls within the NWS HMA, but to the south of the district there is an overlap with the Coastal West Sussex HMA.
2. The supply of suitable, available, and developable land identified to date in Lewes is insufficient to meet the district's housing needs. The emerging Lewes Local Plan is likely to identify a housing shortfall of between 2,675 and 6,628 dwellings over the plan period to 2040, against the current housing requirement of 12,040 dwellings.
3. The draft Mid Sussex Plan (Regulation 18) was published in November 2022, and the proposed submission plan (Regulation 19) was published in January 2024. The District Plan covers the period 2021-2039 and will supersede the current District Plan 2014-2031 (adopted 2018). It is based on a housing requirement of 19,620, set by the standard method. In addition to completions since 2021 and commitments (existing allocations and permissions), this need will be met through the creation of three sustainable communities, a range of smaller housing sites, and an evidence-based windfall allowance. The District Plan provides an oversupply of 996 dwellings, as a buffer to improve the resilience of the plan to under-delivery.
4. Each authority has assessed the ability of its area to accommodate housing development. Protected landscapes such as the High Weald National Landscape (AONB) in the Mid Sussex plan area and South Downs National

Park in the south of the district constrain the amount of available and suitable land for development in Mid Sussex. The South Downs National Park significantly constrains the amount of available and suitable land that can be identified in Lewes.

5. MSDC has shared and invited comments from LDC on the methodology and conclusions of its site selection process ahead of Regulation 18 consultation on the District Plan. In accordance with the site selection methodology, the most sustainable sites are already included in the District Plan Review to meet Mid Sussex housing needs, and there are currently insufficient available, suitable and developable sites in Mid Sussex to meet unmet need from Lewes. The parties consider they are doing the maximum reasonable to meet their respective housing needs.
6. LDC and MSDC will engage with all local authorities in their HMAs on housing-related matters, including affordability, strategic developments, and opportunities for meeting unmet need.
7. Subject to meeting its own housing needs and establishing that there is potential to assist other local authorities with unmet needs in the future, MSDC will prioritise assistance as follows in accordance with the Mid Sussex SHMA:
  - Priority 1: Northern West Sussex HMA
  - Priority 2: Coastal West Sussex HMA
  - Priority 3: Other adjacent and nearby HMAs where justified by evidence of strong functional links between the local authority areas

#### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

8. The identified need for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Mid Sussex is met through the Northern Arc (Brookleigh) strategic site allocation at Burgess Hill (allocated in the District Plan 2018) and the significant sites to be allocated through the District Plan Review. LDC has recently updated its GTAA to inform their Local Plan review. Both authorities agree to meet their own need for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

#### Housing development at neighbouring settlements

9. The Mid Sussex towns of Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill share a boundary with Lewes. Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill have seen significant growth in recent years, such as the Northern Arc (Brookleigh)

development in Burgess Hill which was allocated in the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) and is currently under construction. Existing commitments (sites that are under construction, have unimplemented planning permission or are allocated for development in an adopted plan) provide for approximately 1,056 dwellings in Haywards Heath and 5,140 dwellings in Burgess Hill. The Mid Sussex District Plan Review allocates an additional 226 in Haywards Heath and 358 in Burgess Hill.

10. The draft District Plan (2021-2039) allocates three housing sites (DPA2: Land at Apple Tree Close, Janes Lane, Burgess Hill, DPA5: Land at Hurstwood Lane, Haywards Heath and DPA6: Land at junction of Hurstwood Lane and Colwell Lane, Haywards Heath) that are on or near to the shared boundary. Consideration has been given in respect of comments raised by LDC within their Regulation 19 representation with modifications drafted. Potential cross boundary impacts have been considered and assessed through MSDC's evidence base work with no impacts being identified.

11. The parties will work collaboratively with one another and key stakeholders as the Lewes Local Plan progresses, with particular regard to infrastructure capacity in and around Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath. Any site allocations on the edge of these towns in Lewes district will require detailed engagement with MSDC before the Plan progresses to the next formal stage, to ensure that there is sufficient infrastructure capacity and that development impacts can be mitigated.

## 5. Governance Arrangements

The authorities are committed to working positively together and as part of the Greater Brighton City Region, sharing information and best practice throughout the plan preparation phase and beyond.

This co-operation and collaboration take place at senior officer and technical officer level. This Statement of Common Ground is signed at Head of Service level and will be reviewed at each key stage of plan-making. It will be updated to reflect progress made through effective cooperation.

In terms of governance, the parties agree:

12. MSDC and LDC have engaged on an ongoing basis throughout preparation of the District Plan Review and consider that the Duty-to-Cooperate has been met with respect to the Mid Sussex District Plan Review.



13. MSDC and LDC will continue to engage and work collaboratively with one another and key stakeholders as both plans progress.
14. The parties will continue to work with the other local authorities in their respective housing market areas on housing and other strategic issues.
15. The parties will work collaboratively on plan preparation and evidence, whilst acknowledging each other's timetables and timescales.
16. They respect each other's right to develop their own plans that fit the specific circumstances of the local authority's communities.
17. The parties will meet at officer level to review emerging evidence and respond to new issues and changing circumstances.
18. The parties will update this SoCG as progress continues through the preparation of the local plans and development plan documents for each of the authorities.

#### 6. Timetable for review and ongoing cooperation

<b>LPA</b>	<b>Present Plan Adoption</b>	<b>Proposed Plan Review Date</b>	<b>Regulation 18 Date</b>	<b>Regulation 19 Date</b>	<b>Target Submission Date</b>
Mid Sussex District Plan	March 2018	2022-2024	November 2022	January 2024	Summer 2024
Lewes Local Plan	May 2016	2023-2025	Spring 2024	Winter 2024	Spring 2025