

Mid Sussex District Council

District Plan Review

Matters, Issues and Questions – Stage 1

Matter 6: Housing

September 2024



Issue 1: Whether the Council’s approach to calculating its full, objectively assessed needs and housing requirement is justified, based on up-to-date and reliable evidence, effective, positively prepared, and consistent with national policy?

Objectively Assessed Need-Housing

57. Does the Plan period cover an appropriate time frame for the provision of housing (2021-2039) consistent with national policy? If not, what would be the implications for housing need?

The Submitted District Plan covers the period from 2021 – 2039 which looks ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption should the District Plan be adopted in 2024 which was the intended adoption date in the Council’s adopted Local Development Scheme [P1]. To provide flexibility, the Council proposes extending the end date to 2040. This has been put forward as a Proposed Modification [DP2 M1].

- 57.1. The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance provide no policy or guidance with respect to determining the start date of a plan period. Work to review the adopted District Plan commenced in 2021, using a 2021 base date for the accompanying evidence base including needs-based assessments such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Economic Growth Assessment and Retail Study.
- 57.2. The starting date for the plan-period follows the same approach as the adopted District Plan which covered the period from 2014 – 2031, albeit it was adopted in 2018.
- 57.3. The Council adopted its Local Development Scheme [P1] in January 2024. Based on best practice and previous experience, this estimated adoption in December 2024. This would comply with the NPPF (September 2024, para 22) requiring strategic policies to look ahead over a minimum 15-year period.
- 57.4. As set out in response to Question 1, the Council intended to submit the District Plan in April 2024 however this was delayed until July 2024 due to the General Election and pre-election restricted period. Recognising the risk of non-compliance with the NPPF, the Council has proactively suggested a modification [DP2 – ref M1] to extend the plan period to 2040.
- 57.5. The implication of this is to add another year of housing need. The Submission District Plan [DP1] was based on a local housing need of 1,090 dwellings per annum derived from the standard method calculation at the time of publication

(January 2024). This led to a plan period housing need of **19,620** for the period 2021 - 2039.

- 57.6. However, affordability data released in March 2024 amended this figure to **1,039 dwellings per annum**. This leads to a plan period housing need of **19,741** for the extended period 2021 – 2040, an increase of 121 dwellings.
- 57.7. The implications and Council's response to this are set out in the proposed modification reference M67 [\[DP2\]](#) update to policy **DPH1: Housing**. This modification reflects the revised standard method figure, proposal to extend the plan period to 2040, and updated Commitments/Completions data as at 1st April 2024 (noting that the Submission plan was based on figures as at 1st April 2023). The proposed additional plan year has also led to an increase in housing supply due to:
- An additional year of windfall allowance
 - Additional supply from sites **DPSC2: Land at Crabbet Park** and **DPSC3: Land to the South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common**. Delivery trajectories for these sites showed delivery beyond 2039, the additional plan year to 2040 increases the amount delivered within the plan period.
- 57.8. The effect of extending the plan period would be an increased total supply of **20,783** compared to **19,741** in the Submission District Plan. The over-supply would therefore increase from 996 to 1,042 up to 2040.

58. To determine the minimum number of homes required, housing policies should be informed by the Government's local housing need methodology. As such, are the inputs used to determine the level of housing needed within the Plan appropriate?

The Council has determined the minimum number of homes required using the Standard Methodology in full accordance with National Policy and Planning Practice Guidance. The Council has not sought to rely on exceptional circumstances and has not used any alternative inputs. The inputs are fully in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance and are appropriate.

- 58.1. In accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance, the Council has used the standard method formula and prescribed inputs to determine its housing need in the Regulation 19 District Plan and subsequent Submission version, as follows.
- **Step 1 – Setting the Baseline.** The Council used the 2014-based household projections and the current year (at the time of Regulation 19 publication) of 2023 as the starting point, looking ahead over 10 years. The annual increase over the period 2023 - 2033 was 699.

- **Step 2 – Adjustment for Affordability.** The Council used the Office for National Statistics Median Workplace-Based Affordability Ratios to determine the affordability adjustment. The most up-to-date data was used. At Regulation 19 stage this was the March 2023 dataset, which gave an affordability ratio of 12.95.

- 58.2. Application of the Standard Method formula at Regulation 19 stage arrived at an annual housing need of **1,090** dwellings.
- 58.3. Subsequent to consultation on the Regulation 19 version of the Plan, and prior to submission, updated affordability data was released by ONS. In addition, the Step 1 baseline position should be calculated as 2024 – 2034. The effect of this is a reduction in the annual housing need to **1,039 dwellings**. As advised in Planning Practice Guidance (2a-008-20190220) policy making authorities should keep their local housing need figure under review. The Council has therefore submitted a proposed modification [[DP2](#), M67] which adjusts the housing need figure accordingly, with implications for policy **DPH1: Housing**.

59. Are there exceptional circumstances to suggest that an alternative approach be taken? If so, what are they, and how would they impact on housing need? Is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2021 (H1) up to date and justified?

The Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment [[H1](#)] includes a full analysis of alternative approaches to assessing housing need. It concludes that there are no exceptional circumstances that justify taking an alternative approach or are compliant with Planning Practice Guidance.

- 59.1. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) [[H1](#), paras 5.18 – 5.49] sets out wider considerations in assessing housing need.
- 59.2. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) notes that the Standard Method is a minimum starting point and that there may be circumstances whereby a higher housing need than the calculated figure is justified. PPG notes examples of this (2a-010-20201216):
- *growth strategies for the area that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth (e.g. Housing Deals);*
 - *strategic infrastructure improvements that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally; or*
 - *an authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground;*
- 59.3. The SHMA [[H1](#)] concludes that there is no growth funding to promote and facilitate additional growth in Mid Sussex (para 5.20); carries out a full analysis of the

implications of significant infrastructure improvements related to the potential implications of Gatwick Airport Growth (paras 5.20 – 5.45) – the conclusions of this are set out in response to Question 60; and assesses whether Affordable Housing Need would justify an increased housing need (paras 5.46 – 5.49).

- 59.4. The SHMA [H1] concludes that *“there are no circumstances in Mid Sussex District relating to growth funding, strategic infrastructure improvements or affordable housing need which indicate that ‘actual’ housing need is higher than the standard method indicates”*.
- 59.5. The National Planning Policy Framework and PPG provide for very limited circumstances that allow for a lower housing need to be justified. Whilst the SHMA [H1] concludes that more recent Subnational Population Projections data (such as the 2018-based release) show much lower projected population growth than the 2014-based release, the PPG is clear that *“any method which relies on using housing projections more recently published than the 2014-based household projections will not be considered to be following the standard method”* (2a-015-20190220). There are no exceptional circumstances that would justify using such figures therefore the Council does not rely on them.
- 59.6. The SHMA [H1] was completed in 2021 which coincides with the start date of the submitted District Plan. In accordance with the PPG, the Council has kept the housing need element under review, informed by the most up-to-date position at time of publication:
- The Regulation 18 Plan was based on a housing need of 1,119 dwellings per annum (2022 baseline)
 - The Regulation 19/Submission Plan was based on a housing need of 1,090 dwellings per annum (2023 baseline)
 - The proposed modification [DP2, M67] is based on a housing need of 1,039 dwellings per annum (2024 baseline)

60. What are the implications, if any, of the Gatwick Airport’s proposed extension and DCO on the demand for housing? Does the OAN set out within the submission Plan of 19,620 remain appropriate?

There will be no implications on the demand for housing should the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Development Consent Order (DCO) application be consented. Therefore, the OAN of 19,620 set out in the submitted District Plan remains appropriate.

- 60.1. Mid Sussex District Council played an active role in the DCO Examination, alongside nine other Councils adjacent to project boundary (known as the Joint Local Authorities). The Joint Local Authorities did not dispute the position of the applicant Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) and its conclusion regarding the impact of

the DCO Project on the quantum of housing that needed to be provided in the area as a result of the project.

- 60.2. GAL submitted evidence to the DCO Examination which included an assessment of the Population Effects of the DCO Project (Appendix 17.9.3: GAL assessment of Population Effects [APP-201]). This assessment explored whether the future supply of labour generated by current and potential future local plan housing supply would be sufficient to accommodate additional employment generated by the construction and operational phase of the Project. The conclusion of the assessment was that there would not be any significant effects on housing i.e. there would not be any additional demand for housing as a result of the Project. There will be sufficient labour supply, generated through adopted and emerging local plans, to fill the jobs created by the Project.
- 60.3. The Joint Local Authorities had specific concerns relating to pressure on temporary accommodation during the construction period (caused by non-home based workers). Whilst GAL does not accept this position, a sum of £1million have been secured via a S106 agreement, to be made available to Crawley Brough Council to mitigate any impacts, should they occur.
- 60.4. The DCO Examination closed on 27th August 2024 and a decision by Secretary of State is expected in February 2025.
- 60.5. This accords with the findings set out in the SHMA in relation to 'Exceptional Circumstances' [H1, paragraphs 5.21 – 5.45].

Affordable housing

61. Is the figure of 470 affordable homes per annum set out in the SHMA (H1), split between rented and owned homes, subject to S106 control, based on appropriate evidence?

Yes, the Council considers that the figure of 470 affordable homes per annum is based on appropriate evidence.

- 61.1. Section 7 of the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) [H1] undertakes a full assessment of affordable housing need for the Submitted District Plan ('the Plan'). The assessment methodology is set out in paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4. of the SHMA [H1] and follows an established approach in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance.
- 61.2. Table 7.11 of the SHMA [H1] concludes a need for 470 homes per annum for affordable rented homes (i.e. social and affordable rented). The need for affordable home ownership is estimated at 475 (gross) homes per annum

(Table 7.15) reducing to 41 homes per annum taking into account potential supply (i.e. resales).

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

62. Is the plan clear as to the identified need for additional pitches, including for those who no longer travel, as well as transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers, and travelling show people? Is the April 2022 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (H2) consistent with the December 2023 version of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites? If not, would this impact on the need for additional pitches?

Yes, the Submitted District Plan (the Plan) sets out the identified need for additional pitches.

- 62.1. The 2022 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) [H2] assesses the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, including transit provision. The findings of the assessment are set out at paragraphs 7.34 to 7.39, 7.44, 7.45 and Section 8 of the GTAA [H2].
- 62.2. The GTAA [H2] establishes that there are no Travelling Showpeople identified in Mid Sussex and concludes no current or future need for Travelling Showpeople plots (paras. 7.44 and 8.9). Similarly, the GTAA [H2] concludes that there is currently no need for a formal transit site in Mid Sussex based on the historic low numbers of short-term unauthorised encampments and feedback from the stakeholder engagement (paras. 7.47 to 7.51).
- 62.3. The identified permanent pitch need for Gypsies and Travellers is set out within Policy **DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** of the Plan [DP1]. The table within Policy **DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** reiterates the pitch requirement, alongside the existing commitments which will contribute to meeting the requirement. The supporting text to Policy **DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** explains that no transit need has been identified by the GTAA [H2].

The Council is satisfied that the GTAA [H2] is consistent with the December 2023 Planning Policy for Traveller sites. Therefore, there is no need for additional pitches.

- 62.4. The GTAA [H2] was prepared under the 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). Paragraph 4 bullet point a. of the 2015 PPTS states that local planning

authorities should make their own assessment of need and Policy A outlines the considerations for local planning authorities in establishing the necessary evidence base. Section 3 of the GTAA [H2] acknowledges the requirements of the 2015 PPTS (para. 3.2) and sets out the methodology used in assessing needs (paras 3.8 to 3.21).

- 62.5. The December 2023 PPTS amends the planning definition set out in Annex 1: Glossary but is otherwise unchanged. Under the 2015 PPTS, GTAA's were not required to assess the needs of those who no longer travel. However, the GTAA [H2] assesses and presents the needs of those who met and did not meet the 2015 PPTS planning definition, and therefore meets the December 2023 definition. The full identified need is taken forward within Policy **DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**. Any undetermined households are also included in the need figure.
- 62.6. The Council therefore considers that the identified need figure is consistent with the definition set out in the December 2023 PPTS.
- 62.7. The Council has proposed a modification (M71) within the submitted Schedule of Proposed Modifications [DP2] to remove the footnotes 40 and 41 to clarify that those sections are not subject to the 2015 PPTS planning definition.

63. Are there other considerations that are likely to drive an increase in need locally, such as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas?

The GTAA [H2] did not raise any other potential considerations that might drive an increase in need locally. The Council has considered need arising from neighbouring areas.

- 63.1. The Council is aware that several of its neighbouring authorities are currently updating, or have recently updated, their Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments to inform their respective District Plan reviews.
- 63.2. Lewes District Council, Crawley Borough Council and Wealden District Council have confirmed that they intend to meet their own identified needs. Brighton & Hove City Council and Tandridge District Council are unable to confirm their position as they are still at an early stage of Plan-making. The South Downs National Park Authority have also just started their Local Plan review process.
- 63.3. Horsham District Council sought assistance from the Council following the completion of their GTAA in November 2023. However, the Council was unable to assist due to the advanced stage of the Plan and insufficient suitable supply of sites [DC8].

63.4. Statements of Common Ground set out the agreed positions in terms of Gypsy and Traveller need and provision [[DC4](#), [DC5](#), [DC9](#), [DC10](#) and [DC13](#)].

64. Is the identified need supported by a robust, up-to-date, and credible evidence base consistent with the ‘Draft Guidance to local housing authorities on the periodical review of housing needs - Caravans and Houseboats DCLG 11 March 2016’?

Yes. The Council considers that the evidence base (the 2022 GTAA [[H2](#)]) is consistent with the 2016 draft guidance.

64.1. The GTAA [[H2](#)] has been prepared in accordance with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) (2015) to provide a robust, up-to-date and credible evidence base which is consistent with the 2016 draft guidance.

64.2. The GTAA [[H2](#)] references the 2016 draft guidance at paragraph 3.36 noting that it sets out how Government would want local housing authorities to undertake an assessment of need for households that reside or resort to their district. It notes that the approach to assessing needs set out in the draft guidance is the same followed by the GTAA assessment. Both seek to assess the need from households:

- On authorised developments;
- In over-crowded condition or are doubled-up or concealed;
- In bricks and mortar;
- On waiting lists for a public site.

64.3. The GTAA assessment process of engaging with stakeholders and the community, reviewing existing data and carrying out surveys with households is also consistent with the 2016 draft guidance.

64.4. There are no suitable waterways within the district and therefore no known historic or specific demand from houseboat dwellers arising from the evidence.

Other specialist needs

65. How have the needs of other caravan dwellers and houseboat dwellers been considered within the Council’s evidence base?

65.1. There is no known current or historic demand from other caravan dwellers and houseboat dwellers within the district.

66. What assessment has taken place of the needs of particular groups by household size, type, and tenure, including self-build and custom housebuilding? What assumptions have been made to calculate the need for specialist housing: for example, housing for older people, and for households with specific needs, to offer a better choice of housing? Are these assumptions justified and consistent with national policy?

The Council considers that the SHMA [H1] robustly assesses the needs of a range of specific groups, in line with national policy, to meet the needs of particular groups by household type and tenure over the Plan period.

- 66.1. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) [H1] assesses the needs of specific groups, including family households, students, services families, private renters, self-build and custom housebuilders, as well as the overall housing mix. The needs of specific groups are assessed in the following sections of the SHMA [H1]:
- Section 8: Older Persons and People with disabilities (paras 8.4 – 8.39 and 8.64 – 8.71);
 - Sections 9: Family households (paras 9.2 – 9.28), overall housing mix across different tenures (paras 9.32 - 9.37);
 - Section 10: Younger households (paras 10.2 - 10.18), Students (paras 10.19 – 10.22) and Service Families (paras 10.23 – 10.32); and
 - Section 11: Private Renters (paras 11.17 – 11.28), Self-build and custom house builders (paras 11.79 – 11.97).
- 66.2. Section 9 of the SHMA [H1] sets out the approach to assessing needs by household size, type and tenure. Paragraphs 9.2 - 9.9 analyse current family household types by house size and tenure. Existing occupancy levels, by age group and tenure, are then considered in order to estimate the size of housing needed over the Plan period (paras. 9.14 – 9.24). The SHMA [H1] also draws on data from the Council's Housing Register (para. 9.27) which provides current levels of need by house size for affordable housing.
- 66.3. In terms of assessing the need of those wanting to build their own home, Section 11 of the SHMA [H1] sets out the number registered on the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register (paras 11.86 – 11.92). Paragraphs 11.95 – 11.97 also consider secondary data from the National Custom and Self-Build Association (NaCSBA), in line with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (para 67-003-20190722).
- 66.4. In relation to older persons' housing needs, paragraphs 8.27 – 8.32 of the SHMA [H1] clearly highlight the different baseline prevalence rates typically applied to modelling needs and outlines matters to be factored in when considering the most appropriate rate to be applied. These matters are:

- Local strategies for delivering specialist housing;
 - The influence of market provision; and
 - National level studies versus local context.
- 66.5. The SHMA [\[H1\]](#) acknowledges the direction of future provision, set out in West Sussex County Council’s Vision and Strategy for Adult Social Care 2019-2021, to reduce reliance on residential and nursing care. The SHMA [\[H1\]](#) acknowledges at paragraphs 8.27 – 8.31 the different models for considering older persons’ needs, including the Strategic Housing for Older People Analysis Tool (SHOP@) referred to in PPG. However, the PPG acknowledges SHOP@ is one of a number of tools and the SHMA [\[H1\]](#) clearly justifies why the 2016 Housing LIN Review rate is used over the other options (paras. 8.33 – 8.34). It also clearly explains at paragraphs 8.35 – 8.37 the adjustments made to the 2016 Housing LIN rates to reflect the comparatively good health and affluence of the older population in Mid Sussex.
- 66.6. In terms of assessing the need of households with specific needs (i.e. households with disabilities), the SHMA [\[H1\]](#) sets out population projections for varying disabilities across younger and older age groups over the Submitted District Plan (the Plan) period. The analysis uses prevalence rates from Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) and Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) websites, makes adjustments to reflect the local context and links to the population growth projections used in the standard method (para. 8.15 – 8.18). The SHMA [\[H1\]](#) also assesses the need for housing suitable for wheelchair users and estimates the need across different tenures (paras. 8.64 – 8.73).
- 66.7. The Council has sought to address the identified needs of the above specific groups through policies with the Plan [\[DP1\]](#), including **DPH4: Older Persons’ Housing and Specialist Accommodation, DPH6: Self and Custom Build Housing and DPH12: Accessibility.**

Housing Requirement

67. Is a minimum housing requirement of 19,620 justified and consistent with national policy? What is the status of the 996 dwellings referenced within the table in Policy DPH1 as total under/over supply for resilience and unmet need? Should this figure be included within the annual housing requirement for the district?

The Council has identified a local housing need of 19,620 dwellings in the submission District Plan [DP1] based on application of the standard methodology. As set out in Policy DPH1: Housing the Council has identified an over-supply of 996 dwellings which adds resilience to housing delivery. Given its status it should not be added to the housing requirement.

- 67.1. The Housing Need and Requirement Topic Paper [H5, paras 7 - 13] explains that the Council has established its local housing need by using the Standard Methodology in accordance with the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. The response to questions 58, 59 and 60 provide a detailed explanation of the process and consideration of exceptional circumstances. At Regulation 19 stage, the local housing need was established as 1,090 dwellings per annum based on the standard methodology which equals **19,620 dwellings** for the plan period 2021 – 2039. This figure is justified and consistent with national policy.
- 67.2. Following application of the Site Selection methodology [SSP1] and Sustainability Appraisal processes, at Regulation 19 stage the Council identified a total housing supply of 20,616 dwellings as set out in policy **DPH1: Housing**. This represents an over-supply of **996 dwellings**¹. The submitted District Plan explains that this provides resilience to housing delivery in Mid Sussex should any commitments not be delivered, with anything beyond meeting Mid Sussex need contributing towards unmet need arising in the Northern West Sussex Housing Market Area as agreed by a Statement of Common Ground [DC4].
- 67.3. The supporting text to policy **DPH1: Housing** explains that the 996 dwellings adds resilience to housing delivery, should any commitments not be delivered as expected. Given the fact the 996 provides flexibility in the housing supply to ensure housing need can be met, and that it is not a fixed figure, it should not be added to the housing requirement.

¹ Note that, as per proposed modification M67 [DP2] and as set out in the Topic Paper [H5, paras 94 – 95] the over-supply would increase to 1,042 as a result of extending the plan period and re-basing the housing need and supply position as at 1st April 2024.

68. Are there other considerations that are likely to drive an increase in the homes needed locally, such as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas namely the 30,000 dwellings of unmet need identified up to 2050 in the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton authorities, Housing Need and Requirement Topic Paper (HNRTTP) (H5), and the more immediate housing needs of Crawley, Brighton and Horsham?

The Council has had full regard to housing needs both within its administrative area and those arising from nearby and neighbouring authorities. The Council is not aware of any further considerations that are likely to drive an increase in homes needed locally beyond those needs already established and considered. The Housing Need and Requirement Topic Paper [H5] explains the Council's considerations and its positive approach to meeting its own need as well as contributing towards unmet needs arising elsewhere.

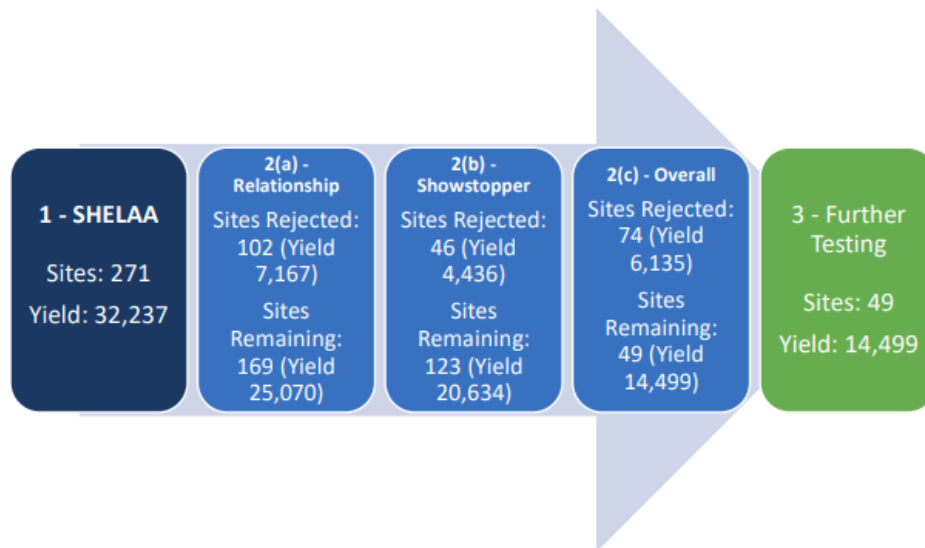
- 68.1. Through its engagement with neighbouring and sub-regional authorities, both individually and through formal groupings, the Council is aware of the housing need situation in the local area. The Housing Need and Requirement Topic Paper [H5, paras 35 - 43] set out a summary of the latest housing need position. This is also reflected in the Northern West Sussex Statement of Common Ground – Housing [DC4] and where relevant, individual Statements of Common Ground [DC5-DC15].
- 68.2. Through engagement with neighbouring authorities and an understanding of their respective local housing need positions the Council is not aware of any further considerations which would increase housing need within adjoining areas beyond those already set out within the Topic Paper and agreed Statements of Common Ground. The Council's response to unmet need is set out in policy **DPH1: Housing**.

69. If so, are there any policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance that provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of housing, within the plan area; or would any adverse impacts of meeting the Council's OAN and the unmet needs of others significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole?

The Council has carefully considered the policies within the framework when concluding the potential housing supply within the district and consequentially how much of the Council's local housing need and unmet

needs of others be met. The Site Selection Process [SSP1] has guided this by assessing potential sites against NPPF policies.

- 69.1. The Site Selection Process uses a staged approach based on policies in the NPPF. The first stages (Stages 2(a) and 2(b)) reflect the NPPF policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance that provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of housing.
- 69.2. Following application of these stages, 123 sites with a yield of 20,634 dwellings remained in the process and progressed to stage 2(c) where sites were considered against the range of policies within the Framework as a whole. The Council rejected sites at this stage where there was significant and demonstrable harm (i.e. the negatives outweighed the positives). At this stage 74 sites with a yield of 6,135 were rejected. The Site Selection Conclusions paper [SSP3, para 3.1] sets this out and is summarised in the diagram below.



- 69.3. Sites progressing through stage 2(c) were then tested further on an in-combination basis and were reasonable alternatives in Sustainability Appraisal terms.
- 69.4. This iterative and staged process informed the Council's conclusions on the extent to which its housing need could be met and the extent to which it could assist with unmet need arising elsewhere. The following paragraphs provide more detail on the Council's approach.

Site Selection Process

- 69.5. One of the considerations for determining the housing requirement has been the assessment of sites submitted to and identified by the Council in the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) [SSP4 and SSP5]. These have been assessed against the Site Selection Methodology [SSP1] for their potential for allocation within the District Plan. This is a tried and tested, robust and transparent process used for the adopted District Plan [BD1] and Site Allocations DPD [BD2].

69.6. As set out in SSP1 and summarised in response to Question 36, the Site Selection process is a three-stage process which has been guided by policies in the NPPF.

- **2(a) Relationship to Settlements**
- **2(b) Criteria: Showstoppers**
- **2(c) Criteria: Overall Assessment**

69.7. **Stage 2(a)** rejects sites that are isolated from settlements and would therefore not contribute to a sustainable pattern of development. These sites would be reliant on private car use to reach services and facilities, would not align growth and infrastructure and would not support climate change objectives and would therefore not be compliant with paragraphs 11 and 16 of the NPPF. The Council concludes that adverse impacts of allocating these sites significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. A total of 102 sites with a yield of 7,167 were rejected at this stage [[SSP3](#), para 3.1].

69.8. Stages 2(b) and 2(c) involve assessment of sites against the Site Selection criteria. **Stage 2(b)** rejects sites that are assessed to contain ‘showstopper’ constraints – i.e. would have a significant impact (assessed as Red – “Very Negative Impact”) against any criterion where the NPPF has clearly stated that development in these areas should be avoided, refused or only permitted in exceptional circumstances. The Council concludes that adverse impacts of allocating these sites significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. A total of 46 sites with a yield of 4,436 were rejected at this stage [SSP3, para 3.1].

Site Selection Criteria Stage 2(b)	NPPF Reference
1: Landscape	<p>174a: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)</p> <p>176: Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.</p> <p>177: When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.</p>
2: Flood Risk	<p>159: Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).</p>

3: Trees	<p>180c: development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists</p> <p>174b: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland</p>
4: Biodiversity	<p>180b: development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.</p>
5: Listed Buildings	<p>199: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.</p>
6: Conservation Areas	
7: Archaeology	

69.9. Whilst there are no ‘showstopper’ or single reasons to reject sites at **Stage 2(c)** of the Site Selection process, this stage considers the combination of negative impacts against the criteria as a whole and therefore forms the Council’s consideration of adverse impacts when considered against the NPPF as a whole. The Council concludes that adverse impacts of allocating these sites significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. A total of 74 sites with a yield of 6,135 were rejected at this stage [SSP3, para 3.1].

Further Assessments

69.10. The Site Selection process is concerned with assessing sites against the range of criteria. The Council has also considered sites that reached Stage 3 in more detail both on an individual and in-combination basis.

69.11. Approximately 50% of Mid Sussex district is within the High Weald AONB/National Landscape. A further 10% is within the South Downs National Park (albeit not in the District Plan plan area). These areas are protected by national policy and therefore

detailed assessments of the impacts of sites on these areas have been carried out in the Major Development in the High Weald AONB [ENV7] and Setting of the South Downs National Park: Assessment of SHELAA Sites [ENV8] papers. The conclusions of these papers have informed the Site Selection process.

- 69.12. As set out in response to Matter 4: Transport, the District Plan has been subject to detailed transport modelling which has involved the testing of numerous scenarios. As described in response to Matter 4, the district is heavily constrained by the transport network. The quantum and location of development proposed within the submitted District Plan could lead to 'severe' impacts on the transport network although mitigations are being identified. The Council has modelled scenarios (e.g. Scenarios 4 and 4b in T3) which include a greater quantum of development however the impacts are demonstrably more severe and have been discounted.
- 69.13. Mid Sussex is constrained by Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC in neighbouring Wealden district. As described in response to Question 11, the Submitted District Plan is likely to have significant effects on some European sites including from atmospheric pollution on Ashdown Forest SPA/SAC caused by increased car movements across the Forest. Whilst the HRA confirms the Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of European sites, this may not be the case with an increased quantum of growth and is finely balanced. This was a significant consideration during examination of the adopted District Plan [BD4] and remains a key consideration in determining the quantum and location for growth within Mid Sussex.
- 69.14. The Site Selection process and conclusions therefore demonstrate the Council has identified constraints that provide strong evidence that accommodating higher levels of growth than proposed would be harmful. In addition, when considering the policies of the NPPF as a whole, there are demonstrable negatives that outweigh the positives. The Council is satisfied that the level of growth proposed within the submitted District Plan is sustainable and deliverable, meets Mid Sussex housing needs, and has potential to accommodate an amount of unmet need arising elsewhere.

70. Is the requirement for Older Person's Housing and Specialist Accommodation (DPH4); DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and DPH6: Self and Custom Build Housing justified and positively prepared?

The Council considers that the requirement for Older Persons' housing and Specialist Accommodation, Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation and Self and Custom Build Housing is justified and positively prepared.

- 70.1. The Council's responses to Questions 62 and 66 above set out how the need of the above specific groups has been robustly assessed through the Strategic Housing

Market Assessment (SHMA) [\[H1\]](#) and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) [\[H2\]](#).

- 70.2. **DPH4: Older Persons' Housing and Specialist Accommodation** seeks to provide a strategy for meeting the identified need through specific site allocations (**DPA18: Land at Byanda** and **DPA19: Land at Hyde Lodge**), and the three mixed use sustainable communities sites (**DPSC1: Land to the west of Burgess Hill/ North of Hurstpierpoint**, **DPSC2: Land at Crabbet Park** and **DPSC3: Land to the South of Reeds Lane**) and a further site allocation at Crawley Down (**DPA9: Land to the west of Turners Hill Road**). Furthermore, this policy sets out criteria for new developments and extensions to existing facilities providing clarity for schemes on non-allocated sites to come forward. The policy also seeks to avoid the loss of such accommodation unless justified.
- 70.3. **DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** positively plans for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation by identifying criteria to guide allocations and for use in determining planning applications. The policy specifies that provision should be on-site and that the Significant Sites should contribute to meeting the need. Policy **DPSC3: Land to the south of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common** is required to deliver six permanent pitches to address the identified need. **DPH5: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople** also seeks to avoid the loss of existing sites unless justified, thereby assuring the continued provision of suitable accommodation to meet local needs.
- 70.4. **DPH6: Self and Custom Build Housing** seeks to ensure that sufficient provision of serviced plots is delivered to meet the level of demand through positively encouraging provision on all new residential sites, as well as setting a requirement for developments of 100 or more dwellings. This policy is addressing the demand identified in the SHMA [\[H1\]](#).
- 70.5. The Council considers that the requirements in the above policies are justified and positively address identified needs, enable a choice of accommodation to be delivered and contribute to creating sustainable communities.

71. What is the housing requirement for each designated neighbourhood area?

The NPPF (para 66) requires strategic policy makers to establish a housing requirement figure for the whole area and a housing requirement for designated areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. The submitted District Plan allocates sufficient sites to meet the housing requirement in the district in full and is therefore not reliant on Neighbourhood Plans to allocate further sites to meet the housing requirement.

- 71.1. The District Plan area has full coverage of adopted Neighbourhood Plans, with a total of 20 'made' Plans. The submitted District Plan allocates specific housing sites

which meet the housing requirement in full, meaning that there is no residual need for a future Neighbourhood Plan to allocate sites. The Council is therefore not able to identify a housing requirement for designated areas as there is no residual requirement to be met.

- 71.2. Tables 2a and 2b [DP1, page 41] identify the committed housing supply, District Plan allocations and therefore the total housing supply for the plan period by Settlement and Parish. This therefore indicates the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development within the district by designated Neighbourhood Plan, noting that the Neighbourhood Plan boundaries in Mid Sussex are related to Town and Parish Council and/or settlement boundaries.
- 71.3. The District Council will support any future Neighbourhood Plans that wish to allocate sites although these will be in addition to the supply identified within the Plan. At the time the Plan was submitted for Examination, there were no new or revised Neighbourhood Plans being prepared.

72. Are any main modifications necessary for soundness, if so, why?

No, the Council does not consider that further main modifications are necessary for soundness and that that the submitted plan is sound.

- 72.1. However, there has been some slippage in the timetable for the preparation of the Plan as set out in the LDS [P1], due to the unexpected pre-election period in May 2024. The LDS [P1] anticipated adoption of the plan in 2024, however adoption is now anticipated to be in 2025. If this is the case in order to for the Plan to cover a 15 year period from date of adoption (NPPF, para 20), the Plan will need to have an end date of 2040, rather than 2039.
- 72.2. The Council anticipated that this would be a matter that the Inspector examining the Plan would want to explore during the Examination. Therefore, the Council took a proactive position and suggested an amendment to the end date of the Plan in the Schedule of Proposed Modifications document [DP2]. It also suggested some consequential changes to other policies in the Plan, such as **DPH1: Housing**, in relation to the housing need number.