



# Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 -2039 Examination

## **Matter 3 Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy Hearing Statement**

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## MATTER 3: VISION, OBJECTIVES AND SPATIAL STRATEGY

### **Issue 1: Whether the Spatial Vision and Objectives for Mid Sussex Council are justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared?**

Q30. Does the Spatial Vision for the 2018 District Plan remain relevant?

1.1.1 This is for the Council to respond to.

Q31. Are the Plan objectives which have been identified relevant; justified; and consistent with National Policy?

1.1.2 This is for the Council to respond to.

Q32. Is the Plan period justified, effective and consistent with national policy in particular paragraph 22 of the Framework? Should it be extended, if so, why?

1.1.3 The plan period is not consistent with paragraph 22 of the Framework in that once adopted it will not look ahead over a minimum 15 year period. The plan period should be extended in order for it to be fully justified and effective.

### **Issue 2: Whether the Spatial Strategy is justified, positively prepared, effective, and consistent with national policy?**

Q33. Chapter 6 of the Plan relates to the District Plan Strategy. However, there is no explicit strategy within the Plan as submitted rather four principles and a distribution of development based on commitments, and existing and proposed allocations. Is there an overall spatial strategy which sets out the pattern, scale and design quality of places and makes sufficient provision for development and infrastructure as required by paragraph 20 of the Framework? If so, how would this strategy influence decision-making, and has it been positively prepared, justified, and effective?

1.1.4 No. The plan lacks a clear spatial strategy as required by paragraph 20 and has been informed only by commitments and existing/proposed allocations and four key principles which are more aligned with objectives than a specific strategy. This is a

fundamental part of any plan and should inform the site allocations proposed within the plan as well as future decision-making. Without this crucial element, it cannot be demonstrated that the plan has been positively prepared, justified or effective.

Q34. Does the spatial strategy make the effective use of land including previously developed land?

1.1.5 This is for the Council to address.

Q35. Is this strategy sufficiently clear to decision-makers, developers, and local communities as to where the majority of new development including infrastructure will be located? Is it consistent with the policies of the Plan?

1.1.6 No. Gladman considers that the spatial strategy is not sufficiently clear to decision makers, developers or local communities. Whilst it is acknowledged that the strategy within the District Plan 2018 needs to be revised, the emerging plan does not identify an overall strategy and instead relies upon four broad principles which are more aligned with objectives. This is a key omission in the context of both plan making and future decision making and means that the plan cannot be deemed effective.

Q36. How were the settlements defined as different categories and how did the Council decide on the scale and level of growth attributed to the different areas/settlements in the Plan? Is this justified?

1.1.7 This is for the Council to respond to. However Gladman considers that the level of growth attributed to Category 2 settlements has not been sufficient and that there are a number of sustainable settlements within this category that can take a higher level of development and contribute to meeting the needs of the wider sub-region.

Q37. How does the spatial strategy and the distribution of development relate to neighbouring settlements outside of the District such as Crawley to the north?

1.1.8 This is for the Council to address.

Q38. Is the strategy and distribution of development consistent with paragraph 105 of the Framework which states that the planning system should actively manage patterns

of growth and focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made sustainable and paragraph 124 of the Framework which references the need to achieve appropriate densities so as to optimise the use of land in their area?

**1.1.9** No. The emerging plan is not considered to be consistent with the provisions of the Framework in that, without an identified spatial strategy, it is not seeking to actively manage patterns of growth. Gladman also considers that the direction of growth and development to the most sustainable parts of the District have not maximised, particularly in relation to the more sustainable Category 2 settlements identified.

Q39. How have the constraints within the District, such as the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the setting of the South Downs' National Park influenced the strategy of the Plan?

**1.1.10** This is for the Council to respond to.

Q40. To what extent was the preferred combination of options 1 and 2 chosen on the basis of a justified and proportionate evidence base?

**1.1.11** This is for the Council to respond to.

Q41. Does the spatial strategy look sufficiently further ahead, particularly in relation to larger developments that go beyond the Plan period, such as 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, Sayers Common?

**1.1.12** This is for the Council to respond to.

Q42. What reasonable alternative options were considered as part of the Plan's preparation and why were they discounted?

**1.1.13** This is for the Council to respond to. However, Gladman considers that reasonable alternatives have not been properly considered, both in terms of broad levels of growth to address unmet housing need in adjoining areas and also in terms of site allocations in each of the settlement areas. Gladman considers that the District is able

to meet more of the unmet needs within the wider sub region yet the emerging plan has not assessed any higher growth options and therefore the plan is not sound.

Q43. Are any main modifications necessary for soundness, if so, why?

1.1.14 Gladman considers that modifications cannot be made to make the plan sound as there is a fundamental flaw in the consideration of reasonable alternatives in terms of levels of growth.