

Examination of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040

Hearings: week 1 - April 2026

Written statement from Fenella Maitland-Smith¹, Save West of Ifield

Matter 3: Homes to meet the needs of all the community

a. The identified level of affordable housing need

HDC's *Matter 3: Housing Needs Topic Paper* (para 10) states that Horsham's housing need has been modelled from local information but we note that Crawley's needs have not been taken into account. This seems counter-intuitive given the proposal to provide 3,753 houses for Crawley's unmet needs (21% of Horsham's proposed requirement), and the differences in demographics and disposable income between Horsham and Crawley. Para 23 seems blinkered in speaking about the "*continued need for a boosted affordable housing supply to meet the needs of Horsham District's communities*" without mention of Crawley's need.

This apparent disregard for Crawley's specific needs could be in breach of NPPF para 64, as referenced by HDC in their para 24.

We repeat the point in our statement for Matter 1c, that both the disposable incomes of Horsham residents, and house prices, are over 30% greater than in Crawley, and earnings are around 10% greater. This suggests that **any development intended to support Crawley's unmet need must take into account these differences, via significant %s of genuinely affordable housing.**

b. Whether the proportion of affordable housing sought from each site is appropriate

Further to the above, there must be a strong argument for the proposed West of Ifield site to provide significantly more affordable housing than other sites to satisfy Crawley's needs.

Crawley Borough Council make the point that the current West of Ifield planning application "*... provides only 35% provision for affordable housing when the evidenced need for Crawley is 40% in the adopted Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023-2040 and the emerging Horsham District Local Plan Framework Review 2024 and is insufficient to address local need. Furthermore, in the absence of a plan-led allocation there is no mechanism or safeguards in place to ensure that any of the affordable housing delivered by a future development in this location would be allocated to Crawley Borough residents.*"

We note that paras 29 – 32 of the Matter 3 Topic Paper refer to a land-value uplift of around 35 for the West of Ifield. This seems exceptionally high given the price paid for some of the land, not least Ifield Golf Course. But if it is correct, then is there an argument for a much higher % of genuinely affordable housing for Crawley's needs from this site, and much higher than 40%?

c. Whether the mix of homes is appropriate

HDC notes the recent significant increase in demand for affordable units of 3 and 4 bedrooms, but the limited existing supply. What are Crawley's needs in terms of the mix of homes? Should the need for social housing in Horsham and Crawley be addressed explicitly in the Plan?

d. The plan's approach towards self-build and custom housing

No comment.

e. The plan's approach towards homes for older people

No comment.

f. Accessibility policy

No comment.

g. Provision for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

No comment.

¹ Government statistician, senior civil servant and expert advisor to the European Commission. Her career in economic statistics includes 12 years at the Bank of England, 11 years at the UK Office for National Statistics, and six years at the IMF and OECD.