

# Examination of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040

## Hearings: week 1 - April 2026

### Rusper Parish Council Hearing Statement

Rusper Parish Council stands by all of its previous submissions submitted at all consultation phases of the Horsham Local Plan process.

This statement provides an important overview of the Rusper Parish Council position and goes on to respond to some of the questions raised by the Inspector. Also, to clarify the position, Rusper Parish Council has worked closely with the Save West of Ifield community group in areas where our objectives clearly overlap. This has helped to significantly reduce the costs in obtaining the necessary professional advice and in understanding all of the issues in relation to Rusper Parish. In the light of that Rusper Parish Council also endorses all of the formal submissions made by the Save West of Ifield group. Despite this close collaboration in obtaining information the parish council as an elected body remains broadly neutral on individual matters and makes its own independent decisions at full council meetings based on the evidence obtained in relation to any planning matters.

## Overview

It is the opinion of Rusper Parish Council that the current planning process is deeply flawed and we would hope that the Inspector can take account of some of those flaws when deciding on the validity of the currently submitted Horsham Local Plan.

Our major concern is not one that anyone present can resolve directly, but it has to be born in mind. The current planning system fails to consider any overall national strategy for the use of land in general over the whole country. It is obvious that England has a finite land supply and the planning system should start by identifying how much of that is currently used by all of the key areas of national concern and then project forward to establish what the desired allocation of that land would need to be to best balance all of the needs being placed on it.

Instead of that we have a system that focuses all the planning guidance on housing and specifying housing numbers based on algorithms that take little notice of the actual local issues and no notice of government policies to encourage development in more deprived areas of the country. As a result we have housing numbers in the more affluent south east that do not match the real need.

More detail of this is provided in our specific matter statements below.

## Matter 2: Housing supply and headroom

### *a. The housing supply trajectory as proposed*

From past discussions with developers, there seems to be a general rule that the highest annual delivery from any one site is around 300 homes. The documents seem to make some allowance for this in the delivery timescales, but any future planning applications would need to consider this aspect of delivery.

### *b. The reliability of housing delivery assumptions / allowance for non-delivery*

The plan identifies some of the problems of infrastructure delivery, but it seems that the governments insistence on housing numbers being met does not allow for any flexibility in this regard. This leads to situations, like Horsham is currently in, where the 5 year land supply is not being met. These sorts of constraints need to be reflected in government policy and managed within the plan properly. Whilst the phasing of the delivery within SP37 makes some allowance for this, the uncertainty of what happens in the event of major infrastructure hold-ups is not clear.

The waste water provision for the north east of the district, managed by Thames Water, is already over capacity with frequent releases of raw sewage. The proposals to upgrade that facility are still vague in terms of financing and timescales, so any development in this area should reflect the risk that delays here would impact delivery.

Similarly, the water provision by Southern Water is showing long term issues for the region and plans to resolve this are still evolving and this again could impact on the delivery of new housing.

### ***c. The reliability of assumptions about windfalls***

It would seem from the recent permissions granted in Rusper that the windfall provision should be achievable. However, the problem will be trying to ensure that all of the other environmental, climate and farming issues are not ignored to achieve these numbers.

### ***d. The robustness of the trajectory***

In the absence of definite infrastructure provision for the area, it is difficult to be sure of the robustness of any housing delivery options. The need for agreed timescales for all types of infrastructure provision, needs to be a priority. This is especially true of the failings already apparent for water supply and waste treatment across the region.

### ***e. Maintaining adequate housing land supply including a rolling 5 year supply***

Any agreed housing delivery numbers need to take account of the initial start up times for any new strategic developments and the time needed to provide the infrastructure, otherwise the plan will obviously fail and a 5 year rolling supply will not be achievable, especially in the early stages of the plan.

### ***f. Headroom, resilience and the mitigation of risk***

If sensible targets are set, this becomes a matter of plan management and HDC need to be prepared to review the plan if things change rapidly.

### ***g. Whether the housing requirement should be stepped***

If a 5 year supply is to be managed against the delivery times for larger strategic developments, this would seem to be a requirement.

### ***h. Whether additional housing allocations are required, and if so, of what kind / size / timing***

There is a serious lack of real social housing provision within the plan. This is an identified need for both Horsham and Crawley that is failing to be met currently and requires addressing.