

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning Application: DM/26/1259

Site: Hillsborough House, 118 High Street, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex

Response to Planning Officer's Request for Further Justification

This Supplementary Planning Statement has been prepared in response to the Case Officer's request for further justification for the proposed change of use from six self-contained flats to a single dwellinghouse.

1. Introduction

The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use of Hillsborough House from six self-contained flats (Use Class C3) to a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3).

The applicant acknowledges that the proposal would reduce the number of individual Class C3 dwellings. However, it is respectfully submitted that the planning assessment should consider the full planning circumstances of the site and not simply compare the existing six flats with the proposed single dwelling.

2. Planning History

The existing lawful use of the property comprises six self-contained flats (Use Class C3).

However, the property also benefits from planning permission **DM/25/2550** for a **Children's Residential Home (Use Class C2)**.

That permission authorises the change of use from six independent Class C3 dwellings to a single Class C2 residential institution.

The existence of this permission is an important material planning consideration because it demonstrates that the Local Planning Authority has already accepted, in principle, that the property may lawfully cease operating as six independent Class C3 dwellings.

Whilst every planning application must be determined on its own merits, the existence of an extant permission for a materially different lawful use forms part of the planning context within which the current proposal should be assessed.

3. Housing Supply

The applicant fully recognises that Mid Sussex District Council is presently unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and understands why any reduction in the number of dwellings must be carefully considered.

However, the planning balance is more complex than simply comparing six dwellings with one.

Planning permission **DM/25/2550** provides a lawful alternative whereby the property could operate as a single Class C2 residential institution rather than six independent Class C3 dwellings.

Accordingly, the planning context is not limited to the existing use alone. The extant Class C2 permission is a material consideration which should be afforded appropriate weight when assessing the significance of the proposed reduction in the number of Class C3 dwellings.

4. Practical Deliverability of the Approved Class C2 Use

Following the grant of planning permission DM/25/2550, detailed discussions took place between the prospective operator of the approved Children's Residential Home and Mid Sussex District Council regarding the council tax implications of operating the property as a Class C2 residential institution.

The prospective operator sought confirmation that, if operated as a single Ofsted-regulated Children's Residential Home, Hillsborough House would be assessed as a single council tax dwelling, charged at the standard rate, with no council tax premium.

Mid Sussex District Council confirmed that responsibility for council tax banding rests entirely with the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and that the Council has no power to determine whether the property would be assessed as one dwelling or as multiple dwellings for council tax purposes.

Following discussions with the Council's Head of Service, the Council advised that **if** the VOA assessed Hillsborough House as a single dwelling operating as a Class C2 use, and staff maintained their principal residence elsewhere, it was likely that the Council would not apply a council tax premium. However, the Council was unable to provide any assurance that the VOA would adopt that approach. Furthermore, because Mid Sussex District Council will cease to exist as a consequence of local government reorganisation from April 2028, the Council was also unable to provide any certainty regarding how the successor unitary authority may apply any future council tax policies.

Consequently, there remains genuine uncertainty regarding the council tax treatment and ongoing financial implications of implementing the approved Class C2 permission.

Whilst these matters are not, of themselves, determinative planning considerations, they are relevant to understanding the practical deliverability and commercial certainty of the approved C2 use. They therefore form part of the wider factual background against which the current proposal should be assessed.

5. Sustainable Development

The proposal represents sustainable development.

It retains the property in residential use, makes efficient use of an existing building within the built-up area of Hurstpierpoint, requires no additional land take or infrastructure and secures the long-term future of an existing residential building.

The proposal also restores the building to the form for which it was originally designed and occupied, thereby improving its architectural integrity whilst continuing to contribute to the village's housing stock.

6. Planning Balance

The applicant accepts that the proposal results in a numerical reduction in the number of Class C3 dwellings.

However, this should be weighed alongside the following material considerations:

- the extant planning permission **DM/25/2550** permitting the lawful use of the property as a Class C2 Children's Residential Home;
- the continued retention of the property in residential use;
- the restoration of Hillsborough House as a single coherent dwelling reflecting its original purpose;
- the long-term conservation and maintenance benefits arising from removal of internal subdivision;
- the practical uncertainty surrounding implementation of the approved Class C2 use; and
- the provision of a high-quality permanent family home in a sustainable settlement.

When these matters are considered collectively, it is respectfully submitted that the planning benefits of the proposal outweigh the numerical reduction in Class C3 dwellings.

7. Conclusion

The proposal should not be viewed solely as the loss of five dwellings.

The property already benefits from planning permission **DM/25/2550**, which establishes that the site may lawfully operate as a single Class C2 residential institution. That permission forms part of the planning context and is a material consideration in determining the current application.

The present proposal instead retains the building in mainstream residential use as a single Class C3 family dwelling. It secures the long-term future of Hillsborough House, restores the building to its original purpose, preserves its residential function and provides a sustainable and deliverable form of development.

For these reasons, the applicant respectfully submits that planning permission should be granted.