

Mermaid Cottage
Fox Hill
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 4QY
30th July 2026

Planning application DM/26/0682

Dear Mr.King

Further to our email correspondence, I wish to object to the above planning application on the grounds that trip rates and traffic congestion were based upon a primary school being built before completion of the development.

The future of the primary school was discussed at a meeting of West Sussex County Council on 12 December 2025, as reported by the Argos newspaper, as follows:

“The news about the proposed Hurst Farm school, which was expected to have space for 420 children, was shared during a meeting of West Sussex County Council on Friday (December 12).

It was one of 28 proposed mainstream projects nationwide which are expected to be cancelled by Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, more than a year after the Department for Education’s free school programme was paused for a review.

Jacquie Russell, cabinet member for children, young people and learning, said West Sussex had been ‘caught up’ in that review. The council had put in bids for a SEND facility in the south of the county, alternative provision in the north and a mainstream primary in the north – Hurst Farm.

In the council’s document ‘Planning School Places 2025’, it states: “The Department for Education/Education and Skills Funding Agency has agreed in principle to build a new free school at Hurst Farm which may in part cater for rising numbers in Wivelsfield and Fox Hill across the border in East Sussex.

“The housing development has received planning permission and work is being undertaken to timetable the build.”

Mrs Russell said the council had the option to accept some funding to go towards the SEND facility and alternative provision.

She added: “We know now that if we took that option, that is not likely to create two separate provisions. We would have to seek funds elsewhere.”

Alternatively, the authority could remain on the Department for Education’s project list – but nothing would happen until after 2030.

A decision on which option to take has to be made by the end of February.”

There is no mention of the above on the West Sussex County Council website for meetings in December 2025 and February 2026 or in the Argos.

Clearly the future of the primary school hangs by a slender thread which, if reprieved, would require West Sussex County Council to access the necessary funding and to seek planning permission, followed by a construction period well after the completion of residential development. The ensuing chaos in Hurstwood Lane when construction traffic possibly queuing in one direction meets residential traffic attempting to exit in the other direction during the morning peak hour+ does not bear thinking about.

WSP based there traffic calculations on 220 pupils attending the school from within the development which will not be the case due to the delay in the bureaucratic process involved. Children from Wivesfield, LW/21/0729 and possibly from LW/25/0071 will also be adding car journeys during the peak morning period that members of the Planning Committee were unable to consider in 2023. A primary school at Hurst Farm has been a major selling point for cumulative development gaining planning permission within the catchment area, which does not gel with infrastructure being provided in a timely manner. On 9th July Downlands Community School, near Hassocks, shut after a wider issue affected just over 1,400 customers in the Ditchling area of Sussex.

