

20th April 2025

Steven King, Planning & Sustainable Economy
MID-SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Dear Steven King

OBJECTIONS TO APPLICATION No. DM/25/0014, /0015
Erection of c.200 dwellings on Huntsland farmland

Thank you for your letters notifying us of the Application for Outline Approval for the erection of 200 dwellings covering pristine farmland known locally as Huntsland Farm.

Having viewed the documents made available on your website we would like to express our strongest objections to this disproportionate desecration of our countryside. Primarily, our strategic objections are to such a massive housing estate next door. Secondly, we find unacceptable the extra flooding that will occur from the steep site next to us to the East, to be covered in concrete/tarmac. Thirdly, we object to concreting over farmland which is a vital resource, especially in times of blockade and looming war. We also object on other planning grounds and to the political context.

A. STRATEGIC OBJECTIONS:

- 1** We object to this proposal as contravening the provisions of the '*Strategy for the South East*' which designated the area as a 'strategic gap' between the urban areas of East Grinstead and Crawley-Gatwick which were planned as Growth Areas for economic and residential development in the South East.ⁱ
- 2** The '**Strategic Gap**' is here to protect the quality and appearance of the countryside, its green spaces, woodland, ancient trees, wildlife, nature walks and freedom from creeping urbanization.
- 3** The proposed development would **eradicate tens of hectares of good farmland for ever**, upon which the UK depends for food and to achieve self-sufficiency in times of international strife, as now. Home-grown food is also more reliable in terms of standards, quality, treatments and packaging, whereas foreign imports are compromised by being unknown, sometimes poor, even injurious, as in the case of chlorinated US chicken.
- 4** Building large swathes of housing, beyond local needs, encourages excessive volumes of economic migrants into the UK. These also put local people out of work.
- 5** Such house-building does not advance economic growth, as claimed by Government. Growth of GNP results from beneficial economic activity such as exporting goods and services. Building in our own back-yard benefits land speculators and builders, not the Nation as a whole. Such building, with imported timber and other materials and labour, can reduce the GNP.ⁱⁱ

- 6 England is the 8th highest density country (of >1 million people) in the World. The South-East is the densest Region.ⁱⁱⁱ It needs to be protected from worsening this pressure because over-crowding reduces the standard of living, causes friction and ill-health, leading to conflict.
- 7 Building in the countryside is uneconomic. It involves inefficiently extending networks of water, sewerage, electricity, gas, telecoms and other services.
- 8 New Towns of 50-100,000 people derive economies of scale both in provision of fixed services and the running of the police, fire, ambulance, care and other services.^{iv} Such planned development is therefore preferable to that in this proposal, given the need and spare capacity in northern Regions.
- 9 South-East England is already **over-heated**. So New Towns should be located in Regions which need investment, economic activity and welcome cheap labour. There are more suitable areas in the North, North-West and North-East, such as Liverpool and Teesside suffering from industrial decline and thus offering opportunities to regenerate abandoned land to serve local communities, provide employment and level-up standards of living. The **Minister for Housing, Communities & Local Government** was requested^v via a supportive letter from our MP Mims Davies,^{vi} to adopt this strategy and the Department has acknowledged that policy.^{vii}
- 10 Planning is for guiding future investment and policies to make most efficient use of resources, requiring scenarios to be set out with risk analysis of likely impacts. This is largely absent. There is a need for a **National Strategic Plan** to agree on and guide development as outlined in '*A New Case for a National Strategic Plan*'.^{viii}
- 11 Government is **over-riding traditional planning processes**, which reduces the care and consideration that a Democratic system should afford to all parties involved. **Plans are pointless** if whimsically ignored when opportunistic proposals are accepted. This proposal is an example of speculative exploitation of preferential treatment towards big corporations.
- 12 If the land speculator cannot build on Huntsland farm, it can be put in a Land Bank for future uses, such as growing high value crops, e.g. for wine, fruit, herbs etc. At worst, it could be used for photovoltaic panels on stilts so that sheep may graze beneath.

B. FLOOD RISK OBJECTIONS

- 1 The updated (March 2025) Flood Map by Ramboll (Fig.3.2) shows their estimated area at **risk of flooding** at 3.3% per year. Flooding already occurs in our part of that area every 5-10 years or so (photo attached)^{ix} so 3.3% is well below the current risk. The impermeable areas created by the proposed development will markedly increase this risk and deepen the flood-water.
- 2 The proposal now includes storage basins to withhold downstream flooding. But if the risk estimates are so low, these **basins will not be adequate**. Even if adequate for 'median' years, the crucial years are those when extreme rainfall causes the dams to overflow and possibly break down, leading to catastrophic flooding downstream, i.e. through our private gardens all the way to Rowfant House.
- 3 The provision of **control valves** on the pipes between the basins is alleged to mitigate this risk. But, of course, the end result is the same, if slightly slower in discharge rate, depending whether the valves are controlled by hand or automatically.
- 4 We therefore Object to the Proposal even with Amendments unless additional safeguards are included, These should include:

4.1 A pumping station built to lift the surface water up to the main drain on Turners Hill Road. This should be built, run and maintained by the developer, or his contractor, in perpetuity. This provision needs to be required before planning permission is granted so that the developer, i.e. Wates, knows it has financial and legal responsibilities well into the future to provide for.

4.2 The developer will also need to provide contributions to the repair of the Surface Water drain on Turners Hill Road.

4.3 The **sewer pumping station** also needs provision for retention in times of failure. As WSCC Lead Local Flood Authority points out in their letter of 26th February 2025.

4.4 The Flood Authority raised the effect of **Urban Creep**. 10% is now claimed to be allowed for. That would be 20-30 houses. But the only space on the site for more houses is below the basins and there is no space for more basins below them.

4.5 The Flood Authority noted the ditch beside Huntsland Lane was not obviously draining to the site. Unfortunately, the Ramboll proposal to set a pipe to link the two will accentuate the volume of water running down the hill.

4.6 An additional consideration is that the **quality** of 'surface water' will include contaminants from car-washing, fuel and oil leaks, domestic cleaning fluids and gradual erosion of tarmac and other building materials. These will surely affect the fishing ponds to the west fed by the over-flows from the swales.

C. **GENERAL OBJECTIONS** on local planning issues:

- 1** The proposed mass of new dwellings covering **a large area of existing grazing detracts from the rural character** of the area. Street lights will be on all night on the hillside, quite out-of-keeping with a rural area. Production-line brick boxes ignore **the quality and diversity of existing buildings**.
- 2** The **disproportionate influx** of about **1,000 people unfamiliar with local customs** will disturb this quiet neighbourhood, bringing noise, litter, anti-social behaviour, vandalism, trespassing and potential burglary. Their children will be inclined to explore the surroundings, ignoring the propriety of fencing, private property, planting and protected areas.
- 3** **The economic impact will over-load existing services, impeding our access to them, requiring extra expenditure, leading to higher Council tax.**
- 4** Some extra labour supply will **put existing trades-people out of work or business**.
- 5** **Local roads are unsuitable for extra traffic**, being narrow, with blind bends, few side-walks, no lighting and no speed control on Wallage Lane, especially dangerous for **pedestrians and cyclists**, already endangered by **heavy goods vehicles** serving the rampant expansion of Rowfant Business Centre.
- 6** **The site was not Allocated in the District Plan** by the Planning Team which deemed it unsuitable and not required for development. The Team found the low rate of local increase did not warrant large volume housing. Therefore this proposal should be dismissed as superfluous and contravening the District Plan.

D. POLITICAL OBJECTIONS

1 Government directives to increase house-building are being driven by three extraneous factors which responsible government could and should resist.

1.1 The house-builders' lobby is powerful, aggressive, well-funded and well entrenched in political circles. This gives advantage to influence public policy in their favour. Moreover, this intrusion into political decision-making is unfamiliar to the public and therefore neither democratic nor strenuously challenged. It is also occasionally open to corruption by political donations and other means of preferment. It should be condemned as anti-democratic by local leaders with a sense of public duty.

1.2 Housing demand is inflated by masses of economic migrants and asylum-seekers crossing the Channel and being given sanctuary in hotels and subsidized housing. Some of these are from countries that the UK has been party to wars against, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. It is therefore Governments' failure to stop decimating their homelands and failure to provide aid for them to revive and develop their own neighbourhoods, which should be rectified.

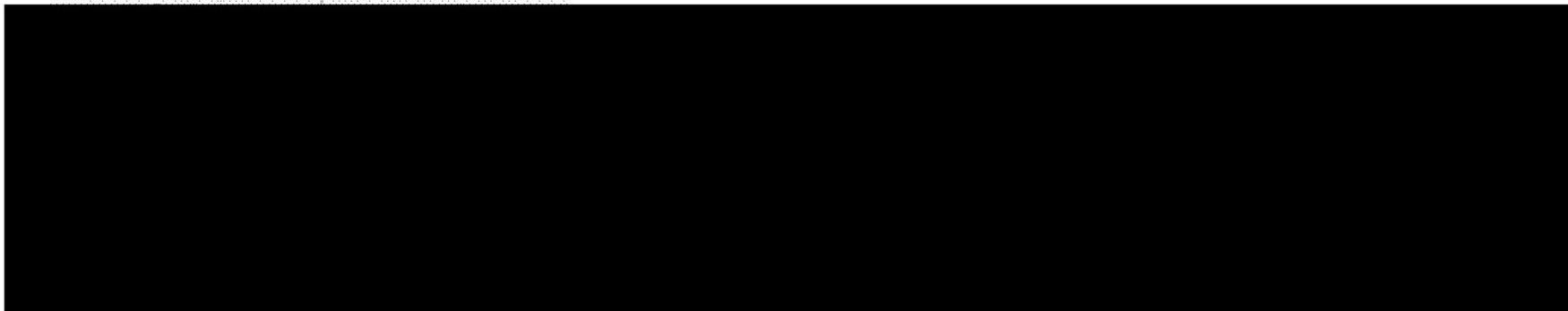
1.2. It is for local government, representing the communities who suffer the brunt of these failures and National irresponsibilities, **to resist these pressures** and defend local tax-payers, constituents and environments from intrusion, loss of amenities, peace and security. If left unchallenged, this lack of accountability can lead to demonstrations and rebellion.

SUMMARY

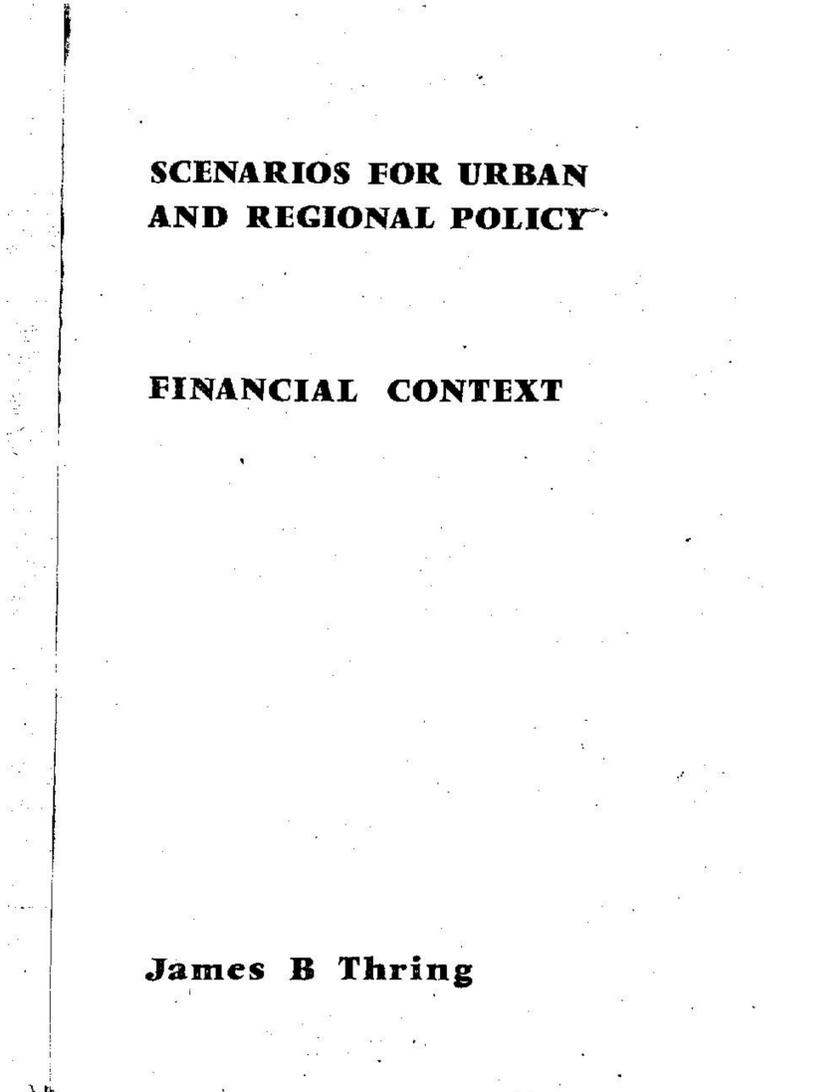
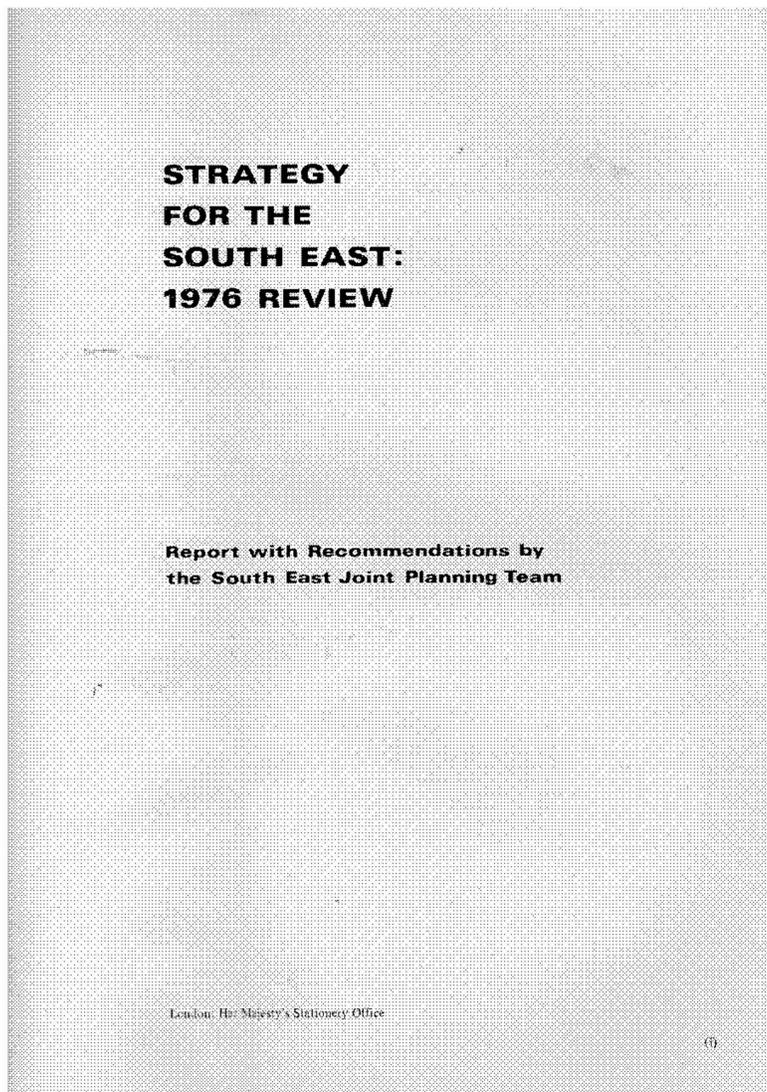
We implore the Planning Committee to Refuse this Application on grounds that it is not required, not planned for and not compatible with existing environmental and social norms. It poses a flood risk. It would damage the local economy by increasing tax-take while providing no benefits. It would spoil vital farmland.

It is for Central Government to resist the twin causes of inflated housing demand by guarding our borders and not helping people suffering from its wars where they live. Governments should be looking ahead at our likely future essential requirements with a National Strategic Plan to give confidence for economic investment and growth in places where it is urgently needed, and for farming to provide food in times of conflict and embargo, currently on the horizon thanks to abetting war with Russia, and to preserve the environment.

Yours faithfully



Enclosed; References & supporting material



ii

iii Thring, J B (1990) 'World Density Comparisons' Planning Intelligence.

PLANNING π INTELLIGENCE

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WORLD DENSITY COMPARISONS

Sources; 'Population Concern' 1995 (excluding 35 city-states with < 1 million)

COUNTRY	AREA km ²	POPULATION millions	DENSITY persons per	RANK
1 Singapore	621	2.9	4,670	1
2 Bangladesh	130,173	116.6	859	2
3 Mauritius	1,839	1.1	598	3
4 Taiwan	36,001	21.1	586	4
5 Netherlands	33,929	15.4	454	5
6 South Korea	98,731	44.5	451	6
7 Puerto Rico	8,858	3.6	406	7
8 England	130,308	46.2	355	8
(S.E. England	19,096	8.0	401	8)

iv

Thring J B (1979) 'Costs of New Town Development' Department of the Environment.

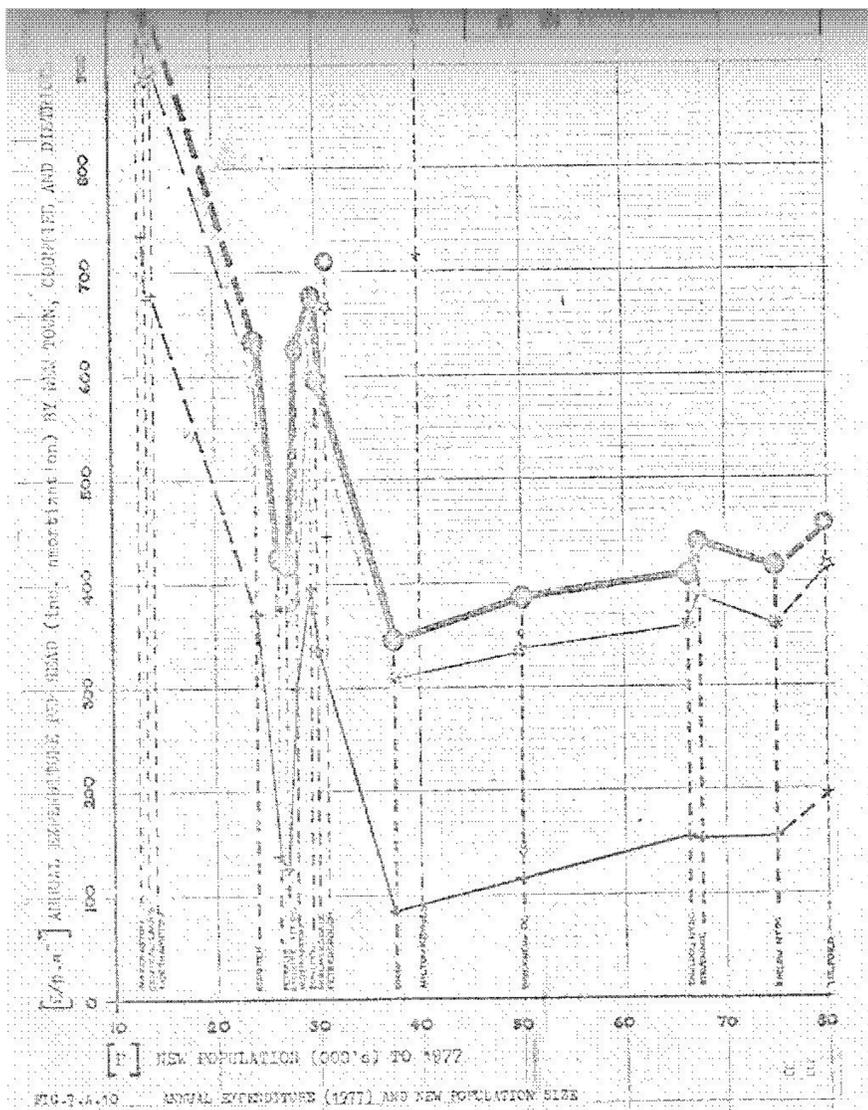


FIG.7.A.10 NEW POPULATION (1977) v ANNUAL EXPENDITURE PER HEAD (1977) IN NEW TOWNS

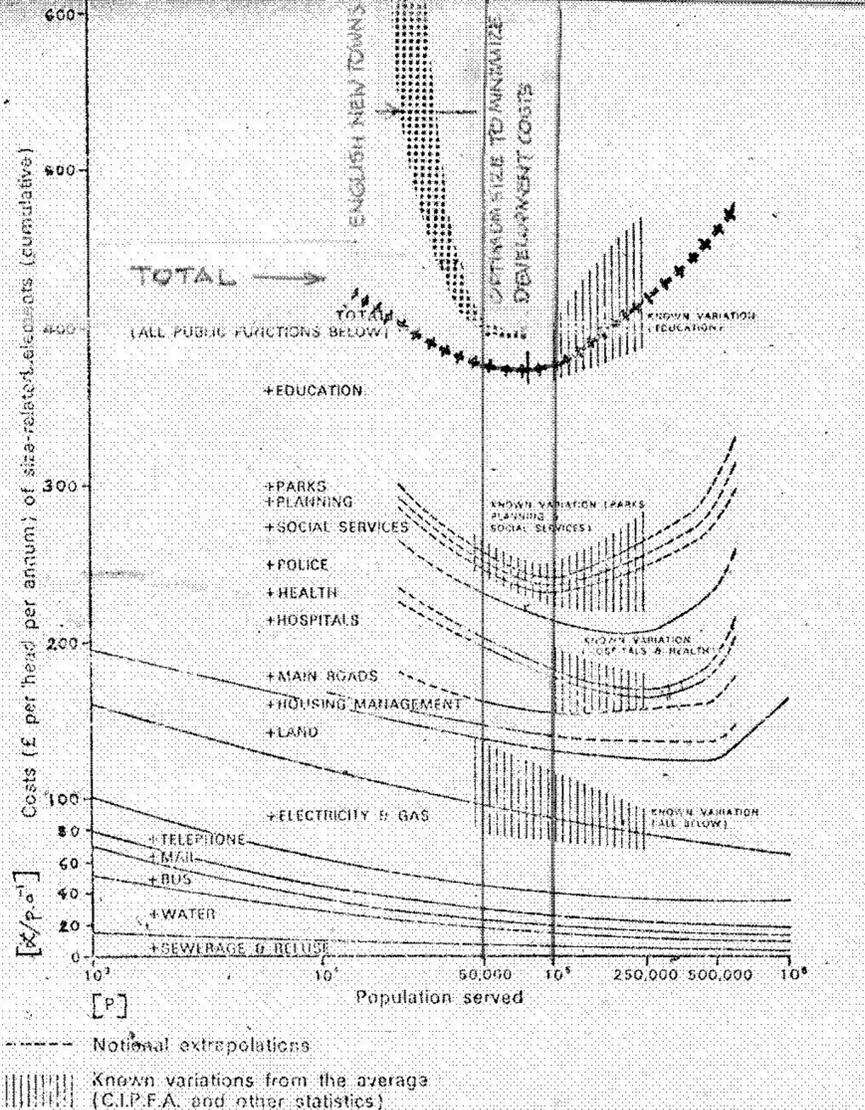


FIG.7.A.11 ANNUAL EXPENDITURE BY PUBLIC AUTHORITIES WITH AND WITHOUT NEW TOWNS v POPULATION (THRING, J (1980) 'Costs of New Town Development')

letter to Housing Minister, re: New Towns vi

Endorsement by Mims Davies MP

THE ROWFANT SOCIETY

BRANDON HOUSE WALLAGE LANE ROWFANT WEST SUSSEX RH10 4NL
01342 714677 initsy.bryofpeace@btinternet.com 07483 219729

5th March 2025

Mr Matthew Pennycook, MP
Minister for Housing Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Mr Pennycook,
New Towns

Could we implore you to designate a New Town or two to cater for the growth in population from outside the UK. These would save resources on infrastructure, provide a focus for growth and service new businesses, as they usually have done. I attach a summary of English New Town development costs.*

New Towns sited on grey areas such as vacant commercial or industrial sites can save on land costs and help clean up those sites.

They also save the countryside from expensive extensions to public services, save farmland for growing vital food supplies and save the rural environment for people to enjoy.

And sited in Regions deprived of investment they would help to level-up the availability for jobs as well as housing in areas such as Tyneside, Glasgow, North Wales and the North West. I am sure the Labour Party would benefit from this redistribution.

We make this proposal partly to reduce the pressure from speculative developers buying up cheap farmland here in the South East and concreting over it. New Towns also divert pressure on local Councils to permit way more housing than is needed for local growth, which is unpopular because it destroys countryside and farmland as well as our community. It is also unsustainable without complimentary investments in jobs.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Dr James B Thring, Chairman

Enclosed: Graph shows minimum costs for New Towns at around 100,000 people. This would help to reach the 1.5million homes Government aims to provide quickly, and economically.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: MD39384

6 March 2025

Comments DM/25/0014 DM/25/0015 DM/25/0016 and DM/25/0017

I am writing on behalf of my constituents living in Crawley Down as their Member of Parliament for the East Grinstead & Uckfield Constituency.

Many local residents have written to me to object to the above planning applications and so on their behalf I am writing the below.

To summarise the main points of concern:

- Local residents object to 350 additional housing units fearing that this will lead to overdevelopment fundamentally changing the character of their local village. This represents significant growth in Crawley Down - as high as 25% according to some estimates
- The access point via Wychwood Place is clearly unsuitable for development of this magnitude and was clearly designed for a much smaller development. Planning officers should request that plans be revised in this regard to mitigate the impact on local residents.
- The proposed land has significant issues of drainage. Adding a development of this size and associated run off will make this issue worse in the view of local residents. They have alerted me to frequent surface water flooding on nearby roads, gardens and woods. Planning consent should be withheld until local residents and the parish council are assured on appropriate flood mitigation measures.
- The capacity and performance of local health services is a long running issue which I am working with partners to resolve. Nevertheless, in the absence of significant improvement here, I do not believe local health services at present can cope with additional residents and also the high need patients located at the proposed care home.
- In addition, there is widespread concern with the capacity of the local road network, not least with the significant development already granted planning permission elsewhere in Mid Sussex and Tandridge.

I hope planning officers and the planning committee will pay every consideration to these concerns from my constituents and local residents, when assessing the suitability of this site.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]

Mims Davies
Member of Parliament for East Grinstead & Uckfield

vii MHCLG reply agreeing New Town need

 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: TO2025/08108

Dr James Thring
therowfantsociety@btinternet.com

9 April 2025

Dear Dr Thring,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 12 March 2025 regarding New Towns.

The Government is committed to delivering a new generation of new towns, with locations informed by the recommendations of an independent, expert New Towns Taskforce. New towns will include large-scale new communities built on greenfield land and separated from other nearby settlements, but also a larger number of urban extensions and urban regeneration schemes.

The Taskforce will submit a final report to ministers this summer which will include a list of places new towns could potentially be located, as well as wider recommendations on the funding and delivery of new towns.

Our New Towns Programme will not just make a significant contribution to meeting England's housing needs into the future. It will also support economic growth by releasing the productive potential of constrained towns and cities and ensuring our housebuilding drive is aligned with our industrial strategy and national infrastructure plans.

The government is committed to delivering 1.5 million new homes by the end of this Parliament and we can't do this by using brownfield sites alone. That's why the manifesto was clear that we will be more strategic in our approach to Green Belt land to build more homes in the right places, including via the New Towns Programme.

The government is clear that new towns will be delivered in partnership with local leaders and communities. The New Towns Taskforce will continue to work collaboratively with local areas, to ensure new towns are built in the right locations and provide what areas need including public transport and services like GP surgeries and schools, as well as access to open green spaces.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely,

Harry
Correspondence Unit

viii Proposal for National planning strategy

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A NEW CASE FOR A
NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN
PROCESS, ELEMENTS, BENEFITS, UNCERTAINTIES & CONTINGENCIES

Dr James B Thring

Revised September 2018

ix Flooding of private property at foot of Huntsland hill.
The stream through Brandon House garden in 2020.



vii

viii

ix