

Sarah Valentine

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 March 2026 14:53
To: Claire Armstrong-Mackenzie
Cc: planninginfo
Subject: Re: Planning Application: Land at Borde Hill Lane – Up to 125 Dwellings and New Roundabout Access

[REDACTED]

For clarity this objection relates to reference DM/25/3129

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of up to 125 dwellings with access via a new roundabout at Borde Hill Lane. For the reasons set out below, I believe this proposal is unsustainable, contrary to planning policy and would cause significant and irreversible harm to the local environment and community.

1. Conflict with the Development Plan and Spatial Strategy

The site is not allocated for housing within the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan. Allowing development on this unallocated land would undermine the plan-led system and conflict with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Granting permission in this instance would set a concerning precedent for speculative development beyond the locations properly assessed through the established plan-making process.

Furthermore, the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary for Haywards Heath. The adopted spatial strategy clearly directs growth towards Burgess Hill rather than peripheral countryside locations such as this. Approving development here would directly contradict that strategy and contribute to incremental urban sprawl.

The proposal also fails to align with the emerging “20-minute neighbourhood” principles referenced in the draft District Plan. Key facilities such as a secondary school and GP surgery are beyond a safe and realistic 20-minute walk, with routes that are disconnected and in places unsafe. In practice, residents would be heavily reliant on private vehicles, which runs counter to both local sustainability objectives and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Harm to Landscape and the High Weald Setting

The site occupies sensitive countryside adjacent to the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty (AONB). This land currently functions as an important buffer between existing development and the protected landscape. Introducing a large housing scheme and an oversized roundabout in this rural setting would urbanise the area, erode its tranquil character and harm the setting of the AONB.

The scale and design of the proposed roundabout in particular appear wholly out of keeping with the rural character of Borde Hill Lane and surrounding roads.

3. Flood Risk and Unsuitability of the Site

The land is known to experience flooding. The extent of mitigation that would be required to make the development acceptable highlights the inherent unsuitability of the site. Removing established trees and vegetation — which currently perform natural drainage and flood management functions — would increase risk both to new dwellings and to existing neighbouring properties.

The potential consequences of exacerbated flood risk in this location outweigh any perceived benefit of development.

4. Loss of Biodiversity and Environmental Harm

This site currently supports rich biodiversity. Birds of prey are regularly seen overhead and owls can be heard at night, demonstrating the ecological value of the land. Development would inevitably lead to habitat loss and fragmentation of wildlife corridors.

While biodiversity net gain may be claimed, it is difficult to see how newly planted landscaping could realistically replicate the maturity and ecological function of the existing environment. Experience from the nearby Penlands Green Redrow development demonstrates that replacement planting often struggles to establish successfully, particularly when planted to meet construction deadlines and without long-term care. It would take decades for any new planting to approach the environmental value currently present — and even then, it would not replicate the existing natural systems such as carbon sequestration and flood mitigation.

The impact of development on wildlife is not theoretical. Within the Penlands Green development, two badgers have reportedly been killed crossing newly introduced roads in the past year alone. Increasing development and traffic in this area will inevitably heighten such risks.

In addition, the likely reliance on private cars would increase emissions, worsening air quality and contributing further to environmental degradation.

5. Highway Safety and Traffic Concerns

The proposal would place additional strain on roads that are already constrained, narrow and in poor condition. Given the site's limited accessibility to services by foot or public transport, it is reasonable to assume most residents would depend on private vehicles. Construction traffic, delivery vehicles and visitors would further add to congestion.

The proposed roundabout appears excessive for its rural context. Its scale may encourage higher approach speeds, raising safety concerns for road users.

Cycling has been suggested as a sustainable transport option, yet current road widths, congestion levels and poor visibility make surrounding routes unsafe for cyclists.

6. Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian access from the site would be problematic. Vehicles already approach the existing roundabout at speed, and enlarging it risks exacerbating this issue. No controlled crossing is currently proposed.

Even if crossing measures were introduced, pedestrians travelling to key destinations such as the railway station, supermarkets or town centre would need to cross Balcombe Road multiple times. Balcombe Road has narrow pavements on only one side, making it difficult for pedestrians to pass safely without stepping into the carriageway. Increased pedestrian movements during peak times — particularly school travel periods — would heighten the risk of serious accidents.

7. Impact on Existing Residents

The development would introduce a substantial increase in traffic, vehicle movements and general activity, fundamentally altering the character of the area. Additional road traffic would result in greater noise, light pollution and emissions, conflicting with local objectives to reduce such impacts.

The scale and layout of the proposed roundabout, in a relatively unsupervised location, may also create conditions conducive to antisocial behaviour.

Introducing pedestrian crossings on the roundabout — while necessary for safety — would disrupt traffic flow, potentially worsening congestion and increasing emissions from idling vehicles.

8. Pressure on Local Infrastructure and Services

Although located outside the Haywards Heath settlement boundary, future residents would inevitably depend on the town's amenities and services. It is unclear whether this additional demand has been properly assessed.

Local water supply is already under pressure, with drought conditions and usage restrictions imposed in recent years. Any further development must carefully consider long-term water resilience in light of climate trends and growing demand.

Local schools, including Harlands Primary School and Warden Park Academy, are operating at capacity. Additional families would increase pressure on school places, likely resulting in children travelling further afield, generating yet more traffic and undermining sustainable travel objectives.

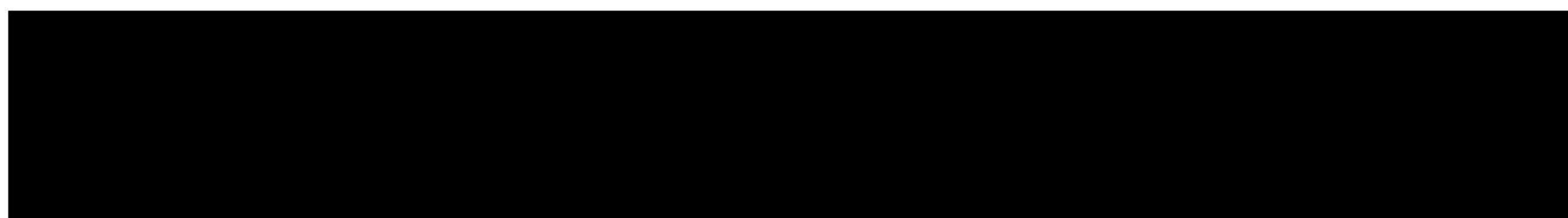
Conclusion

In summary, this proposal represents development in an unsustainable and inappropriate location. It conflicts with the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan, lies outside the defined settlement boundary, threatens the setting of the High Weald AONB, and would cause lasting harm to biodiversity, highway safety, local infrastructure and residential amenity.

The countryside lost to this development cannot be replaced. The environmental and community costs far outweigh any short-term benefits.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

For reference my details are as follows:



Please confirm receipt of my objection.