

## Caroline Grist

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**From:** planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 24 November 2025 22:28  
**To:** Caroline Grist  
**Subject:** Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application DM/25/2550

## Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 24/11/2025 10:27 PM.

### Application Summary

Address:	Hillsborough House 118 High Street Hurstpierpoint West Sussex
Proposal:	Change of Use from 6 no self contained flats, 4x1bed, 2x 2 bed (Class C3) to Children's Residential Home (Class C2) for a maximum of seven children between the ages of 8 and 18, with up to 5 carers working during the day and up to 3 carers at night.
Case Officer:	Caroline Grist

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### Customer Details

Address:	131A High Street Hurstpierpoint Hassocks
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### Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	<p>Dear Sir / Madam,</p> <p>We object to the application DM/25/2550 for the change of use to a children's residential home (Class C2) for up to seven children at Hillsborough House, 118 High Street, Hurstpierpoint. This objection is made on the following planning grounds: (A) harm to the Conservation Area and heritage setting; (B) safeguarding and management (including police/safeguarding consultee weight); (C) lack of demonstrable local commissioning / need; (D) occupancy scale and best practice; and (E) transport, parking and highway safety.</p> <p>We request that the application be refused unless the applicant can robustly address the matters below. If the Council is minded to approve, the proposal should be materially reduced in scale to a maximum of 2-4 children, or the property should remain in residential use for local families (C3) - that is the reasonable fallback to avoid the demonstrable harms set out below.</p>

A. Heritage and conservation area harm

Hillsborough House sits within the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area. Mid Sussex policies DP34 and DP35, the District Plan and the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area appraisal require that development within conservation areas must preserve or enhance special character. The change from multiple self-contained flats to an institutional care home - with increased trips, taxi escorts, shift changes, servicing and external lighting - would materially change the character of the High Street and the Hurstpierpoint Recreation Ground, significantly impacting the setting of nearby listed buildings and public space.

No proportionate Heritage Impact Assessment is supplied in the application that examines the intensity of use and likely impacts on the High Street's interest or the recreation ground it adjoins at the rear. The Council cannot conclude the statutory duty under s.72 (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990) demonstrating the proposal is appropriate without this. I therefore ask the Council to refuse, or require a full Heritage Impact Assessment to test the proposal against DP34/DP35 before determination.

#### B. Safeguarding, policing and management - absence of a robust Management Plan

No Management Plan has been provided and therefore the impact of the proposed home, its residents and surrounding neighbourhood is without evidence or commitment. The application lacks any enforceable and committed Management Plan addressing staffing availability, rotas, shift changes, visitor/escort protocols, incident management, safeguarding arrangements and parking/vehicle management. Planning Inspectors require such a plan as a pre-occupation condition when allowing children's home appeals. For example, in a recent appeal the Inspector imposed an express pre-occupation requirement Appeal (Ref APP/C1950/W/23/3325982 - see paragraphs requiring Management Plan):

"Prior to the commencement of the use of the children's home, a Management Plan (MP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The MP shall include the following details: (a) Details of vehicle movements and parking arrangements related to residents, staff, deliveries and other services associated with the use; (b) Details of how any instances of disturbance or noise related to the use of the property will be monitored and managed. The use shall not operate other than in accordance with the approved MP." This wording demonstrates the standard of control Inspectors consider necessary where operational impacts (parking, noise, shift changes) are material.

Secondly, the application is absent of any police / safeguarding consultee information and details. Police and safeguarding consultee objections are decisive, given they are essential to the children residing in the home, staff, the surrounding neighbours and local community. Safeguarding is a vital baseline requirement for any C2 children's residential home, particularly for large settings in residential areas, such as the one proposed in this application. I therefore request the Council to publish and take into account formal consultee responses from Sussex Police (neighbourhood policing) and West Sussex Children's Services / commissioning before determination. Noting that both views of these consultees and a detailed, committed and appropriate Management Plan are both required.

#### C. Need / commissioning - not demonstrated for Hurstpierpoint

No substantive evidence has been provided in the application to justify the need for a 7-bed facility in this specific location. The application therefore fails to demonstrate evidence of the County Council's sufficiency duty under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 and consistency with the targeted provision outlined in the 2024 Commissioning Residential Provision report. The application's assertion of "need" is completely undefined and uses media sources as a major evidence, which is both inappropriate and provides no specificity to Hurstpierpoint parish, nearby conurbations or even mid-sussex. On that basis, the Council should require evidence that (a) WSCC has commissioned this exact property, or (b) there is a verified local shortfall within Hurstpierpoint that cannot be met elsewhere.

#### D. Occupancy scale and best practice - 7 children is excessive in this setting

The proposed 7-place facility constitutes an institutional scale of operation that conflicts with current best practice guidelines and the County Council's own commissioning strategy: WSCC's 'Children First: In-House Residential Service Strategy 2019-22' advocates for small, community-integrated homes accommodating 2-4 children. SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2024 also focuses on enabling children to live well in their communities and be supported within local schools and families, not with a focus on high-density facilities in an inappropriate village setting. A 7-place home is materially larger than the common practice in appeal outcomes and registration models; it implies higher staffing levels, more vehicle movements and greater risk of noise/disturbance and pressure on the High Street and

recreation ground environment. The application exceeds this threshold resulting in an unacceptable intensity of use for a low density and largely residential zone.

We propose to (a) Refuse the application in its current form; (b) If permission is granted, require a material reduction in scale to no more than 2-4 children (with occupancy strictly conditioned and enforced), or (c) secure retention of the property as much needed C3 family rental housing for local families.

#### E. Transport, parking and highway safety

The proposal raises significant concerns regarding highway safety and the preservation of public amenity, particularly given the proximity to a busy public space. Children's homes are staff-intensive and this application notes up to 5 day carers and 3 night carers but provides no staff recruitment, rota, parking survey or Delivery & Servicing Plan. Notable concerns include: Local High Street constraints: The High Street's narrow carriageway and constrained kerbside make unmanaged shift changes and taxi drop-offs likely to cause congestion and risk to pedestrian safety and neighbour amenity.

Public recreation safety concerns: Not only does the property front on to the High Street but its rear access is via the lane directly abutting a public recreation ground heavily used daily by local children and families. The introduction of frequent vehicular movements (shift changes, service vehicles, visitors) as proposed into this shared access area presents an inherent and unacceptable safety risk to public space users.

The applicant has yet to provide a formal Transport Assessment or Parking Assessment to deal with these issues. In the absence of this critical data, the Local Planning Authority cannot adequately determine that the access and surrounding highway infrastructure can safely accommodate the increased traffic generation. The Council should require a Transport Statement and a parking/shift-change management plan before any determination, and should refuse where these are not supplied or are inadequate.

#### Requested actions and decision test

Given the above, we ask the Council to:

Refuse planning application DM/25/2550 in its current form; OR, if minded to grant, only to grant subject to the following pre-occupation requirements and permanent limits:

- a. A detailed Management Plan to be submitted and approved before occupation and implemented in perpetuity covering staffing, rotas, shift and cover patterns, safeguarding and escort/taxi protocols, incident reporting and noise monitoring. (Inspector precedent shows this is reasonable and necessary).
- b. A Transport Statement, Delivery & Servicing Plan and a binding staff parking / shift management plan (including off-street parking proposals or permit-controlled staff parking) to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.
- c. Written commissioning confirmation from West Sussex County Council demonstrating that the property is commissioned and that WSCC has verified a local need for this precise location.
- d. Published consultee responses from Sussex Police and WSCC Children's Services (safeguarding / commissioning), and the Council must take these into account in its decision.
- e. A binding occupancy cap - no more than 2-4 children - unless the applicant provides compelling, independently-auditable evidence on staffing, safety, and community impacts that satisfy the LPA and consultees. If such evidence is not provided the fallback must be C3 family rental use.

We would also request the applicant/council to publish the officer assessment / consultation responses in full on the public access file (including all correspondence with Sussex Police, WSCC Children's Services, highways and conservation officers) so local residents and consultees can properly comment before a decision is taken.

#### Conclusion

The proposed use, as submitted (7 children, multiple staff shifts, no robust Management Plan, no Transport Statement, and no demonstrable local commissioning), raises significant and

demonstrable planning harms - to heritage, neighbour amenity, safeguarding/safety, and highway safety - and lacks the evidence needed to weigh public benefit against these harms. Appeal decisions and inspector practice confirm that where those harms are not addressed, appeals can be refused or permission only granted with stringent pre-occupation conditions and occupancy caps. On that basis I request that the Council refuse DM/25/2550 unless the specified, robust mitigation and reductions in scale (2-4 children or return to family rental use) are implemented and secured.

Please record this representation on the application file and notify me of the Council's decision and any committee date.



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Kind regards