

**From:** planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 January 2026 06:55:12 UTC+00:00  
**To:** "Joseph Swift" <joseph.swift@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application  
DM/26/0073

## Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 29/01/2026 6:55 AM.

### Application Summary

|               |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Address:      | Land Off West Hoathly Road East Grinstead West Sussex                                                                                                               |
| Proposal:     | The erection of 44 new homes with access from West Hoathly Road, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure and highway works. |
| Case Officer: | Joseph Swift                                                                                                                                                        |

[Click for further information](#)

### Customer Details

|          |                                  |
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| Address: | 123 Dunnings Road East Grinstead |
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### Comments Details

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|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Commenter Type:      | Neighbour or general public                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stance:              | Customer objects to the Planning Application                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Reasons for comment: |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Comments:            | <p>I wish to object to this planning application.</p> <p>I live within approximately 50 metres of the site and experience this landscape daily, often with my children. For us, this is not an abstract planning designation or a line on a map. It is part of our everyday environment and one of the last remaining open transitions between East Grinstead and the surrounding High Weald.</p> |

My objection rests on a single, fundamental concern: designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty must carry real meaning in decision-making, not merely require additional documentation or mitigation.

The High Weald AONB is a nationally protected landscape. Its designation exists to conserve and enhance natural beauty in the fullest sense, including landscape character, biodiversity, ecological function, tranquillity and the integrity of the countryside.

Such landscapes are finite and irreplaceable. They are protected precisely because development pressure elsewhere has failed to safeguard what remains. The purpose of designation is therefore not to manage development more carefully, but to prevent inappropriate development altogether, except in genuinely exceptional circumstances.

It is difficult to reconcile that purpose with a proposal for 44 dwellings at the very edge of a town, extending the urban boundary into a protected landscape.

The site sits on the southern edge of East Grinstead, and this context is critical. At settlement edges, development does not sit neutrally within the landscape. It advances the urban boundary into open countryside. Built form, lighting, domestic activity and disturbance replace what is currently a permeable transition between town and AONB.

Once that edge moves, it does not move back.

This site currently forms part of a fragile but important threshold between the town and the wider High Weald. Developing it would permanently alter that relationship. Even if some visual effects can be softened over time, the defining harm here is the irreversible shift of the settlement edge into a nationally protected landscape, and that cannot be mitigated.

In this context, claims that ecological connectivity can be maintained or enhanced through buffers or landscaped corridors feel theoretical. Narrow green margins cannot replicate the ecological function or character of an intact landscape transition.

A striking feature of this application is the scale and complexity of mitigation proposed, including landscape strategies, biodiversity calculations, future planting and long-term management plans. This gives rise to a deeper concern. Mitigation does not neutralise harm where the principle of development itself conflicts with the purpose of designation. It may soften impacts, but it cannot undo them.

The landscape features affected here, including historic field patterns, established vegetation, woodland edge conditions,

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tranquillity and ecological continuity, are irreplaceable in any meaningful sense. Newly created habitats and future planting cannot replicate what is lost, particularly given the time-lags involved and the uncertainty of delivery over decades.

Numerical biodiversity targets or compensation delivered elsewhere do not address the loss of ecological integrity in this specific place. Damage within a protected landscape is not made acceptable by improvement outside it.

There is a real risk that mitigation is being treated as a substitute for restraint, as a means of making development appear acceptable rather than a tool for addressing truly unavoidable impacts. That approach fundamentally undermines the intent of AONB protection.

I am also concerned that the proposal includes access arrangements that could facilitate future expansion beyond the current application boundary. In a protected landscape, this matters greatly. Once development establishes a new settlement edge, it becomes a reference point for further proposals, compounding harm incrementally.

I recognise that housing delivery is an important public objective. However, nationally protected landscapes exist precisely to change the planning balance. They are not places where harm is justified by default, but places where restraint is required in the long-term public interest.

As a parent, I am acutely aware that the consequences of decisions like this extend far beyond the present moment. Once this landscape is altered, it will not be restored in my children's lifetime or their children's.

For these reasons, I believe this proposal would result in irreversible harm to the special qualities of the High Weald AONB and should be refused.

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Kind regards