

**From:** planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 11 February 2026 18:16:40 UTC+00:00  
**To:** "Steven King" <steven.king@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application  
DM/25/3129

## Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 11/02/2026 6:16 PM.

### Application Summary

Address:	Land At Borde Hill Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex
Proposal:	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 125 dwellings, together with the provision of landscaping, open space, and associated development works, with access from Balcombe Road. All matters reserved except for access.
Case Officer:	Steven King

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### Customer Details

Address:	6 Orchard Way Haywards Heath West Sussex
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### Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Dear Mr King,  I object to the proposal submitted by Fairfax DM/25/3129. I am directly affected by the proposal. My objection is grounded in the application's own submitted evidence and pre-existing evidence. It demonstrates that the proposed number of 125 dwellings is not justified, not policy-compliant (notably with the current mid-Sussex District Plan), and not deliverable without unacceptable harm or

unresolved risk. It must be rejected. The reasons are set out below.

1. The site is not included in the current District Plan 2014-2031 (and is in contravention of the Ansty, Staplefield & Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2031), and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2031)) and therefore should be rejected. Without inclusion the site has no basis for approval.

2. The site has unresolved risks related to floods and foulage drainage. The application does not demonstrate that foul drainage and clean water infrastructure can accommodate 125 dwellings without harm. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 159-169 require that development is directed away from areas at risk of flooding and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Policy DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage) of the Mid Sussex District Plan requires development to manage surface water sustainably and ensure no increased flood risk on or off site.

The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy concede that greenfield runoff volumes cannot be achieved due to underlying clay geology. "Site has areas within flood zone 2/3 or has flooded historically" according to Lepus Consulting's Sustainability Appraisal from October 2022 finds the site has a 'major negative impact on flooding.'

The Scrase Stream / West Common Stream extends well beyond the site and has already contributed to flooding and surface water problems in Haywards Heath and Lindfield, including Penland Road, Borde Hill Lane, Turners Mill, Burrell Road and Mill Green Road. The application fails to demonstrate that additional hard core and associated runoff will not exacerbate these known local and downstream issues. The safest response is rejection of the application and at minimum a serious reduction in impermeable area and development size.

The drainage solution proposed relies on extensive engineered measures including attenuation basins, bunds behind gardens, French drains and the use of estate roads as exceedance flow paths. This represents an inadequate and maintenance-dependent solution. These measures introduce long-term maintenance risk, reduce resilience to extreme rainfall events, and require substantial land take. They have not been tested against updated climate change allowances, and rely partly on outdated modelling. The safest and policy-compliant response is no development and if development is necessary there must be a reduction in impermeable area and reducing the volume of houses and hard core coverage, not increasingly complex engineering.

3. Protected species are at risk. An Ecological Impact Assessment confirms the presence of legally protected species, including

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common dormouse and multiple bat species, including vulnerable species. Dormouse presence is confirmed along hedgerows that are directly affected by the proposed layout. A European Protection License is required, and mitigation relies on future design stages. This introduces legal risk because the site must adhere to wildlife laws (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and demonstrates that the current household volume and layout are likely to be damaging to these species.

The application acknowledges significant loss of grassland habitat, fragmentation of hedgerows, and loss of foraging habitat for bats. These impacts are described as significant at local or site level. Mitigation is heavily dependent on future conditions and assumptions. This is not acceptable at outline stage where the principle, scale and extent of harm must be tested now.

4. This site is adjacent to AONB land and the continuous natural landscape will be broken by the proposed development. This site is included in Historic England's description of Borde Hill's Grade II\* Parkland Listing on their website: "To the ... east, the site's parkland and woodland merge into the adjacent undulating, wooded farmland" referring to Sugworth Farm.

Policies DP34 and DP26 and NPPF paragraph 176 require protection of landscape character and AONB setting. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local authorities to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs in making decisions that affect the designated area. The proposed site is part of a continuous landscape that makes a positive contribution to the setting of the High Weald AONB. An independent LVIA of the site dated Dec 2022 by Louise Hooper determined development with a lower 60 houses would "...have a major adverse impact on the High Weald AONB", and 'a major adverse impact on the landscape character of the site and its surroundings including Borde Hill Lane' (page 5). A volume of 125 houses would be significantly worse per the current application.

It would result in a significant and discernible extension of built development into the countryside surrounding the AONB and entrance to Haywards Heath, creating a large new urbanisation adjacent to and abutting it, and would introduce an abrupt change of landscape character in close proximity to the AONB, and a loss of natural landscape contiguous with the AONB. It would also adversely impact on perceptual qualities of the AONB of tranquillity and rurality due to the level of noise, activity and lighting that would inevitably be associated with a development of this scale, in such close proximity. The proposal would thereby be contrary to objectives S1, S2, W2, DS1, DS2 and PQ2 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan, would conflict with para 189 of the NPPF which seeks to ensure that development within the

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setting of the National Landscape avoids or minimises adverse impacts on it, and would fail to conserve and enhance the landscape character and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.

The assessment in the planning proposal by Fairfax relies heavily on proposed boundary planting as mitigation. Such planting would take many years to mature and does not address medium-term harm particularly where land rises dramatically above existing houses. Without winter visibility analysis, the true magnitude of visual harm (notably for Orchard Way given land rise) has not been robustly assessed. The assessment does not include winter photography or a Zone of Theoretical Visibility, both of which are standard tools for assessing impact on residential receptors and are recommended. The current evidence base is therefore insufficient.

5. Heritage and Archaeology is uncertain and needs investigating. The West Sussex Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the proposed development has the potential to contain significant archaeological remains. Policies DP36 and NPPF paragraphs 199-208 apply. The scheme causes acknowledged heritage harm and archaeological uncertainty linked to a Roman road alignment. A Heritage Impact Assessment by Place Services identifies substantial harm to designated heritage assets, including Sugworth Farmhouse and South Lodge. Even where harm is classified as less than substantial, national policy requires that it be clearly justified and weighed against public benefits. Given the scale of development and the unresolved environmental and infrastructure impacts, the case that the public benefits outweigh this harm has not been made. Reducing the scale of development to zero is the most effective way to minimise heritage harm.

The archaeological study associated with the application identifies the putative alignment of a Roman road within the site, with uncertain anomalies that cannot be ruled out. This creates an expectation of further investigation, trial trenching, and potential design changes. The application underestimates the programme, cost, and layout implications of this risk.

6. Huge description and hard core overreach. The proposed roundabout is too large and would cause huge impact on the local area during construction and light pollution once created. It is commensurate with a major highway (e.g. A272) and not the modest 'lanes' that feed into it. This area already has flooding related issues that need addressing and additional hardcore surface would accentuate the existing problem during heavy rain events.

7. Wider Infrastructure and Services are struggling to cope already. Using standard estimates one can expect circa 350 people to live in 125 houses (a mix of 3-4 bedrooms) and 30-40 primary school age children. Harlands school is effectively full.

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Policy DP20 requires adequate infrastructure. The application fails to show additional capacity in healthcare, education and social services.

8. Loss of trees and green infrastructure. The application proposes the loss of a mature English oak and reduction of woodland parcels, described as regrettable but unavoidable due to access arrangements. This assertion has not been robustly tested against alternative access designs. Tree loss and woodland reduction further compound landscape and ecological harm and indicate that the site is being over-engineered to accommodate an excessive number of dwellings.

9. The site does not comply with MSDC's 20-minute neighbourhood principle for access to shops, secondary schools, GPs, Age Concern etc - see Fig 2, LCWIP prepared by PJA for MSDC 2023. In 2016 MSDC rejected the site as being "remote from services and facilities" and "causing a detrimental impact on the landscape". Nothing has changed.

Please refuse this application.

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Kind regards