

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 July 2025 22:45:47 UTC+01:00
To: "Hamish Evans" <hamish.evans@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/25/1495

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 01/07/2025 10:45 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land Adj. To Rocky Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex
Proposal:	The installation of a 22.5 metre lattice mast, mounted with 9No. antennas, 12No. cabinets, 1No. Electrical meter cabinet located within a compound comprised of 2.4 metre high chain-link fence topped with 3 strands of barbed wire and the creation of a new access from Rocky Lane and ancillary development thereto.
Case Officer:	Hamish Evans

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Customer Details

Address:	34 Roundway Haywards Heath
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	I write to object in the strongest terms to the above proposal. My grounds of objection, based on the Council's own comment guidance and other material considerations, are set out below. 1. Visual Impact and Character The proposal would significantly harm the transition between

Haywards Heath's edge and the surrounding rural valley, diminishing openness and undermining the area's character. The design, scale, and materials do not reflect the local vernacular, instead appearing out of place from public viewpoints and adjacent properties.

The planning notice lists the height as 22.5 metres, but the applicant's own Planning, Design, and Access Statement (para 3.3) confirms it is actually 23.8 metres.

The submitted photomontages are misleading, using selective viewpoints and full summer foliage to conceal the development's true visual impact. Views in winter or from alternative angles would clearly show its prominence and the loss of open vistas.

The applicant's argument for policy DP12 is self-contradictory. They claim the site will be screened by trees, yet in para 4.2 they state, "The lowest array of antennas has to be above the surrounding trees." and as already noted relies on full summer-height foliage.

2. Design Quality

The scheme's industrial tower design, transmitter arrays, fencing, and stark façades disregard the area's traditional pitched roofs and material palette, conflicting with the intent of policy DP26.

There is no demonstrable commitment to sustainability features (e.g. biodiversity enhancement or water-sensitive design), undermining Policy DP2.

3. Overbearing Impact and Loss of Outlook

The tower's height along the western boundary would create an overbearing mass, reducing daylight and outlook for nearby homes and significantly impacting residents' amenity.

Contrary to para 2.1 the closest property is approximately 80 metres away, not 110 metres as stated. This discrepancy raises concerns about the accuracy of the information provided by Avison Young.

4. Economic Benefits Do Not Outweigh Harm

The applicant claims of limited local economic benefits are grossly overstated and ignore that the local area already enjoys strong mobile coverage and access to high-speed fibre networks including those managed by both Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council.

Any limited benefits would largely serve transient users, not local residents, and do not align with the applicant's claims for DP23.

Any minor economic gains are clearly outweighed by irreversible harm to the landscape, ecology, and highway safety.

5. Highway Safety

The only vehicular access point lies at the base of a steep valley. Oncoming drivers cannot see turning traffic until the last moment, creating a serious collision risk.

There is no evidence of adequate visibility splays, swept-path analysis for service vehicles or proposals to mitigate the danger on narrow sections of Rocky Lane. The applicants own Road Safety Audit highlights increased collision risks.

6. Loss of Important Trees and Habitat

The tabletop assessment cited for DP38 lacks direct field evidence and relies solely on desk-based analysis to support the application. Fountains Woods, adjacent to the south, is a privately owned ancient woodland that is protected due to its sensitive ground flora. Glow worms have been documented breeding on the site.

The scheme requires removal of mature indigenous hedgerow and veteran trees which are key to local biodiversity and landscape structure. This contradicts the applicant's statement for DP37 which omits mention of the removal.

This development would fragment habitats, jeopardise protected species and run counter to national guidance on irreplaceable habitats.

7. Intrusion into the Countryside

Permitting development beyond the built-up boundary would set a precedent for ribbon development along Rocky Lane, eroding the urban-rural divide and contravening DP11.

8. Noise and Disturbance

Increased traffic, outdoor lighting, cooling, and servicing will raise noise and light pollution, disrupting the site's tranquillity and harming local wildlife.

9. Aviation Safeguarding

Notwithstanding comments from the DIO Safeguarding team, the site falls within a frequently used low-level flight corridor between the Southeast and Salisbury Plain training areas.

Military helicopters frequently low fly over the area at night, the

structure poses risks to aircrew, neighbouring residents and their properties. The application lacks proper assessment of aviation safety or mitigation measures, and adding anti-collision lighting would worsen the site's visual impact.

10. Lack of Community Consultation

The Local Authority's failure to notify/consult has undermined public trust; residents only learned of the application through an anti-5G group's mail.

No neighbour notification letters or community drop-in events have been held, contrary to the DCMS Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (March 2022), which requires pre-application engagement with local stakeholders, including schools and residents.

The Applicant claims, "Our engagement with the local community included direct communication with the Haywards Heath Lucastes and Bolnore District Councillors Paul Lucraft and Abdul Bashare, Cuckfield and Lucastes County Councillor Peter Bradbury, Ansty and Stapefield Parish Council, and Mid Sussex MP Alison Bennett on 12th February 2025. To date no responses have been received.". If accurate, this indicates a significant failure by these elected officials to fulfil their duties and an attempt to circumvent the code of practice.

11. Failure to Heed Independent Health-Based Recommendations

Peer-reviewed studies (e.g. Pearce et al. 2019) recommend at least a 500 m buffer between base stations and sensitive sites like homes and schools to limit RF exposure. The application lacks justification for a closer site and omits any health impact assessment.

12. Archaeological Considerations

The West Sussex Historic Environment Record identifies Bronze Age ring ditches, a Roman road alignment and medieval field boundaries within 500 m of the proposed site. The application fails to acknowledge these, contrary to paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires assessment of archaeological impact.

13. Future Technologies and "5G-Ready" Capability

The application, though labelled as 4G, confirms the towers will be 5G-ready with larger antennas, higher masts, and stronger outputs. Numerous references to 5G in the documents reveal the true intent.

Alternative, lower-impact options such as micro-cells or small cell

installations on existing infrastructure, or satellite coverage, have not been explored. The DCMS Code of Practice requires operators to justify why such solutions are unsuitable before proposing larger masts. Here, cost appears to be the main factor cited by applicants.

Conclusion

For all of the above reasons, and in the absence of any overriding public interest or robust mitigation strategy, I urge the Council to refuse planning permission for DM/25/1495.

Kind regards