

Steven King

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 17 February 2026 12:42
To: Steven King
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 17/02/2026 12:41 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:	23 Greenways 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:	Dear Sirs, Proposed development of land north of Balcombe road - Sugworth farm Planning ref DM/25/3129 I am writing to you to register my concern at the proposed housing planned at Sugworth farm in Haywards Heath. I believe this development should not be approved primarily because it will inevitably increase the flood risk to existing properties in the town and surrounding villages. To set the context the Mid-Sussex district council published a report titled 'Strategic flood risk assessment level 1' in 2015, which states there were in 2015 an estimated 2,200 properties in Haywards Heath and Lindfield at risk of flooding. Determining the total number of residential properties accurately would require access to Council tax data but a search of the internet suggests that using the 2011/2021 census there were between 12,000 to 13,000 properties. Taking the highest number of properties means 16.92% of properties were at risk of flooding. The owners of these properties are having to pay enhanced insurance premiums to cover their
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flood risk. Some will even be denied insurance and have to rely upon Flood Re to obtain cover.

We have already had a new development at Penland Green which is able to discharge water into the Scrase stream and we know in extreme rain events this stream along with the West Common stream are unable to cope, with the result being over topping and adjacent properties flooded.

The proposed development does not adequately address the potential impact from flood in the rest of the town and the increased insurance premiums having to be paid by the properties. Allowing the development to proceed would ignore this additional tax on some to the benefit of the developer and their profit.

Points I believe the council should consider are:

1) Modelling of flood risk. The modelling is inadequate for the following reasons:

- a) There are several models available. Construction companies tend to concentrate on those which provide them the best result. There is little evidence other modelling has been commissioned which may provide a less favourable picture.
- b) The report relies on secondary data sources (paragraph 1.4 of the Aqua Terra report 'Land north of Balcombe road, Haywards Heath: Outline drainage strategy - December 2025'). Data specific to the proposed site should be collected over a period of time to provide a more accurate analysis of the risk.
- c) The Aqua Terra modelling rests on various assumptions which could be incorrect. This is why multiple flood models should be used.
- d) The Aqua Terra report uses as its core risk level the 1% annual exceedence probability (AEP) which is a 1 in 100 year event. Insurers and reinsurers use a higher risk level such as an AEP of 0.40% being a 1 in 250 year event. This is what they typically base their premium calculations upon for natural catastrophe perils.

2) The Aqua Terra report recommends various features to reduce surface run off such as porous surfaces and sustainable drainage systems (SUDS). But they acknowledge there will be discharge into the Scrase and West Common streams. This will increase the flood risk elsewhere in the catchment area.

3) The Aqua Terra report recommends the provision of SUDS, which will require regular maintenance to be effective. Only 2% of SUDS are adopted by water companies with the remaining 98% being the responsibility of the private estate management company. These companies often lack the experience and knowledge to properly maintain the SUDS. The Flood and Water management act 2010 which would impose a statutory duty to maintain these features has not been fully adopted yet, specifically schedule 3, so there is a very real risk of the surface water mitigation features failing over time. Such failure increases the risk to those properties downstream. Evidence of earlier failures to maintain features designed to mitigate flood risk are provided in the report by the Mid-Sussex district council titled 'Strategic flood risk assessment level 1' in 2015 where the following are mentioned:

- Delta House in Bridge road in Haywards Heath suffered two feet of flood water due to a blocked culvert on 01.02.2004
- Hassocks where three shops were flooded on 08.11.2008 due to blocked drains

Additionally we know that the Highways Authority does not maintain the road gullies due to funding constraints which results in the surface water running to the lowest point where it accumulates.

The poor record of maintenance means the council should assume in their deliberations that flood mitigation features which require regular maintenance are deemed to fail.

4) The Aqua Terra report mentions that only the properties which have non-porous paving will have rain harvesting systems to prevent surface run off. They estimate that 24% of the development will fall into this category. The remaining properties are deemed to have sufficient porous paving. The report ignores the run off created by the roof of the houses, which flow off the site and eventually into the surrounding streams. The Aqua Terra report acknowledges in paragraph 2.3.1 that 'slightly acid loamy and clayey soils will impede drainage across the site'.

This means water infiltration and seepage into the land will be reduced with the water flowing to the SUDS and from there into the West Common stream and hence the Scrase stream.

The council should insist that all properties have complete rain harvesting systems installed so that surface run off, both from roofs and paving, is minimised at the very least.

In conclusion, the council should consider the damage this development could inflict on other properties in the area. As council tax payers these residents deserve this risk being factored into the discussion on whether to approve or not this development. It is easy for a property developer to build and then walk away with their profits, leaving the residents to manage the problems in the future. Therefore I request if consent is given that it is subject to:

A) A relief waterway be constructed to take surface run off from the West Common and Scrase streams away from the urbanised areas of Haywards Heath and Lindifield through the countryside to the River Ouse at East Mascalls.

B) All properties at the Sugworth farm development having rain harvesting systems which capture the surface run off from each property so that the water flowing into the SUDS is reduced. This will of course increase the cost of each house.

Yours faithfully,



Kind regards