

Caroline Grist

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 24 June 2026 21:19
To: Caroline Grist
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application DM/26/1315

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 24/06/2026 9:19 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land West Of Gatesmead Wickham Way Haywards Heath West Sussex
Proposal:	Proposed 49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure.
Case Officer:	Caroline Grist

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	27 Gatesmead 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:	Planning Application DM/26/1315 - Formal Objection

Dear Planning Officer,

I wish to register my strong objection to planning application DM/26/1315 for the proposed development of 49 dwellings on land west of Gatesmead, Wickham Way, Haywards Heath.

This proposal would result in the loss of a valued area of open green space that has been used and enjoyed by local residents for decades. My family and I have regularly used these fields for more than twenty years. They provide an important recreational resource, contribute significantly to the character of the area, and form a valuable green buffer between existing development and the surrounding countryside.

My objections are as follows:

1. Unresolved Public Right of Way (DMMO 3/22)

A Definitive Map Modification Order application relating to a claimed public right of way across or adjacent to the site remains undetermined. This application has been awaiting determination for several years. It is premature for the Council to approve a development that may directly affect a route whose legal status has yet to be resolved. Granting permission before this matter is settled risks prejudicing both the planning process and the proper consideration of public access rights.

2. Highway Safety and Traffic Impact

The local road network is already under considerable pressure. Birchen Lane and surrounding roads suffer from poor maintenance and significant pothole problems. Traffic congestion during school drop-off and pick-up times is already a concern, particularly given the presence of several nearby primary schools.

The addition of 49 homes will inevitably generate substantial additional vehicle movements, both during construction and once occupied. The application does not adequately demonstrate how the existing road network can safely accommodate this increase without worsening congestion, increasing road safety risks and placing further strain on infrastructure that is already struggling to cope.

3. Access Arrangements and Credibility of the Proposals

The application states that access will be taken from Gatesmead. However, local residents have heard similar assurances before, only for practical access to be routed via Wickham Way.

The reality today is that access to the site is achieved via Wickham Way. Residents are therefore entitled to question whether the proposed access arrangements will operate as described in practice or whether Wickham Way will once again become the primary route for vehicles associated with the development.

This is not simply a theoretical concern. Previous experience has demonstrated a disconnect between what residents were told would happen and what subsequently occurred on the ground. The Council should therefore require robust evidence that Gatesmead can safely accommodate all construction and operational traffic and that effective measures exist to prevent traffic from migrating onto surrounding residential roads.

Without such assurances, residents face increased congestion, additional road safety risks and a further erosion of residential amenity. The history of access arrangements associated with this site makes careful scrutiny of these proposals essential.

4. Impact on Schools and Community Infrastructure

Local schools are already operating at or near capacity. Additional housing will place further pressure on educational provision, healthcare services and other community facilities. There is insufficient evidence that the necessary infrastructure exists, or will be delivered, to support the proposed development.

Three local primary schools already experience significant traffic pressures during drop-off and pick-up times. Introducing dozens of additional households into the area will inevitably increase these pressures and create further concerns regarding both congestion and pedestrian safety.

5. Loss of Valuable Green Space

Wickham Fields is one of the few remaining areas of open countryside immediately accessible to local residents. Once lost, this green space cannot be replaced.

For more than twenty years these fields have provided local families with space to walk, exercise, enjoy nature and maintain their wellbeing. The cumulative loss of accessible green

space fundamentally changes the character of Haywards Heath and diminishes the quality of life of existing residents.

6. Ecology and Biodiversity

The site supports a range of wildlife, including reports of black redstarts, a nationally scarce species with only a very small breeding population in the United Kingdom, together with other protected and priority species.

The fields provide established habitat and wildlife corridors that would be significantly harmed by development. Given the biodiversity crisis and the Council's environmental responsibilities, a precautionary approach should be adopted and comprehensive ecological evidence should be required before any determination is made.

7. Harm to Heritage Assets

The development would adversely affect the rural setting and significance of nearby Grade II* listed buildings, including Wickham Farmhouse and Sunte House.

The remaining open countryside around these heritage assets contributes materially to their historic character and significance. The National Planning Policy Framework requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets, and I do not believe the applicant has demonstrated that the public benefits of this proposal outweigh the resulting harm.

8. Cumulative Impact

This application cannot be viewed in isolation. The area is already facing significant development pressures. The cumulative effect on roads, schools, healthcare services, drainage infrastructure, biodiversity and local character has not been adequately assessed.

Residents are repeatedly being asked to absorb the impacts of additional development while seeing little evidence that the supporting infrastructure is keeping pace. The result is a gradual but continual erosion of the qualities that make this area an attractive and sustainable place to live.

Access Arrangements and Traffic Management Concerns

The application proposes that vehicular access to the development will be taken from Gatesmead. However, local residents have seen similar assurances given previously, only for practical access to be directed via Wickham Way.

At present, access to the site is effectively achieved via Wickham Way, and there is understandable concern that, despite the proposals shown in the application, traffic associated with the development will continue to use Wickham Way in practice. This raises serious questions about the robustness and enforceability of the proposed access arrangements.

The Council should require clear and compelling evidence that Gatesmead can safely accommodate all construction and operational traffic associated with the development and that measures are in place to prevent the migration of traffic onto surrounding residential roads. Without such assurances, residents face the prospect of increased congestion, additional road safety risks and a further deterioration in residential amenity.

The fact that previous commitments regarding site access have not reflected the reality experienced by local residents only strengthens the need for careful scrutiny of the access proposals submitted as part of this application.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully request that Mid Sussex District Council refuses planning application DM/26/1315.

Yours faithfully,



Kind regards