

DM/26/0073 – Public Note on FOI Disclosure and Neighbourhood Plan Review



Date: 25/05/2026

I wish to comment on the recently disclosed pre-application correspondence released by Mid Sussex District Council under FOI reference **R333922**, which has now been made available following an internal review. As this information was not previously accessible during the public consultation period, I hope it is acceptable to provide a short representation in response.

The FOI documents include the Council's written pre-application advice to the applicant. Several points within this advice appear material to the assessment of the current planning application:

- 1. The Council advised against submitting a planning application at that time.** The Senior Planning Officer stated that the principle of development “*would not accord with the development plan*” and that they “*would strongly advise against the submission of a planning application now.*” This advice was given because the site was then classified as countryside and was not allocated for development in the adopted plan.
- 2. The East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan is currently under review.** Although the site is now included within the Neighbourhood Plan, I understand that the Plan is undergoing review. As such, the allocation cannot yet be afforded full weight. In this context, the FOI disclosure is particularly relevant, as it shows that the Council previously raised significant concerns about the suitability of the site and the principle of development, and many of these concerns appear to remain unresolved in the current submission.
- 3. The Conservation Officer identifies mid-range ‘less than substantial’ harm to the Grade II listed Old Dunnings Mill.** The FOI documents indicate that the Conservation Officer considers the proposal to cause a “*mid-range*” level of harm to the listed building's setting, which is greater than the level suggested in the applicant's own Heritage Statement. This level of harm requires careful application of NPPF paragraph 208 and a clear justification through public benefits.
- 4. The pre-application advice highlights multiple policy conflicts and unresolved matters.** The documents reference concerns relating to housing mix (DPH7), heritage (DP34), drainage, design, and other technical areas. These issues appear to remain unresolved in the current submission.
- 5. The affordable housing expectations set out in the pre-application advice differ significantly from the applicant's recently uploaded correspondence.** The Council's advice requires a tenure split of 25% First Homes and 75% Social or Affordable Rent. This contrasts with the applicant's later request (in the newly uploaded affordable-housing documents) for flexibility to move to 100% shared ownership/shared equity or discounted open-market tenure due to Registered Providers declining involvement. This discrepancy

raises further questions regarding the deliverability and policy compliance of the affordable housing provision.

These points arise in addition to the concerns set out in my earlier notes relating to HNWL matters, as well as the formal objection from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). When considered collectively, the FOI disclosure appears to reinforce the number of unresolved issues relevant to the suitability of the proposed development.

