



**Planning Objection: DM/25/3021 & DM/25/3020 (Land West of Courthouse Farm, Copthorne Common)**

To: Joanne Fisher- Mid Sussex District Council Planning Department

Re: Objection to Applications DM/25/3021 and DM/25/3020

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**SUMMARY OF OBJECTION**

Worth Parish Council OBJECT to planning applications DM/25/3021 and DM/25/3020 on the following substantive planning grounds:

1. Conflict with the emerging District Plan
2. Conflict with the Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan
3. Insufficient infrastructure and unsustainable location
4. Material impacts on school provision, highways, water/ sewage and local green space
5. Developer intentions and delivery risk
6. The site is not allocated under the district plan, currently in Reg 19 stage, and lies outside the settlement boundary or the area intended for development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**1. DEVELOPMENT PLAN – MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN (2014–2031 / 2021–2039)**

The Mid Sussex District Plan forms the statutory development plan against which these applications must be assessed. Policies that are particularly relevant include those on infrastructure, transport, character/design, water, and sustainable development.

Policy DP20 – Securing Infrastructure

New development must demonstrate that infrastructure (including education, health, utilities, and transport) is available or provided to serve the development. There is no evidence that existing local infrastructure can accommodate these applications. The

Fairway/Primary school sector in Copthorne is at capacity, and there are insufficient school places within Copthorne itself. This is contrary to DP20.

#### Policy DP21 – Transport & Accessibility

DP21 seeks to secure accessibility and sustainable transport modes. There is no safe pedestrian route to the nearest crossing or village services. Services and facilities are more than a 20-minute walk away. The only facility within a 20-minute walk would be the Esso Petro station along the A264, this location has limited parking facilities and products. The lack of safe and direct footpaths increases dependence on private cars in direct conflict with the policy's sustainability aims.

#### Policy DP26 – Character and Design

DP26 requires development to reflect local character, reinforce village identity, and respect rural settings. These proposals would significantly alter the rural character and setting west of Copthorne Common, eroding the landscape that is not allocated for development.

#### Policy DP42 – Water Infrastructure and Environment

Developments should not place undue pressure on water and sewage infrastructure. Copthorne continues to experience water scarcity (hosepipe bans) and existing sewage capacity concerns—yet the application does not convincingly demonstrate that these issues will be resolved. This conflicts with DP42.

## 2. COPTHORNE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan (2021–2031) is part of the statutory development plan and must be afforded weight in decision making. Once formally 'made' it holds equal status in planning decisions alongside the District Plan.

#### General Development Requirements (CNP1)

CNP1 establishes local criteria for acceptable development. Although the Plan does not explicitly allocate sites west of the A264 for housing, its general requirements reflect community priorities for sustainable, context-aware development. The applications fail to align with this policy's emphasis on local character and access.

#### Character and Local Green Space Protection

The Neighbourhood Plan includes character area designations and seeks to safeguard valued green spaces. Introducing large residential and care uses on this greenfield site materially undermines those objectives.

**NOTE ON SITE LOCATION:** If the site lies outside the settlement boundary or the area intended for development in the Neighbourhood Plan, it carries even greater weight against these proposals where they are not allocated for growth.

### 3. INFRASTRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

#### Lack of Local School Capacity

Copthorne's primary school(s) are at or near capacity. There is a clear local need for schooling within Copthorne for children already resident here—not further afield—yet these proposals would add future demand without securing dedicated new local school capacity.

#### Pedestrian Accessibility

There is no safe footpath connection to the pedestrian crossing or to local services, contrary to transport and sustainability policies and increasing reliance on private vehicles (contrary to DP21).

#### Water Supply & Sewage Constraints

Copthorne remains subject to water use restrictions (hosepipe bans). Introducing additional dwellings increases risks of exacerbating pressures on potable water supply and sewage capacity, contrary to DP42 and wider environmental objectives.

### 4. LOSS OF GREENSPACE & RURAL CHARACTER

The site is currently open, greenfield land contributing to the rural character of Copthorne. Development here would result in the permanent loss of greenspace and negatively impact local landscape character, contrary to DP26 and the Neighbourhood Plan policies designed to protect character areas and local green spaces.

### 5. DEVELOPER INTENTIONS AND DELIVERY RISK

Residents are justifiably concerned that the applicants may not intend to build the development themselves but rather sell the site on. These risks piecemeal or speculative development which often results in delayed or diluted delivery of infrastructure obligations required under S106 agreements. The planning system should guard against speculative planning where infrastructure and community needs are not securely tied to delivery.

## CONCLUSION

For the reasons above, these applications:

- Conflict with Mid Sussex District Plan policies on infrastructure, transport, character, and water.
- Conflict with key Copthorne Neighbourhood Plan objectives protecting local character and guiding appropriate development.
- Would place unacceptable pressure on local services and infrastructure.
- Would erode valuable greenspace and rural character.

Therefore, Worth Parish Council respectfully request the Council to REFUSE planning permission for DM/25/3021 and DM/25/3020.