

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 April 2026 21:00:23 UTC+01:00
To: "Susan Dubberley" <susan.dubberley@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/26/0676

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 08/04/2026 9:00 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	West Hoathly Brickworks Hamsey Road Sharpthorne East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 4PB
Proposal:	Variation of condition no 31 relating to planning application DM/23/0827 - to allow amendments to the Energy and Sustainability Statement.
Case Officer:	Susan Dubberley

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Customer Details

Address:	2 Station Road Sharpthorne
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	As an energy journalist living next to the brick works development, I feel compelled to point out that approving the requested modification to remove the solar PV would saddle both incoming residents and the general energy bill payer with higher energy bills, show a complete lack of forethought and fly in the face of government policy. As the applicant's own Energy and Sustainability Statement

highlights, the cost of electricity is 3.5 times higher than gas, largely due to environmental levies. This is not going to change in the near future and is a huge barrier to low carbon technology uptake due to the cost. Both electric vehicle (EVs) chargers and air source heat pumps (ASHPs), while more sustainable than the alternatives, are huge electrical loads and will therefore present the new homeowners with enormous electricity bills. The council's current requirement for solar PV would allow those homeowners to significantly reduce these costs by generating their own electricity for large parts of the year. Allowing this requirement to be removed because the developer has achieved some arbitrary sustainability criteria would result in a huge missed opportunity for a holistic approach that would be impossible to justify.

Already there has been a missed opportunity for a ground source heat network to have been installed here using a shared ambient ground loop. The Sustainability Statement rejects on the grounds it is uneconomical, and yet companies like Kensa are already installing these systems in new build developments at a similar price to ASHPs. There may also have been the potential if a ground source network had been installed for existing households to join in the future given there is no gas connection in the hamlet. The statement also appears to argue that the varied orientation of the homes within the development would mean the homes would not be able to generate meaningful capacities from solar, which is not backed up by data from the solar industry.

Approving this modification on the basis that the High Weald Design Guide advises against 'add-on equipment on roofs' (this guide clearly needs urgent clarification) would also show a complete lack of forethought as solar is allowed under permitted development and a significant number of these homes will have had solar installed by the new owners within the next few years. Why should these homeowners be saddled with this £10,000 per home installation cost rather than the developer? At worst approving this modification will result in less solar and at best it will just shift the cost.

Similarly, installing 100 or more ASHP and EV chargers in one area of the network will result in UK Power Networks being required to carry out upgrades to the local network - costs which will fall on everyone, not just the new homeowners. Energy bills are already increasing by £60 per year by 2031 due to the cost of electricity grid reinforcement. Solar PV would have helped reduce the impact of this new development on the electricity grid. Instead this proposal would leave energy bill payers picking up the bill to save the developer's pockets.

Finally, I would hope there is no need to point out that approving this modification would fly in the face of recent governmental policy. Only at the start of this year the government pledged to triple the number of domestic rooftop solar panel installations by

2030, and the incoming Future Homes Standard will make it compulsory for new homes to install solar panels equivalent to 40% of their ground floor area. While this does not officially come into force until 24 march 2027, what possible justification is there for not at least making a nod towards this standard now? Especially given the solar is already factored into the budget and the plans for this development.

I hope the planning inspectorate will consider my points and agree that there could be no moral justification for approving this modification.

Kind regards