

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 June 2026 15:58:05 UTC+01:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <caroline.grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
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 22/06/2026 3:58 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: 7 Gatesmead Lindfield Haywards Heath

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	I wish to formally object to planning application DM/26/1315 for the proposed development of 49 dwellings at Wickham Fields. While I recognise the need for new housing, I believe this application raises a number of significant planning concerns which have not been adequately addressed. Highway Safety and Unsuitable Access Arrangements

A major concern is the proposal to access the development via Gatesmead, a narrow residential cul-de-sac, that was originally designed to serve approximately 40 dwellings. Since its original construction, the number of properties served by this access has already increased to around 80 homes, placing additional pressure on infrastructure that was not designed for the current level of use.

Gatesmead contains narrow sections, limited visibility and blind corners which already create difficulties for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The addition of traffic generated by a further 49 dwellings would inevitably increase congestion and create additional safety risks for existing residents.

The only access and egress is through Gatesmead via Birchen Lane, if the road had to be closed for any reason there will be no easy access for emergency vehicles.

Access to the proposed site requires access across an ancient, believed to be medieval, sunken path. This is a well used pathway, the proposal does not adequately address how this and safety of pedestrians will be protected during construction.

Furthermore, access to Gatesmead is via Birchen Lane, which is currently in a poor state of repair. The road surface has deteriorated significantly, and the existing infrastructure does not appear suitable to accommodate further development traffic without substantial improvement.

The pedestrian environment is also a concern. Pavements in the area are narrow and in places are in poor condition. Increased traffic volumes would reduce safety for pedestrians, including children, elderly residents and those with mobility issues.

Failure to Deliver Previously Promised Highway Improvements

Residents were previously advised that improvements and resurfacing works to Gatesmead would be undertaken in connection with earlier phases of development. These works have not been carried out.

Given this history, there is understandable concern regarding the ability of the developer to deliver and maintain the infrastructure improvements necessary to support yet another significant housing development.

The Council should require evidence that existing commitments have been fulfilled before permitting additional development dependent upon the same access arrangements.

Unresolved Public Right of Way Issues

The application site is subject to an unresolved Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO 3/22).

Until this matter has been properly determined, there remains uncertainty regarding public access rights affecting the site. It would be premature to grant planning permission before these issues have been fully resolved and their implications properly assessed.

Loss of Open Space and Impact on Character of the Area

The proposed development would result in the loss of a valuable area of open land which currently contributes to the character of the locality.

The site provides an important visual break between built-up areas and forms part of the green setting enjoyed by existing residents. Development of this land would result in urbanisation of the landscape and a permanent loss of open space.

The cumulative impact of continued development, specifically considering the proposed significant development proposed on land west on Hanley Lane/ Borde Hill, such developments in the area are significantly eroding the character that makes this part of Mid Sussex attractive and distinct.

Biodiversity and Protected Wildlife

The site supports wildlife and contributes to local biodiversity. There are concerns regarding the adequacy of surveys undertaken and whether the full impact on protected species and habitats has been properly assessed.

The loss and fragmentation of habitat associated with this development could have long-term consequences for local wildlife populations. Any biodiversity net gain claims should be carefully scrutinised and independently verified.

The Council should also be satisfied that any protected species present on or around the site have been properly identified and safeguarded before any planning permission is granted.

Water Supply and Infrastructure Capacity

There are concerns regarding the ability of local infrastructure to accommodate additional demand from 49 new homes.

Residents already experience regular water supply pressures, last year Ardingly reservoir came within 6 weeks of critical levels, including hosepipe restrictions during periods of dry weather. Given ongoing concerns regarding reservoir capacity and water resource availability within the region, it is unclear whether sufficient capacity exists to support further housing growth without negatively affecting existing residents.

The application should demonstrate, through clear evidence from the relevant utility providers, that adequate water infrastructure and long-term supply arrangements are in place before permission is considered.

To emphasise this I have today received an email from South East Water saying that they cannot cope with supply during what is becoming a more regular weather event. -

" Please use water for essential purposes only
We're going into another heatwave this week and we want to make sure the taps keep flowing for everyone. We need your help to do this. Please use water for essential purposes only: hygiene, drinking and cooking.

Why are we asking you to help?

Right now the demand for water is of course higher due to the weather. Yesterday (21 June) the total amount of water we treated and put into the network was 644 million litres-that's 56 million more than the average for June-and it'll likely be more with hotter weather forecast for later this week.

We want to be honest with you. We have:

All possible Water Treatment Works operating 24/7

Increased the teams fixing bursts and leaks to save more water

Re-routed water around the network

Tankered in more water

Filled drinking water storage tanks as much as we can

Managed pressure across the network

However, when demand is as high as this or higher on consecutive days, we struggle to supply everyone. Those living at the far end of the network or on higher ground can see their taps run completely dry.

We know we need to improve this and build more resilience into the network to cope with the changing climate and more frequent heatwaves, and we will. Building this infrastructure takes time and it's not all in place yet.

This means for now we need your help. Every change you make has a real impact on keeping the taps flowing for your neighbours

and local communities....."

Flood Risk and Loss of Natural Drainage Capacity

I am also concerned about the impact of the proposed development on flood risk within the surrounding area.

The application site currently consists of undeveloped greenfield land that performs an important natural drainage function. The site acts as a natural sponge, absorbing rainfall and slowing surface water runoff before it reaches downstream locations.

Development of this land would inevitably reduce its ability to retain water, replacing permeable ground with housing, roads, driveways and other hard surfaces. This raises concerns regarding increased surface water runoff and the potential for greater flood risk elsewhere in the catchment.

Residents are particularly concerned about the implications for areas downstream, including Brook Lane, By Sunte and Lindfield, which currently benefit from the site's natural flood attenuation function. The loss of this undeveloped land could increase the volume and speed of water entering local drainage systems during periods of heavy rainfall.

Given the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, it is essential that the Council is satisfied that the loss of this natural flood storage capacity will not exacerbate existing flooding issues or create new flood risks for neighbouring communities.

The applicant should be required to demonstrate, through robust and independently verified hydrological and drainage assessments, that the development will not increase flood risk either on-site or downstream. Until such evidence is provided, there remains significant uncertainty regarding the long-term consequences of developing this land.

Cumulative Impact of Development

The proposed development should not be considered in isolation. The local area has already experienced significant housing growth, placing increasing pressure on roads, infrastructure, utilities and public services.

The cumulative effect of successive developments has gradually reduced local green space and increased demand on infrastructure that was not designed to accommodate such levels of growth. The addition of a further 49 dwellings would compound these existing issues and further reduce the quality of life for current residents.

Furthermore, as a priority, any further development should be focused on the use of brown field sites such as land that formed Summerhill and Tavistock school on Summer Hill Lane which has been unused since the school closed and buildings demolished approximately 10 years ago.

Conclusion

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

The proposed development raises serious concerns regarding highway safety, inadequate access arrangements, unresolved rights of way, loss of open space, biodiversity impacts, water supply constraints, flood risk and infrastructure capacity. The loss of this greenfield site's natural flood attenuation function is particularly concerning at a time when climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events.

In my view, these concerns have not been satisfactorily addressed and the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on existing residents, local infrastructure and the surrounding environment. I therefore urge the Council to refuse this application.

Kind regards