

Steven King

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 May 2026 06:08
To: planninginfo; Steven King
Cc: Sandy Ellis (Cllr); caroline.ward@haywardsheath.gov.uk;
alison.bennett.mp@parliament.uk
Subject: Objection to planning application DM/25/3129 | Land At Borde Hill Lane
Haywards Heath West Sussex

Land At Borde Hill Lane Haywards Heath West Sussex

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 117 dwellings, together with the provision of landscaping, open space, and associated development works, with access from Balcombe Road. All matters reserved except for access. (Amended plans and supporting statements received 15th April reducing the number of proposed dwellings to up to 117 and reducing the size of the proposed roundabout).

Dear Steve,

I am writing to strongly oppose the planning application DM/25/3129 Land at Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath submitted by Fairfax acquisitions via the agent Woolf Bond.

Reasons for opposition are as follows:

1. Conflicts with current planning policies listed below:

- National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF):
 - Para 115 – Highway safety.
 - Para 116 – Traffic congestion.
 - Para 11 - objective to foster well-designed, safe places with accessible services.
 - Para 135 - Developments are “visually attractive” and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”.
- Mid Sussex District Plan:
 - DP12 – Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside.
 - DP16 – High Weald AONB (National Landscape).
 - DP20 – Securing Infrastructure.
 - DP21 – Transport (avoid severe residual cumulative impacts).
 - DP26 – Character and Design (context-responsive, high-quality design).
 - DP34 – Listed Buildings & Other Heritage Assets.
- Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan:
 - AS1 – New Housing Development (small-scale, proportionate; robust environmental/visual/highway assessment).
 - AS2 – Preventing Coalescence (including Brook Street–Cuckfield and Ansty– Cuckfield).

- AS3 – Local Gaps (protect openness; resist urbanising impacts).
- AS4 – High Weald AONB (protect AONB and its setting).
- AS6 – Design (respond positively to local character/landscape/heritage).
- AS7 – Transport (no unacceptable highway impacts or worsened congestion).
- High Weald National Landscape (AONB) Management Plan 2024–2029
 - Statutory management plan adopted by MSDC; material to planning decisions; emphasises conserving/enhancing special qualities and managing setting impacts.

2. Excessive housing density and principal of development

The site is not included in the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2021 but is identified in the draft District Plan Allocation 2021- 2039 but only for approximately 60 dwellings, yet this application is for 117 reduced from 125 dwellings. This overdevelopment of the site is nearly double the number in the draft plan, which also recognises that even building 60 houses would result in harm to the character, heritage and landscape of the area.

This conflicts with Policy DP4 (Housing), which requires development to be appropriately located and of a scale consistent with the spatial strategy, as well as Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy), which seeks to direct growth in a manner proportionate to settlement size and function.

3. Detrimental impact on landscape and the High Weald AONB

The site is adjacent to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so if this application is passed, it would cause a permanent intrusion into the countryside resulting in a negative impact on the setting of the High Weald AONB. This suburbanisation of the area would destroy the tranquillity of the area and ruin the beautiful views that contribute to the character of the site.

NPPF (Para 187) states that planning decisions “protect and enhance valued landscapes” and recognise the “intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside”, which this development most certainly would not, as it would severely reduce the landscape buffer between Haywards Heath and the AONB.

Furthermore, the development is contrary to the High Weald Management Plan, and DP16 and DP12 (protection of AONB and countryside).

4. Harm to setting and significance of heritage Grade II listed buildings and gardens, namely South Lodge, Borde Hill Gardens and Sugworth Farm

The proposed new roundabout is much too large and one wonders why this size of development requires it to be so huge, unless of course this is just phase two of the development of the whole of northern area of Haywards Heath and Lindfield.

It is totally out of keeping with the rural surroundings of the area and not in character. The NPPF (para 135) states that developments are “visually attractive” and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”, so the roundabout does not comply with the NPPF policy.

It will harm the setting and significance of the grade II listed buildings and gardens, particularly South Lodge, which is the closest of the heritage buildings to the roundabout and the proposed development site.

5. Transport and highway network issues, including traffic congestion and highway safety

The additional traffic that the development would generate raises concerns about traffic congestion on the rural and semi-rural road network feeding into Haywards Heath, as well as some of the roads within the town, which are narrow and lack the capacity for further widening. Also, Balcombe Road has a railway bridge running across it, which acts as a pinch point for traffic heading to the station from the north of the town.

Both Cuckfield Parish Council and Haywards Heath Town Council have stated that the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF (para 116), indicates that development should be refused on highways grounds if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, which it certainly looks like is the case

with this development. Both councils think it would lead to significant congestion in both Haywards Heath and Cuckfield, so there would be grounds to turn down the application on this basis.

In addition, not only are roads like Balcombe Road and Borde Hill Lane narrow, there are issues of safety in regards to pedestrians and cyclists. The footpaths are not continuous and neither is there sufficient space to include separate cycle lanes along them. This questions whether people will walk or cycle into town due to not being able to safely get their by foot.

Again the NPPF, (para 115) stipulates that the application could be rejected if “safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users”.

6. Inadequate sustainability principles in relation to the 20 minute neighbourhood principles

In the draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 there is reference to using the 20 minute neighbourhood principles to deliver sustainable development. The concept is that key infrastructure and services should be accessible within 20 minutes walking distance of the site. This is not the case for some of the key amenities, such as the shopping centre in South Road and The Orchards, GP surgeries and dental practices, which are over thirty minutes’ walk from the site. This will result in people using private cars rather than walking into town.

This conflicts with NPPF (Para 11), as it fails to “align growth and infrastructure”. There are insufficient primary school places and S106 monies will not cover the extra needed to deliver these services.

7. Biodiversity and ecological integrity loss

Sir Professor John Lawton’s review, “Making space for Nature” (2010) sets out the importance of making our natural spaces bigger, better and more connected in order to establish a strong and connected natural environment. In the intervening years, evidence has grown showing how important healthy ecosystems are to human health and well-being and how restoring nature can contribute to creating resilient communities against climate change and biodiversity loss.

This development will result in loss of biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure by building on green open space, cutting back hedgerows and trees, thus reducing the ecological corridor integrity between areas of conservation interest adjacent and in the vicinity of the proposed development site, including Blunts Wood and Paiges Meadows LNR, Borde Hill Gardens, Millennium Woodland and the ancient woodland in the AONB.

I note that the Naturescape report queries the way the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and highlights that some of the survey work on protected species, such as Great Crested Newts, should be done again according to CIEEM guidelines as they are out-of-date. I would hope that the council would insist that this is done before any decisions are made about the application.

8. Potential flood risk, storm overflow and drought issues

Reading some of the respondents letters to this application I note that there is already flooding issues around the Scrase stream catchment which have got worse since the Penland Farm houses were built.

In fact the area falls into the flood plain of the Scrase Stream, so concreting over of this green space will only exacerbate the problem, especially as extreme weather events of more heavy rainfall are becoming the norm, so putting extra demand on the existing infrastructure of sewers and flood mitigation measures and increasing the risk of causing flooding elsewhere in the catchment.

Likewise, with climate change comes more drought conditions too, so the capacity to provide sufficient water resources should be considered too.

9. Increased pollution

With the extra traffic, there will be an increase in air and noise pollution, and runoff from the highways could elevate soil and water pollution too.

10. Loss of subgrade 3a agricultural land forming 37% of the site

It should be noted that 37% of the site is designated subgrade 3a agricultural land which constitutes Best and Most Versatile, BMV, land. We should not be losing BMV land to housing developments.

Conclusion

I would recommend that this development is refused as it seriously jeopardises the character and setting of the High Weald AONB and heritage assets of Borde Hill Gardens, South Lodge and Sugworth Farm, in addition to dramatically increasing traffic congestion and pollution, along with exacerbating the likelihood of flooding in the Scrase Stream catchment, and the loss of biodiversity and critical ecological connectivity.

Yours sincerely,

