

Steven King

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 May 2026 20:59
To: planninginfo; Steven King
Subject: Object - Application DM/25/3129 - LAND AT BORDE HILL LANE/BALCOMBE ROAD, HAYWARDS HEATH

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr King,

my apologies for emailing if my objection previously came through online successfully. Because I hadn't received any confirmation notification, I thought it best to submit via email to be safe.

In addition to my points previously set out below, I would like to include the additional points including the key reasons why the proposed changes do not address the fundamental issues.

1. Excessive scale remains unjustified

The proposed 117 dwellings remain significantly above the approximately 60 homes identified in the Council's own draft plan as appropriate for this site. No robust or evidence-based justification has been provided to explain why this near doubling is necessary, or how the site and surrounding infrastructure can accommodate development of this magnitude without unacceptable harm.

2. Ongoing harm to the High Weald National Landscape

The amendments do not overcome the substantial landscape harm previously identified. The site occupies a sensitive rural valley that contributes to the setting of the High Weald National Landscape and acts as an important buffer preventing coalescence between Haywards Heath, Cuckfield and Lindfield. Development at this scale would urbanise the landscape, erode key views, and undermine the area's rural character. Independent assessment has already concluded that even a 60-dwelling scheme would cause major harm; the current proposal nearly doubles that impact.

3. Heritage harm remains unresolved

The site makes a strong and direct contribution to the setting and significance of the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse and its historic farmstead. The surrounding fields are integral to the asset's historic and functional context, not incidental. The proposed development would disrupt this relationship, erode important views, and diminish the rural setting that underpins the asset's significance.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, harm to designated heritage assets must be given great weight and requires clear and convincing justification. This has not been provided, and the harm has neither been avoided nor minimised.

4. Flood risk concerns have been deferred, not resolved

The application fails to demonstrate at this stage that flood risks can be safely managed. Instead, it relies on future detailed drainage design and mitigation measures that remain unproven. Key concerns include reliance on uncertain interception methods, the risk of exceedance flows following natural pathways, and unclear long-term maintenance arrangements.

This approach defers critical issues rather than resolving them. Local evidence already demonstrates the consequences of inadequate drainage, with recent development at Penland Green contributing to increased flooding in nearby areas. Introducing a development of this scale risks exacerbating an already failing system.

5. Insufficient water supply infrastructure

There is no clear evidence that existing water supply infrastructure can support an additional 117 homes. Given increasing demand and recent dry periods across the South East, the absence of a deliverable and timely strategy to expand capacity raises serious concerns about the sustainability of the proposal.

6. Lack of school capacity

Local schools are already operating at or near capacity, with primary schools in Haywards Heath exceeding 95% occupancy. There is no certainty that additional school places can be delivered in time to meet demand generated by the development. Reliance on financial contributions does not guarantee timely provision, and existing shortfalls are already affecting local families.

7. Unsustainable impact on local roads

The surrounding road network is constrained and already experiencing significant pressure. Additional traffic from a development of this size would likely result in severe cumulative impacts. The proposed roundabout remains out of character with the rural setting, and existing issues—such as increased heavy vehicle use and rat-running—would be intensified, particularly during the construction phase. We who live in the area already experience the impact of Pendland Green and the intense traffic created. We all struggle to exit onto Balcombe Road and it will only be a matter of time before there is an increase in traffic accidents.

8. Risk to protected wildlife and sensitive habitats

The site supports legally protected species, including dormice and bats, as well as a range of notable wildlife. It lies in close proximity to ancient woodland, increasing ecological sensitivity. The proposed development would result in habitat loss and fragmentation, and the submitted amendments do not adequately address these risks.

9. Absence of policy support

The site is not allocated for residential development in relevant local planning documents, including the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan and the Ansty and Staplefield Parish Plan. Furthermore, the Planning Inspectorate has previously concluded that no additional housing allocation is required in this area. The proposal therefore lacks both policy support and community backing.

Dear Sir/Madam, I am writing to formally oppose the proposed development of land East of Borde Hill Lane (Sugworth Farm) and request its removal from the draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 (item DPH11, MSDS Site Reference 556). I believe that the development of this site would have significant negative impacts on the local environment, infrastructure, and community well-being. My reasons for opposition are as follows:

1. **Proximity to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):**
The proposed development lies in close proximity to the High Weald AONB, a region of national importance due to its natural beauty. Any housing development here would severely impact the landscape and disrupt the tranquillity that characterizes this protected area. The site contains numerous hedgerows and ancient woodlands that support a diverse array of wildlife, including pheasants, rabbits, hedgehogs, foxes, badgers, and, an resident and long established herd of deer who has relied upon this area for some time, appearing very settled. This development would cause significant disruption to these habitats, endangering the local biodiversity.
2. **Flood Risk and Drainage Issues:**
The sloping contours of the site pose a considerable flood risk. Replacing the natural soil with impermeable surfaces such as roads, pavements, and driveways would exacerbate water runoff, increasing the potential for flooding further down the site. In addition, areas to the south of the plot (Penland Green) have already experienced flooding during periods of rainfall (see attached photos from November 2022). As the UK faces more frequent and intense rainfall events due to climate change, the flood risk will only increase. The Met Office has predicted that rainfall in the South of England could increase by a factor of 2.5 in the coming years. In November 2022 alone, monthly rainfall reached 165mm, a figure which could rise to 425mm in the future, potentially causing severe flooding on this site.
The Sustainability Appraisal of the Mid Sussex Development Plan Review (October 2022), conducted by Lepus Consulting, acknowledges the major negative impact of this site on flooding (see page 51). The assessment confirms the high risk of both fluvial and surface water flooding, further highlighting the unsuitability of the site for development.
3. **Traffic Impact and Road Safety:**
The development of nearby Penland Farm has already led to a noticeable increase in traffic on Balcombe Road and Hanlye Lane. The proposed development at Sugworth Farm will only exacerbate this issue, making these roads even more hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists. I have personally stopped cycling along these routes due to the high volume of traffic, narrow roads, and blind bends, which make it dangerous for cyclists to navigate.
Furthermore, the development fails to meet the sustainable '20-minute neighbourhood' criteria set out by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), due to poor road infrastructure and limited public transport options in the area. As highlighted by Lepus Consulting, this development would force residents to rely on private cars for short journeys to local amenities, further contributing to traffic congestion and worsening air quality. This lack of sustainability also undermines the environmental goals of the District Plan.
4. **Impact on Local Infrastructure, Particularly Schools:**
Local schools in Haywards Heath are already operating at full capacity, and there is no available space to accommodate additional pupils. The schools listed below already have waiting lists, and the proposed development would exacerbate this pressure.
 - Holy Trinity CofE Primary School, Cuckfield – Good
 - Lindfield Primary Academy – Outstanding
 - Bolnore Village Primary School – Good
 - Harlands Primary School – Good
 - Northlands Wood Primary Academy – Good
 - Blackthorns Community Primary Academy – Outstanding
 - St Joseph's Catholic Primary School – Good
 - Warden Park Primary Academy – Good
5. **The Sustainability Appraisal of the Mid Sussex Development Plan Review acknowledges the limitations of the local school system (page 81), but it assumes that West Sussex County Council has plans to increase capacity. This assumption is unsubstantiated, and in the absence of these plans, additional housing would place unsustainable pressure on the education system, forcing parents to travel further to secure school placements for their children.**
6. **The 20-Minute Neighbourhood Principle:**
The District Plan strategy is based on the '20-minute neighbourhood' principle, which prioritises locations where residents can access essential services by walking or cycling. However, the Sugworth Farm development fails to meet these criteria, forcing new residents to rely on cars for even short trips to local amenities. This not only increases traffic congestion but also worsens air quality, particularly around schools and other key areas.

In conclusion, the proposed development at Sugworth Farm poses significant risks to the local environment, infrastructure, and community health. It fails to meet sustainable development criteria, exacerbates existing flooding and traffic problems, and puts undue

strain on already overburdened local schools. I urge you to remove this site from the draft Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 and reconsider its suitability for development.

Yours faithfully,



25 Orchard Close, Haywards Heath, RH16 1UU

7th May 2026