



## Mid Sussex District Council

Oaklands  
Oaklands Road  
Haywards Heath  
West Sussex  
RH16 1SS

04 September 2025

Dear Katherine Williams,

### **DM/25/1593: THE DEMOLITION OF NUMBERS 9-11 WOODLANDS CLOSE TOGETHER WITH THE DEMOLITION OF OTHER EXISTING BUILDINGS ON SITE AND ERECTION OF 48 DWELLINGS (USE CLASS C3) WITH OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING, CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING PROVISION OF INTERNAL ACCESS ROADS AND ACCESS ROAD ONTO WOODLANDS CLOSE.**

I am writing on behalf of Worth Parish Council. This letter provides a brief overview of the site and the proposal, and then considers whether the application is in accordance with local and national policy. It concludes that the proposed development does not accord with the adopted development plan and should therefore be refused.

Worth Parish Council (WPC) therefore object to the proposed development.

## The Site

The site is situated to the north of Burleigh Lane and east of Woodland Close to the south of Crawley Down, circa 480m south from the centre of the village.

It measures circa 2.3 hectares and comprises an undeveloped parcel of land with no formal access. It is bordered to the north by trees beyond which is Sycamore Lane, to the east by a line of trees beyond which is a field between Hornbeam Place and Burleigh Lane, to the south by a line of trees beyond which is Burleigh Lane, and to the west by the curtilages of the dwellings on Woodlands Close.

The site is within the built-up area boundary and is allocated for the development of 50 dwellings within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (allocation SA22). It's within the Ashdown Forest 7km zone of influence, within flood zone 1 and 60m east of the Grade II Listed Burleigh Cottage.

## Planning History

Application DM/25/1593 is the only application made on the site that is available to view online.

## The Proposal

The proposal seeks to demolish 9-11 Woodlands Close and create a new access into the site in its place. The access would be situated between 7 and 13 Woodlands Close. The main access road turns south beyond the curtilages of these two dwellings before proceeding east through the site. There are two continuous secondary shared roads which run in a loop to the south of the main access road. The eastern loop also travels north along the eastern boundary. The proposed 48 dwellings are situated on either side of the roads through the site. A stream runs through the centre of the site from north to south and runs under the road through the site.

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The proposed site layout also shows two attenuation basins to the north of the site, and a play area to the centre. There is a footpath connection to the northeast of the site onto Hornbeam Place and two connections to the south onto Burleigh Way which are served by existing gates.

The proposed dwellings are a mixture of terraced, detached and semi-detached, two or three storeys tall and constructed of brick. They are a mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4-bed dwellings, some of which are served by detached garages. Landscaping works include tree planting around the boundary and within the site.

## Planning Policy

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirm that planning decisions should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the adopted development plan consists of:

- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031
- Site Allocations Document
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Local Plan (saved policies)
- Small Scale Housing Allocations Document

Policies contained within the NPPF (2024) are also material in the determination of the application.

The policies that are relevant for the consideration of the application from the Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) and Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan (CDNP) are listed below:

**Policy DP4: Housing** seeks to deliver 876 dwellings per annum until 2023/24 through strategic development north and north-west of Burgess Hill, development at Land north of Clayton Mills, Hassocks, windfall allowance and elsewhere in the district as allocated through neighbourhood plans and the Site Allocations Document.

**Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy** states that '*development will be permitted within towns and villages with defined built-up area boundaries. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale... and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement*'. It then provides a settlement hierarchy based on categories.

**Policy DP21: Transport** requires development to support the objectives of the West Sussex Transport plan 2011-2026 and take account of several criteria.

**Policy DP26: Character and Design** requires development to be of a high standard of design that reflects the distinctive character of towns and villages by complying with several criteria.

**Policy DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution** seeks to protect the amenities of existing and future residents against harmful noise, air and light pollution.

**Policy DP30: Housing Mix** requires development to '*provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes... that reflects current and future local housing needs*'.

**Policy DP31: Affordable Housing** requires '*the provision of a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing for all residential developments providing 11 dwellings or more*'.

**Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets** states that '*Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings*' by complying with 6 criteria.

**Policy DP38: Biodiversity** requires development to protect and enhance protected sites, species and habitats.

**Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage** requires development to follow a risk-based approach to '*ensure development is safe across its lifetime and does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere*'.

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**Policy CDNP05: Control of New Developments** requires residential development to comply with 16 criteria relating to design, density, impact amenity, plot sizes, open green space, construction materials etc.

**Policy CDNP06: Sustainable Drainage Systems** requires development to '*demonstrate that they include sustainable drainage systems designed to manage the risk of surface water flooding within their boundaries, and that they will not increase flood risk elsewhere*'.

**Policy CDNP09: Protect and Enhance Biodiversity** states that '*Proposals for new residential, employment and retail development will be expected to protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife*' by complying with 5 criteria.

**Policy CDNP10: Promoting Sustainable Transport** requires development to promote sustainable transport and comply with 7 criteria.

## Material Considerations

This section considers the proposed development against the most relevant local and national policies.

### Principle of Development

The site is within a Category 2 – Larger Village settlement and is allocated in the Site Allocations DPD under SA22 for the provision of 50 dwellings.

Whilst we acknowledge that the principle for the development of 48 dwellings on the site is acceptable given the allocation, we note that it fails to accord with Policy CDNP05 which states that '*Individual developments will not comprise more than 30 dwellings in total*' due to the adverse impact on the character of the area.

### Design & Impact on the Character of the Area

The area is semi-rural in character as the site is on the edge of the built-up area boundary of Crawley Down. It consists of dwellings on either side of Kiln Road and Woodlands Close, as well as several cul-de-sacs such as the southern end of Woodlands Close, Sycamore Lane and Bramble Way, alongside the more modern development along Acorn Avenue to the east. Dwellings in the area are a mix of terraced and semi-detached and either single or two storeys tall. They are typically constructed of a mix of brick, hanging tiles and render.

The development seeks to provide a new access onto the Woodlands Close cul-de-sac. It is a relatively small and quiet cul-de-sac comprising of 13 dwellings which are either single or two storeys. It represents a decrease in density compared to the other roads nearby which reflects the transition from the more urban areas of Crawley Down to the north, and the countryside to the south.

The proposed development seeks to remove 9-11 Woodland Close which are semi-detached, two storey dwellings. Their removal would mean that the majority of the dwellings in the cul-de-sac are single storey. The provision of a new access to serve 48 dwellings would result in a substantial change in the quiet nature and character of this cul-de-sac where there would be a significant intensification of its use. The proposed development would therefore diminish the character of this cul-de-sac.

Regarding dwelling heights, the Building Heights Plan states that 9 of the dwellings would be 2.5 storeys tall. However, its clear from the elevations that they would in fact be 3 storeys tall, measuring circa 10.30m in height. This would be significantly taller than the dwellings on the adjacent roads such as Woodland Close, Bramble Way, Kiln Road and Sycamore Lane. They would also be taller than the new dwellings on Acorn Avenue. The provision of 3 storey dwellings would not reflect the character of the area, particularly as the site is on the edge of the built-up area boundary where the transition from the more urban parts of the village and the countryside to the south is prevalent.

Regarding materials, the elevations and photo montages show that all of the dwellings would be constructed of the same hue of light brown brick. Whilst the dwellings in the area are predominantly of brick, there is variation through the use of hanging tiles. The hue of brick is also commonly a darker red. The proposal would result in a highly homogenous and uninteresting development with very little variation. This would not respect the character of the area and would be visually bland. The use of a lighter hue of brick is also not seen locally.

The proposed development therefore fails to be '*of a high quality design and layout*' nor does it address '*the character and scale of the surrounding buildings*' contrary to Policy DP26. It also fails to accord with Policy CDNP05 which requires that '*The scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with the surrounding buildings and the character of the area*' and that '*The development is arranged such that it integrates with the village*'.

## Amenity

As discussed, 9-11 Woodlands Close would be removed to facilitate the proposed access. This would mean that 13 Woodlands Close would be enclosed by roads on all sides with Bramble Way to the north, Sycamore Lane to the east, the proposed access road to the south and Woodlands Close to the west. The occupants would therefore be subject to adverse impacts of noise from traffic in all directions.

We are also concerned that there will be a degree of overlooking between some of the units such as 34 and 35 where the north and south side elevations are only circa 2m apart but both have windows and balconies on the first floor of these elevations which would directly overlook one another.

This will significantly harm the amenity of these occupants contrary to Policy DP29 which does not permit development which would be subject to high levels of noise and Policy CDNP05 which requires that '*Amenities such as access, noise, privacy, daylight, sunlight and outlook of adjoining residents are safeguarded*'.

Given the proximity of the access of the site to the existing dwellings on Woodlands Close, there is a severe risk that these occupants will be impacted by the construction phase of the development. We therefore ask that a Construction Management Plan is provided as part of this application and not as a condition should this application be approved, to ensure that the residents are adequately protected from the works.

## Affordable Housing & Housing Mix

The proposal seeks to provide 15 affordable units (31.25%) and 33 market units (68.75%). Policy DP31 requires '*the provision of a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing for all residential developments providing 11 dwellings or more*'. The scheme seeks to provide 31.25% affordable units therefore this is satisfied.

Policy DP30 from the MSDP requires '*a mix of dwelling types and sizes from new development... that reflects current and future local housing needs*'. There is a conflict with Policy CDNP05 which requires a specific mix. Where a conflict in policy exists, the more recently adopted plan takes precedent (Section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). In this case, the Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted in March 2018, whereas the Crawley Down Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in January 2016. Policy DP30 therefore takes precedent.

Policy DP30 states that '*Evidence of housing need will be based on the best available evidence*'. In this case, the most recent evidence is from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was published in October 2021. The SHMA provides a recommended mix for both market housing, social/affordable rented housing and affordable home ownership. We provide a comparison of the proposed mix against each of these recommendations below.

### Market Housing

Unit Type	Number	Percentage Proposed (%)	SHMA Recommendation (%)
1	0	0	5-10
2	1	3.03	20-25
3	18	54.54	40-45
4	14	42.42	25-30

As the table displays, the proposal significantly underprovides on 1 and 2 bedroom units against the SHMA recommendations with no 1 bedroom units proposed. It also overprovides on 3 bedroom units and significantly

overprovides on 4 bedroom units. The scheme therefore does not provide a satisfactory mix of market housing.

#### Social/Affordable Rent

<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage Proposed (%)</b>	<b>SHMA Recommendation (%)</b>
1	4	36.36	30-35
2	5	45.45	40-45
3	2	18.18	15-20
4	0	0	5-10

The above table demonstrates that whilst the mix proposed is more acceptable than that for market housing, there is still a slight overprovision of 1 and 2 bedroom units and a significant under provision of 4 bedroom units of which 0 are proposed. The scheme therefore does not provide a satisfactory mix of social/affordable rented units.

#### Affordable Ownership

<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage Proposed (%)</b>	<b>SHMA Recommendation (%)</b>
1	0	0	5-10
2	4	100	20-25
3	0	0	40-45
4	0	0	25-30

The table clearly displays an unacceptable mix of affordable ownership (first homes in the case of this application) as no 1, 3 or 4 bedroom units are proposed, only 2 bedroom units.

#### Conclusion

It is therefore clear that the proposed mix is unacceptable and the proposed development does not '*provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes from new development (including affordable housing) that reflects current and future local housing needs*' contrary to Policy DP30.

Unless the mix is amended, the application should be refused.

#### **Highways and Access**

The introduction of the new access onto Woodlands Close serving the 48 dwellings, does not comply with Policy SA22 of the Site Allocations DPD which expects access from Sycamore Lane. The access, as proposed, would result in a substantial increase in trip generations along Woodlands Close, which was originally designed to serve the 13 dwellings on the cul-de-sac.

The Transport Statement highlights that there would be an increase in 49 trip generations in the AM peak and 41 trip generations in the PM peak. This is an unacceptable increase given the quiet character of the cul-de-sac. It will become more difficult from the houses on Woodlands Close to enter or exit their property and would result in significantly more traffic on Kiln Road and Woodlands Close in peak times. It is also important to consider the cumulative impact that the development on Bramble Way and Acorn Avenue has had in addition to the 48 dwellings proposed. This continuous increase would result in congestion within the area and Crawley Down in general to an unacceptable level. We do not think the congestion on local roads likely to result from this proposal is adequately considered or addressed by the Transport Statement accompanying the application.

The proposed development would therefore fail to '*avoid severe traffic congestion, individually or cumulatively*' contrary to Policy DP21 and fails to accord with Policy CDNP10 which requires that '*Where development*

would add to traffic congestion in the village or inappropriate traffic on rural lanes, proposals should be brought forward to mitigate any traffic impact'.

## Heritage

The site is situated only circa 60m east of the curtilage of the Grade II Listed Burleigh Cottage (list entry 1354910).

The proposed site layout shows that there would be a small amount of planting on the southwestern corner of the site to provide some screening from the listed building. There are also no dwellings proposed towards the very southwestern corner to provide some physical separation.

The planting is only limited however and the development would still appear visible from within the setting of the listed building and from the listed building itself. The development would replace the rural landscape surrounding the listed building with something considerably more urban in nature in such close proximity to the boundary of the site. The dwellings close to the boundary would also be 2 storeys tall, with three of the 3 storey units only slightly further north and three slightly east towards the centre of the site. It's also important to note that there has cumulatively been a lot of development within its setting over the last 13 years with the development on Bramble Way and Acorn Avenue being delivered in this time.



Figure 1 - Aerial view of the area with Burleigh Cottage in the southwestern corner dated 09/2012 compared to the current aerial imagery

The setting of the listed buildings has been significantly altered throughout this timeframe and the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building in accordance with paragraph 214 of the NPPF. Mid Sussex District Council must therefore consider whether the public benefits outweigh the less than substantial harm.

In addition, the Site Allocations DPD requires '*a sufficiently sized landscape buffer of open space between the listed building and the new development*' and '*Provide a hedgerow/tree belt screening between the open space and the development*'. Whilst a buffer of open space has been provided, a hedgerow/tree screen has not and therefore the policy for the allocation hasn't been complied with.

It is important to note that the Proposed Site Layout (FL24-2191-055) does not correlate with the Illustrative Site Layout (FL24-2191-045) which shows a greater amount of planting in the corner of the site as well as a footpath to the south. The Council should ensure that the drawings match and are correct.

In order to minimise the impact on the setting of the listed building, we ask that a greater level of planting is provided in the southwest corner of the site as currently, the proposed development will not '*protect listed buildings and their settings*' where '*Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building*' contrary to Policy DP34 and the scheme would fail to comply with Policy CDNP05 which requires that '*special regard should be had to sustaining and enhancing the setting and features of a heritage asset*'

## Drainage

The proposed development includes a watercourse through the centre of the site from north to south. The watercourse would be bridged by a boxed culvert or a high level pipe included within the banks. West Sussex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority have prepared policy on culverts<sup>1</sup>. It states that '*The Council's general opposition to culverting is a result of the legal requirements of the Water Framework Directive (2003) that the quality of a watercourse should not be reduced. Therefore, opposition is base on the detrimental effects that are likely to arise*'. Culverts are acceptable where it is unavoidable and necessary to seek land drainage consent. We therefore question whether this is a suitable approach given West Sussex County Council's guidelines.

We also note that for foul drainage, a connection with the existing sewer is proposed. Given the number of dwellings proposed and the cumulative impact of other recent development in the area, we question whether the sewer will be able to accommodate the foul discharge of the scheme as no information has been provided as part of this application. We ask that this information is provided prior to determination rather than as a condition if the application is to be permitted.

We also have concerns regarding the likely impact on the village pond, from cumulative effect of nearby developments, including this proposal. The culvert running through the site connects to a network of streams leading to the pond, which, as a result of three previous developments, has become severely silted. This cumulative impact has significantly harmed local wildlife, and the pond now requires urgent remedial work and request that consideration of cumulative effects is provided as part of the consideration of this application.

## Ecology / Wildlife

We are concerned about the potential impact of this proposal on local wildlife, including but not limited to, the protected species and the measures and recommendations of set out in the PEA and Protected Species Report submitted as part of the application documentation. The recommendations of those reports include specific measures for protection of wildlife and habitat creation, and at the very least we would expect those recommendations to be insisted upon. All opportunities for wildlife protection and promotion should be sought, including (if the application is approved) during construction activity, and sufficient resource provided during and post-construction for on-going checks that all required ecological enhancement measures (such as planting, habitat creation, external lighting etc) have been implemented.

Residents have reported the presence of great crested newts, bats, and badgers on the site. We are concerned that the existing ecological surveys are outdated and may not accurately reflect the current presence or status of protected species. Given the potential legal protections afforded to these species, up-to-date surveys are essential to ensure that any proposed development complies with wildlife legislation and avoids harm to these species and their habitats.

## Construction Traffic

There is little information contained within the application documents about likely impacts from construction traffic, including the potential for excessive noise and disturbance to residents both from on-site construction activities and from access for construction traffic. If the application is to be approved, we would expect the imposition of conditions requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan prior to any development at the site. And for the Parish Council to have opportunity to provide comments on that Construction Management Plan, in the interests of ensuring that impact on residents from any construction traffic and construction operations is minimised.

## Inadequacy of public consultation

Our understanding is that some residents of Kiln Road and Woodlands Drive have not been informed or consulted by Merrow Wood regarding this application. Worth Parish Council is concerned that not all residents received newsletters, despite the very high likelihood that traffic generated by the proposal—including both

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/10342/lifa\\_culvert\\_policy.pdf](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/10342/lifa_culvert_policy.pdf)

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that associated with the new homes and construction activity—could significantly affect the operation of the local road network and the amenity of residents. As a result, some residents may have been deprived of the opportunity to provide comments, meaning that the full extent of local concerns and the strength of feeling regarding the application may not be accurately reflected. Additionally, no indication was given of the approximate number of dwellings, and references to S106 contributions may have given many residents an inflated impression of the funds that would actually be available

## Conclusion

Whilst the site is allocated in the District Plan, it seeks to provide 48 dwellings, more than the 30 dwellings deemed appropriate for any individual development contrary to Policy CDNP05.

The proposed development would significantly harm the character of the adjacent cul-de-sac by providing a new access to a large number of dwellings. Several of the dwellings proposed are taller than the single and 2 storey dwellings which make up the character of the area. The development also uses the same hue of brick resulting in a homogenous design which is not in keeping with the character of the area. The development is therefore not of a high quality of design and does not respect the character of the area contrary to policies DP26 and CDNP05.

The proposal would mean that 13 Woodlands Close would be on a 'traffic island' surrounded by roads on all sides. This will significantly harm the amenities of the occupants by way of noise from traffic generation in all directions. There would also be a degree of overlooking between some of the units including 34 and 35. The proposed development therefore fails to protect the amenities of the occupants of adjacent properties contrary to policies DP29 and CDNP05.

The scheme does not provide an adequate mix with a significant under provision of 1 and 2 bedroom market units, overprovision of 3 and 4 bedroom market units, under provision of 4 bedroom affordable rent units and only 2 bedroom first homes where the SHMA requires the provision of 1, 3 and 4 bedroom affordable ownership units. The mix is therefore inadequate contrary to Policy DP30.

The provision of the new access on Woodlands Way is contrary to Policy SA22 of Site Allocations DPD which explicitly requires access to the site to be provided from Sycamore Lane. Additionally, the access as proposed would result in a significant increase in traffic along Woodlands Way on a quiet cul-de-sac, as well as the other surrounding roads in combination with the recent development on Bramble Way and Acorn Avenue. The development would fail to avoid severe traffic generation contrary to policies DP21 and CDNP10.

The site is situated adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building. The proposal includes little screening on the southwestern corner of the site and so it would be highly visible from the setting of the listed building. The development would therefore result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed buildings and the Council should weigh this against the public benefits of the NPPF and policies DP34 and CDNP05.

The proposal includes a culvert which is not typically supported by West Sussex County Council. We therefore question whether it is acceptable. The foul drainage strategy includes a connection to the existing sewer, however no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the sewer will be able to accommodate the additional discharge and we ask that this is provided prior to determination.

The proposal fails to accord with the development plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that a decision should be made contrary to the development plan, therefore we ask that planning permission is refused for the proposed development.