

19 Woods View,
Crawley Down,
Crawley,
West Sussex
RH10 4BE

18th February 2025

Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands,
Oaklands Drive,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex RH16 1SS

For the Attention of Ann Biggs – Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy

Dear Ann Biggs,

RE: DM/25/0014; DM/25/0015; DM/25/0016 & DM/25/0017

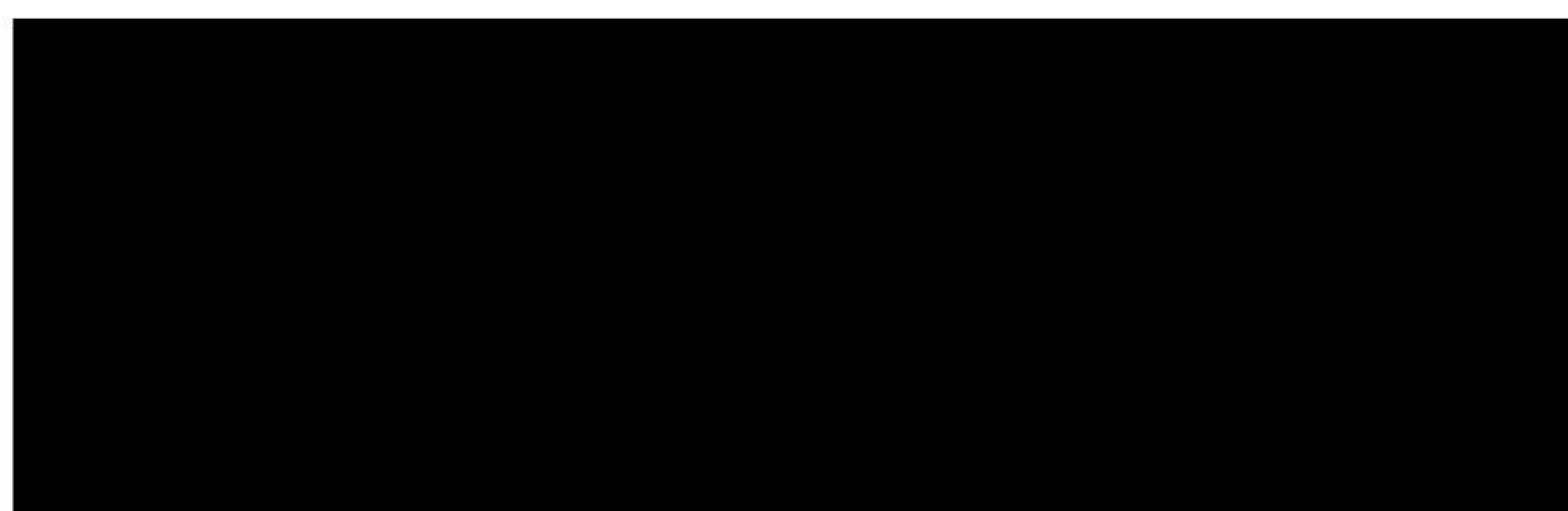
Planning Applications for West of Turners Hill Road to create 350 New Homes and a 65 Bed Car Home

First of all I recognise the need to build properties and so whilst in principle I am not against the building of properties locally - however I would suggest that this has to be done with common sense and the wider community in mind. As a consequence these applications raise some serious issues, concerns and objections particularly and as a consequence of the suggested access and the subsequent flooding risks.

In an attempt to be succinct as practical I have shared my areas of concern and or objections as per the headings below and in no particular order with some supporting detail and thoughts shown separately for ease of reading and better understanding, which I hope is helpful as follows:

- Practical Access
- Change of Use of Road
- Security and Safeguarding
- Public Health & Well-Being and Pollution
- Utilities /Flooding / Drainage
- Public Amenities & Services
- Mid Sussex Council Priorities

Yours Sincerely



Areas of Concern / Objections with some Supporting Detail and Thoughts

- **Practical Access**

Given the closure in 2024 of Hurst Farm the most practical access for such a development is through what was Hurst Farm. I would suggest that this should be explored as a matter of priority.

The proposed development will dwarf Wychwood in terms of size and volume and size of vehicular traffic etc. and our un-adopted roads and infrastructure is not repeat not designed for such significant increases in use – from the current 67 properties to the proposed additional 150 properties and a 65 bed care home with appropriate levels of traffic and HGVs for support services, which would more than treble if not quadruple the use of our small inappropriately designed roads.

I was part of a team that met with Wates and Worth Parish Council as a representative of Wychwood on 17th February and even on a quiet day as half-term it could be seen that vehicles had driven up kerbs onto the grass verges in order to manoeuvre past parked vehicles as their fresh tread marks could be seen, man-hole covers could be seen to have been damaged from heavy vehicles, and flood waters could be seen in varying parts of the estate seeping through pavements and similar as the water has nowhere else to go. Even though it was quiet day traffic wise the negotiation of the estate was challenging given the visitors and cars parked in the roads.

I would share an observation that despite the size of the property the planning process doesn't appear to take into account that many households have more than 2 vehicles so even for example a 4 or 5 bed property may only have 2 parking spaces.

There are local and regional practical access issues this plan will cause problems for the communities and public services, which include but are not exclusive to:

The Impact on neighbouring properties and privacy

- Wychwood has extremely poor access onto and off the estate using a small single entrance / exit onto the site from a 'B' road Turners Hill Road, which is at the junction with another 'B' road Sandy Lane.
- 'B' roads by their nature are designed for low levels of travels hence why they are not as wide and don't really allow for overtaking and stop-start traffic.
- It's a difficult junction to exit given the reduced width of the pavements and as a consequence the restricted vision both ways.
- There are 2 bus stops outside the junction, which allow for traffic to queue quickly.
- We have many resident and visitor vehicles parked on the private road daily and overnight.
- The width of the estate road only provides for and just fits two cars passing slowly.
- The estate has low level lighting throughout, which is sufficient at the current low levels of traffic.
- There are also very tight & blind corners
- The suggested increase in traffic and or congestion on and off the site and on Turners Hill Road will undoubtedly create bottle necks at varying times throughout the day.
- Given the width, design and blind bends of this private road it raises significantly the risk of avoidable accidents both with and or vehicles and or with humans.
- Wates own supporting paperwork suggests that people walking will only increase slowly being an additional 1% over 3 years and that use of own vehicles will be somewhere between 70-80%.

- This is a private road / not adopted and was designed for the current level of properties.
- I've had a drainage report done for my property given the flooding and an observation shared with me by the professionals was that the drainage underneath the road is not sunk very deep underground and each property has an access manhole cover in the road so that means much damage to the manhole covers, roads and drains with increased heavy vehicular transport over many years plus the associated traffic with the build.
- Such an build, which has increased in the number of properties e.g. 65 care bed facility from the original 50 care bed facility since Wates own consultation, will require much heavy plant machinery and vehicles and over a sustained period to provide for and erect the hundreds of homes as well as a commercial building, which based on the capability and capacity of the available access will provide for avoidable damage, pollution in all its forms, as well as increased health and safety dangers including the avoidable accidents and health and well-being issues referred to. Please see enclosed photographs of larger vehicles trying to negotiate one of the turnings – see inserts.



In order to allow this vehicle to go about its business residents and visitor vehicles had to be moved and involved the driver / residents' knocking on doors to get vehicles moved and in doing so provides total access to the exclusion of everything else.

In this case fortunately all vehicle key holders were around to help. As one can imagine this all took some time to action. These photographs' also don't show the then waiting vehicles' for the road to clear.

Given the width of the road the lorry had to manoeuvre slowly to avoid mounting the kerbs, straying onto residents' gardens and the fence to the wood whilst navigating a curved 90 degree bend in the road.

This second vehicle in the photograph shown to the right is clearly right next to the kerb / verge of the residents' garden but it is obvious how difficult even in good light for a normal vehicle to pass either way.

These two vehicles are just isolated examples that a resident happened to take a photograph of.



- This road was not intended for such increased numbers in transport, which would somehow have to try and accommodate the additional traffic of the proposed 150 properties x 2 vehicles average per property (say a minimum of 300+ vehicles) notwithstanding visitors plus a 65 bed care home, which would include care home vehicles, staff vehicles, trade vehicles and visitors vehicles. All these properties would also be receiving deliveries of various descriptions so should include other forms of transportation as well as vital public services such as the police, ambulance and fire. Additional vehicle numbers could exceed 400+ and so thousands of trips are envisaged daily as each trip will go out and then have to return.
- Parking of the vehicular transport associated with the build will clog up our small roadways, increase the dirt and mud associated with such transport and cause avoidable associated health & well-being issues for residents.

● **Change of Use of Road**

Should this access be approved then this private road will cease being a private road and will become a thoroughfare and or cut through to the properties' being proposed.

Presumably this means that the council will adopt the Wychwood estate roads and look to **purchase unused freeholders' land** in order to take over the responsibility for all the roads so that it is able to make good their then public street lighting to an appropriate level and also the widen where possible and then complete maintenance of the roads given the significant increases in load both in terms of weight of that transport but also the significantly increased numbers and varying of vehicles'.

When the current freeholders bought their property little if nothing was envisaged and or declared within the public domain about such possible developments and the need for such large scale access given that nothing was returned and or highlighted as part of the searches, which I for one sought from the council via my solicitor.

● **Security and Safeguarding**

The volume and frequency of such increases in vehicular traffic on a private road with no through road and which has low level lighting raises significant concerns as to the safety and security of existing residents, their children and or any vulnerable persons as well as their property.

Examples include but are not exclusive to:

- Currently children can ride their bikes and play out with other local children in the knowledge of little through traffic. This is vital at a time where society is trying to improve activity in the young but this will not be practical for safety reasons under the proposal.
- Residents can walk their dogs off the lead and participate in regular get togethers on the green building up and providing for a real sense of community. However the access will drive along the green and so this will not be possible for practical reasons under the proposal.
- Residents in particular female and children residents are able to walk and run in safety with the knowledge of a private dead end road that also allows for an ability to get to know local vehicles' and residents'. This may make some children and females uncomfortable given the vast increases in unknown traffic and so may not be practical under the proposal.

- The avoidable and unnecessary damage & deterioration of this road structure will increase the likelihood of accidents to humans.
- There will also be significant increases in maintenance and support costs disproportionately, which should be borne by the appropriate authority.
- Given the poor access and an already saturated in traffic terms Turners Hill Road there is a significant increased risk and or danger of road traffic accidents.
- As a private cul-de-sac road residents' are paying for privacy, exclusivity and so are better able to manage our small community including issues like damage, anti-social behaviour or whatever as residents know each other and can work together for a common cause. However if this is opened up providing for a through road then this ability will be diminished if not removed.

Yvette Cooper MP, Home Secretary said: “Security means knowing someone will be there for you if things go wrong, that laws will be respected and enforced. And it means strong communities – where people pull together instead of turning on each other.”

With this quotation in mind I also refer to Public Amenities & Public Services below as planning, preparation and provision in advance should be a must.

Social infrastructure builds solidarity. When people know their neighbours, take part in joint ventures and see that their communities are places where life prospects can improve, crime rates drop. The opposite is also true: neighbourhoods with weak social infrastructure lack the recreational spaces, social clubs and neighbourhood groups that can help divert people from criminal activity, and exhibit consistently higher levels of vandalism and criminal damage (OCSI, 2021).

When it comes to tackling crime, prevention is not only better than cure, it's also cheaper.

So I would suggest the opportunity to commit a crime should be prevented wherever possible. So the opening up of a private road as a cut through or thoroughfare can only expose all properties and persons of all ages to increases in avoidable crimes. This is another relevant reason to consider alternative more appropriate and safer access.

NOTE: I notice that a band-stand of sorts is also included within the proposals – this will undoubtedly become a magnet for much anti-social behaviours probably including drugs, alcohol and or similar. This will mean more police and other public service involvement including public funds to repair and maintain notwithstanding the local community fallout with increased crime and antisocial behaviour.

The six principles of safeguarding of residents are empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership, and accountability. These principles are used to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of children and vulnerable people of all ages but should also include all residents.

These principles are described as:

- Empowerment:
Encouraging people of all ages to make their own decisions and give informed consent within a genuine collaborative framework
- Prevention:

Taking action before harm occurs, such as preventing the social declines that lead to environments and societal constructs that allow for neglect, abuse, or harm

- Proportionality:
Responding to issues in a proportionate and least intrusive way – not just listening to common sense solutions but actual hearing and acting upon
- Protection:
Providing the necessary protections and infrastructures to and for all people of all ages across society
- Partnership:
Forming partnerships and genuinely working collaboratively with local communities to create mutually beneficial solutions and outcomes
- Accountability:
Ensuring that decision makers are held accountable for their actions

● **Public Health & Well-Being and Pollution**

The resultant odours and pollution including noise, air and light, in the area causing and impacting on the health of local and regional residents and including the impact on local amenities and services.

Living or spending long periods of time next to a busy road(s) can lead to increased health problems. This includes many air pollutants that are produced by the vast number of road vehicles as suggested, which are the minimum and so concentrations will be higher.

- Pollution concentrations with a few metres of busy roads are normally 2 or 3 times those at background locations, which are defined as normally at least 50-100m away from busy roads. The most extreme conditions are found in narrow streets, which can trap pollution and lead to more elevated concentrations.
- Petrol based heavy and light duty motor vehicles of all descriptions are a significant source of air pollution and are important contributors of anthropogenic carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and so emit particularly high concentrations of fine soot pollutants including nitrogen oxides, elemental carbon, ultrafine particles, heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and volatile organic compounds.
- Toxic substances are also found in the coarse particles formed from brake wear and road surface abrasion and these particles are re-suspended in the air by moving traffic.
- There is now strong evidence of a link between traffic-related pollution and a worsening of lung conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD). In addition, research suggests traffic-generated air pollutants in the development of asthma and COPD, particularly in those living close to busy roads.
- There is also evidence of a link between traffic-related pollution and heart diseases as well as premature death.
- Recent research has also highlighted potential links between traffic related pollution, and road proximity with reduced cognitive performance in children. Whilst this evidence is relatively new it is likely to become a major topic in the coming years. It is now much clearer that the impacts of air pollution are felt across the whole life course and are not simply focused on aged vulnerable populations.
- Excessive Noise levels due to the significant increase in traffic will also be an issue and impact negatively on the quality of life of all residents of all ages in the surrounding area.
- The excessive noise generated by increased traffic and associated activities will have a significant impact on the well-being and mental health of residents.

The resultant increase in vehicular traffic, which is already recognised as being at saturated levels, can only exaggerate the situation further as:

- This plan would increase congestion, affect local road networks and create many safety hazards for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The project lacks adequate provisions for parking or public transportation and it will probably further exacerbate these issues.
- Given the Government's plan towards net zero these plans do not advocate for sustainable transportation solutions but only seek to ensure that the development will provide for increased traffic problems, congestions and pollution in its many forms including noise, air and light.
- Currently residents benefit from little noise and so benefit from hearing and seeing the local wildlife including deer, rabbits and birds. This will all be destroyed.

● **Utilities/Flooding / Drainage**

There are questions over whether the local infrastructure is capable of accommodating this increased demand in power, telecommunications and risks of flooding.

Wychwood properties already suffer with much garden and footpath flooding. The surrounding land around Wychwood also floods on the south side and in the woods by the flats often creating a pond after heavy rain.

Wates flood risk drawings suggest that any water will flow to the woods.

Elivia property residents given their current and existing flooding problems' have been told by Elivia homes builders that our flooding originates from the field higher up and so again this can only add to the flooding and drainage problems being currently suffered. Some of our roads have actually been stained by the excess water coming up through the kerb stones because it has nowhere to go.

So the plan will despite Wates flood reports, which seem to rely upon the lie of the land and not what is going on underneath the ground can only exasperate these conditions making things worse for existing residents and undoubtedly any new occupiers of whatever properties.

● **Public Amenities & Public Services**

There will be an effect on the availability and accessibility of essential amenities and services in the area. This plan can only place additional strain on already over stretched resources, such as schools, all healthcare facilities and or public amenities.

- Protecting, maintaining and supporting access to essential amenities and services is crucial for the health & well-being, education and quality of life of all residents.
- The increased traffic will lead to congestion and longer commuting times given there are already various local traffic bottle necks.
- Turners Hill Road and surrounding area is often enjoyed by cyclists throughout the year. The significant increase and volume of traffic including the bottle necks will add to the risks of avoidable accidents with cyclists. Turners Hill Road is also used as part of the annual London-Brighton cycle route.
- Given the traffic issues raised the impact on public transport needs to be thoroughly assessed given that such transport whilst stationary (dropping off / pick up) on Turners Hill

Road will further add to congestion and or if not frequent enough could add to additional vehicles being used to travel.

- There are questions over whether the local infrastructure is capable of accommodating this increased demand in vehicular and or public transport.
- This plan particularly around access and highways would be completely out of character with the area and the surrounding area as described in part above.
- This plan would negatively impact on local and regional wildlife as described in part above.
- This plan (350 properties of say 4 persons plus a care home with say 65 persons = approximately 1,500 persons of all ages) would add a huge workload upon already stretched local and regional public services including doctors, dentists, hospitals and schools and others as described in part above.
- Given the obvious transportation challenges and impact on public services we would consider involving the police service as a minimum given that prevention is generally better than cure but with the risk of accidents significantly increased their wise council may be mutually beneficial.

Public amenities and public services that don't have the necessary and or appropriate levels of infrastructure and or capacity costs both local and regional communities by limiting economic opportunities, impacting quality of life through inadequate transport, poor access to services like healthcare and education, and often leading to higher costs for residents due to inefficient utilities, ultimately hindering community development and prosperity notwithstanding the costs to employers and businesses.

Key considerations on the impact of poorly considered provision and infrastructure of public amenities and public services on local communities include but are not exclusively:

- Economic disadvantage:
Poor access and accessibility, overcrowded roads and inadequate public transport will lead to traffic jams and long commute times. Poor transport links can make it difficult for people to access jobs and their place of work further hindering employment opportunities and economic growth in a community.
- Social exclusion:
Inadequate accessible public services like health & social care, education - both schools and colleges including nursery provision and child care notwithstanding that poor infrastructure can disproportionately affect marginalised communities including vulnerable persons of all ages as well as the old and or disabled people.
- Environmental concerns:
Inadequate accessible public services and supporting infrastructure can lead to increased energy consumption and environmental pollution detrimentally impacting the quality and capacity of services provided but is also not a good use of vital and finite public resources'.
- Higher costs:
Poorly considered or inadequate provision of the infrastructure of public amenities and public services will detrimentally impact on the value for money achieved with public funds leading to higher costs across the board including health and social care services, the police and fire services, education, utilities, transport, and general maintenance expenses. As well as the detrimental impact on hidden costs on inactivity given residents ability to access their place of work due to the lack of supporting services that keep them fit and well and able to contribute to the wider economy.

- Isolation:
Lack of reliable and accessible public services can limit access to essential services and employment opportunities. This notwithstanding the well documented negative impact of isolation of the individual and wider societal mental health and well-being.
- Access to and Accessible Health & Social Care:
Poorly considered or inadequate provision of the infrastructure of public amenities and public services will make it difficult for people to stay fit and well, which will impact and cost the local and regional economy.
- Education Places Available:
Sufficient spaces need to be available from nursery through to college in order to provide for the legal right to a robust education.

Investing in our public services and amenities ahead of house building is vital to address the big challenges - some of which are highlighted and or touched on with in this paper.

Ignoring of such needs ahead of builds can only lead to increased social and political disengagement and the breakdown of communities rather than the establishment of new and or building upon existing communities'. Such forward thinking and investment would bring economic benefits both locally and regionally and could help to close the gaps between economically disadvantaged and more affluent.

Local and regional areas in which their public amenities and or public services don't have the necessary support and or are at the appropriate levels of infrastructure and or capacity generally become depleted and often these same areas experience economic decline.

● **Mid Sussex Council Priorities**

Only last week w/c 10th February 2025 did the council reconfirm their council obligations to:

- Protect, maintain and support the interests of established and neighbouring properties.
- Protect, maintain and support the privacy of established and neighbouring properties.
- Protect, maintain and support the enjoyment of established and neighbouring properties.

These important obligations seem to have been overlooked within these proposals.

I hope that Mid-Sussex Council and its planning team will ensure that Wates or any builder will support all of the community's needs and wishes given the council's priorities as restated only last week w/c 10th February 2025 and shares that their priorities' as:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential
- Making the best use of resources

It is clear that these planning applications fall well short of chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework as it neither meets 'exceptional circumstances' and or 'very special circumstances' yet Wates seem to be pressing ahead regardless.

Despite this there remains no need to redefine the Green Belt until all brown field sites have been fully utilised, and the Councils should look to support ALL of its community.

I would remind our Council of the councils published priorities' as reconfirmed only last week w/c 10th February 2025 as highlighted above given that residents (particularly children and vulnerable people) are quite clearly not being kept safe from avoidable vulnerable situations, and given the significant detrimental impact on quality of life, health & well-being and the impacts around general and local mobility, accessibility and public services including health & social care, education and outdoor activities coupled with the added risks of flooding that this plan doesn't support a sustainable and prosperous economy as it does not help its people and communities to fulfil their potential and most certainly doesn't make the best use of vital and finite resources.