

Planning Policy Advice

Application Ref:	DM/26/0454
Application Type:	Full planning application
Address:	Land at Bolney Road, Ansty
Description:	Proposed erection of 34 new homes with access from Marwick Close, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure and highway works.
Date:	26 March 2026
Policy Officer:	Jennifer Hollingum
DM Officer:	Steven King

Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises the adopted Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (2018) which is currently under review, and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (2022). The site falls within the boundary of the Ansty & Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan which was made in February 2017.

The saved policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan (2004) and the Small Scale Housing Allocations DPD (2008) are not relevant to this development proposal.

Below are the Development Plan policies considered key to the consideration of the development proposal.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (2018)

- Policy DP4: Housing
- Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- Policy DP15: New Homes in the Countryside
- Policy DP20: Securing Infrastructure
- Policy DP21: Transport
- Policy DP22: Rights of Way and Other Recreational Routes
- Policy DP26: Character and Design
- Policy DP27: Dwelling Space Standards
- Policy DP28: Accessibility
- Policy DP29: Noise, Light and Air Pollution
- Policy DP30: Housing Mix
- Policy DP31: Affordable Housing
- Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy DP38: Biodiversity
- Policy DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage
- Policy DP42: Water Infrastructure and the Water Environment

Ansty & Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

The Ansty & Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan was made in February 2017. Since then, the Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) and Site Allocations DPD (2022) have been adopted. If there is conflict between non-strategic policies in the District Plan and the Ansty & Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan, the District Plan takes precedence.

- Policy AS1: New Housing Development
- Policy AS4: Housing Mix
- Policy AS11: High Speed Broadband
- Policy AS14: Walking and Cycling Routes

Emerging District Plan

The Mid Sussex District Plan has been reviewed to ensure it remains effective and consistent with national policy. The review process commenced in 2021 and the draft Mid Sussex District Plan (2021-2039) was submitted for Examination in July 2024.

Hearing sessions were held in February and March 2026. The Inspector has provided the Council with comments and proposed modifications on development management policies and there are also a number of post-Hearing actions for the Council to complete.

The site is allocated for development in the emerging District Plan as DPA17: Land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty for 40 dwellings.

At this stage, policies within the draft District Plan have minimal weight.

Site selection process

All potential housing and employment sites are included within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The SHELAA provides the palette of sites that are assessed for their suitability for allocation in the Development Plan. A site selection methodology has been developed and tested at Examination (of the adopted Site Allocations DPD). The site selection methodology has been used to assess the SHELAA sites, and identify those sites with potential for development, via allocation in a Development Plan Document.

There are 3 steps to the site assessment process, which are:

Stage 2(a) – Relationship to existing settlements – Sites that are disconnected from existing settlements are rejected and not subject to further assessment.

Stage 2(b) – Showstopper constraints – Where environmental constraints and deliverability considerations result in very negative impact against the site assessment criteria. Sites with showstopper constraints are rejected and not subject to further assessment.

Stage 2(c) – Overall Assessment – Sites that remain in the pool are subject to full assessment. Sites may be rejected at this stage if there are a combination of negative impacts. Sites may also be rejected at this stage if the loss of the site's current use is contrary to national policy.

For the purposes of plan making, sites that remained in the pool after Stage 2(c) were subject to further testing including Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and transport modelling. This is Stage 3 of the site selection process. Those sites remaining in the pool after this stage were proposed for allocation in the Submitted District Plan.

The site has been submitted to the Council and is included in the SHELAA as site #784. This site has been assessed through the site selection process for 40 dwellings. In summary, the site progressed to Stage 3 – Further Testing. The conclusion for this site is (July 2024):

The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that, overall, the site represents a sustainable option for allocation. The transport modelling undertaken to date for the District Plan Review does not indicate that there will be any showstoppers, associated with the development of this site. The HRA does not identify any likely significant effect on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, subject to appropriate mitigation. In terms of air quality, there are currently no anticipated significant effects on the Stonepound Crossroads AQMA, or adverse impacts on the Ashdown Forest.

In light of the above, it is considered that the site represents a suitable option for allocation. Therefore this site is allocated in the District Plan 2021 – 2039 Proposed Submission (DPA17).

Site location

The site is allocated for development in the emerging development plan (the District Plan that is currently at Examination) as DPA17: Land to the west of Marwick Close, Bolney Road, Ansty for 40 dwellings. (Proposed modification M127 amends the allocation yield from 45 dwellings to 40 dwellings).

The site is outside of the built-up area as shown on the adopted Policies Maps and therefore Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy and Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside are relevant. The site is contiguous with the existing built-up area. The adopted District Plan defines contiguous as ‘sharing a common border, touching’.

However, as part of the draft District Plan process, it is proposed to extend the built-up area boundary to encompass this site. As such, should the proposed allocation DPA17 remain within the draft District Plan during the Examination, on adoption of the District Plan, the site will be within the built-up area for Ansty.

The Council has undertaken a Settlement Sustainability Review, which enabled a classification of the district’s settlements, taking into account service provision and accessibility. Policy DP6 of the adopted District Plan sets out this hierarchy. The site is in Ansty, a Category 4 settlement, which is categorised as a small village with limited services often only serving the settlement itself.

The village of Ansty is to the north, west and east of the site with open countryside to the south of the site. To the immediate east of the site is the proposed housing allocation DPA16: Land west of North Cottages and Challoners, Cuckfield Road, Ansty for 30 dwellings with part of Ansty village beyond.

The Coloured Site Layout plan (22129/C102, February 2026) shows the access to the site through Upton Drive and Marwick Close. This is in accordance with the requirement in the draft allocation policy. The Planning Policy team will leave it to the Highways Authority to comment on detailed highways matters.

Yield

It is noted that the site allocation DPA17 in the draft District Plan is for 40 dwellings and this planning application has been submitted for 34 dwellings. The Planning Policy team supports the principle of maximising yields from its allocations as it could be an efficient use of land. However, if the site assessment work undertaken for the planning application

demonstrates that it is not possible to accommodate the higher yield of 40 dwellings on this site taking into account any constraints and good urban design and place-making principles, then the Planning Policy team raises no objection to the proposed yield of 34 dwellings.

Housing land supply position

Whilst Mid Sussex District Council has performed excellently in respect of the Housing Delivery Test, a new standard method formula was published in December 2024 alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which gives Mid Sussex a significantly higher housing requirement than the current District Plan. As a result and having regard for the need for an appropriate buffer, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites as per the requirements of paragraph 78 of the NPPF.

Infrastructure

The Planning Policy team would expect the standard infrastructure contributions to be made but will leave it to other consultees to provide the detail.

Good pedestrian and cycling connectivity is important to encourage active travel and to access local services and facilities. The draft allocation policy includes a requirement to integrate development with the site to the east (proposed allocation DPA16) by providing pedestrian and cycling connections and green infrastructure connectivity. The Coloured Site Layout plan (22129/C102, February 2026) shows a path link to the east of the site and the eastern boundary vegetation is being maintained.

It is noted that the public right of way that runs from east to west along the southern boundary of the site is now within the planning application site boundary. The rural character of this public right of way should be maintained in accordance with the requirement in the draft allocation policy and particular attention should be given to the trees and hedgerows on this southern boundary. Given the current overgrown nature of the right of way, there may be opportunities for enhancement. The Planning Policy team will leave it to the Highways Authority to comment on detailed rights of way matters.

Other relevant matters

As the site is located on the edge of a settlement, a landscape-led and high quality design will be important. The Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD is also relevant. The Planning Policy team will leave it to other consultees such as the Council's Urban Designer to comment on detailed design matters. This includes whether the proposed design and layout is in accordance with the requirements in the draft allocation policy: reflects a transition from the built environment to the rural countryside and reflects the rural character of Ansty and avoids being urban or suburban in character.

Mandatory biodiversity net gain will apply to the development proposal. A biodiversity net gain of at least 10% will need to be delivered. The Council encourages higher levels of biodiversity net gain as well as on-site biodiversity enhancements such as swift bricks, bird boxes, bat boxes, bee bricks, hedgehog highways and native wildflower planting with nectar- and pollen-rich flowers.