

Steven King

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 February 2026 17:59
To: Steven King
Subject: Objection on planning application DM/26/0303

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Goffs House
Borers Arms Road
Cophorne
West Sussex
RH10 3LJ

27th February 2026

Dear Mr King,

****Re: Planning Application DM/26/0303 – Land North of Borers Arms Road, Cophorne****
Outline application for up to 260 dwellings and associated development

I write to formally object to this application on substantive planning policy grounds.

The proposal represents major residential development on land that remains designated Green Belt. The applicant's own documentation confirms this designation and acknowledges associated harms.

1. The Site Remains Designated Green Belt

The applicant confirms that:

- * The application site lies within the designated Green Belt.
- * No Green Belt boundary alteration has been made through the Development Plan.
- * Green Belt policy DP10 applies.

This is therefore not a matter of dispute. The land remains formally protected Green Belt.

2. Acknowledged Green Belt Harm

The applicant admits that if the site is not accepted as "Grey Belt," the development would result in:

- * Definitional Green Belt harm,
- * Harm to spatial openness,
- * Harm to visual openness,
- * Conflict with Green Belt purpose (c) – safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Even under their alternative case, the proposal introduces substantial built form into currently open countryside across approximately 13 hectares.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF requires that ****substantial weight**** be given to any Green Belt harm. The scale of development — 260 dwellings plus employment floorspace — constitutes significant urbanisation of open land and a clear encroachment into the countryside.

The permanent reduction in openness is undeniable.

3. The “Grey Belt” Argument Is Contestable

The applicant’s reliance on the new “Grey Belt” provisions should be approached with caution:

- * The site is not previously developed land.
- * It is open agricultural countryside.
- * It contributes to the rural edge of Copthorne.
- * It forms part of a wider assessed Green Belt parcel.

The applicant acknowledges encroachment into countryside. That is itself evidence that the land performs a Green Belt function.

The interpretation that the site does not “strongly contribute” to Green Belt purposes is a subjective planning judgment advanced by the applicant. It is not a settled conclusion.

If the Council concludes that the site does not meet the Grey Belt definition, the proposal is inappropriate development and must be refused unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh harm.

4. No Very Special Circumstances Clearly Outweigh Harm

The applicant relies on housing delivery and affordable housing as benefits.

However:

- * Housing need is not unique to this site.
- * Affordable housing provision does not negate Green Belt harm.
- * Employment floorspace is modest relative to the scale of development.
- * Loss of agricultural land and landscape change are admitted harms.

Green Belt harm must carry substantial weight. The test is whether benefits ****clearly outweigh**** harm. That is a high threshold, and it has not been met.

5. Loss of Trees and Harm to Landscape Character

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms that multiple trees, hedgerows and groups are to be removed or partially removed to facilitate the scheme.

The site is currently defined by mature boundary vegetation and open pastoral character. These trees and hedgerows:

- * Contribute significantly to rural landscape character,
- * Provide visual containment and soften the settlement edge,
- * Deliver ecological and biodiversity value,
- * Form part of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Their removal to enable access points, visibility splays, internal roads and built form will materially alter the rural character of the site and surrounding area.

Replacement planting cannot replicate the amenity, ecological and landscape value of mature trees for decades.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF makes clear that trees make an important contribution to character and quality and that opportunities should be taken to incorporate and retain them. This proposal instead requires their removal to enable large-scale development.

The urbanisation of the site through estate roads, lighting, engineered access features, parking courts and housing parcels will fundamentally transform what is currently open countryside into suburban built form.

This represents clear and permanent harm to landscape character and rural setting.

6. Loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

The Agricultural Land Assessment confirms that the site comprises Subgrade 3a Best and Most Versatile agricultural land.

National policy requires recognition of the economic and environmental value of such land and directs that poorer quality land should be preferred where development is necessary.

The permanent loss of approximately 13 hectares of BMV land is a significant and irreversible harm.

7. Biodiversity Net Gain Failure

The Biodiversity Impact Calculation confirms that the current scheme does not achieve the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain required under the Environment Act 2021 and fails the statutory trading rules.

Major development must achieve at least 10% net gain. A scheme that fails to do so conflicts with statutory and national policy requirements.

8. Traffic and Infrastructure Pressure

The technical documentation confirms:

- * A significant uplift in traffic flows on local roads,
- * The need for engineered traffic calming measures,
- * New access infrastructure altering the rural frontage.

Copthorne is a village settlement with limited infrastructure capacity. The scale of development proposed would place material pressure on roads, schools, healthcare and local services.

9. Cumulative Impact

When assessed cumulatively, the harms include:

- * Green Belt harm (definitional and actual),
- * Permanent loss of openness,
- * Countryside encroachment,
- * Loss of mature trees and hedgerows,
- * Landscape character harm,
- * Loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land,
- * Failure to achieve mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain,
- * Increased traffic and infrastructure pressure.

These harms are long-term and irreversible.

Conclusion

The site remains designated Green Belt. The proposal would urbanise open countryside at significant scale and permanently alter its character.

The applicant's own documentation acknowledges Green Belt harm, countryside encroachment, landscape change and agricultural land loss.

When substantial weight is properly given to Green Belt harm, and when additional environmental harms are taken into account, the benefits cited do not clearly outweigh the identified harms.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Mid Sussex District Council refuses planning permission.

Yours faithfully,

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