

Mid Sussex District Council

Objection to Planning Application Ref: DM/25/0589

Site: Land at Grid Reference 532037 120185, Leylands Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex

I am writing to object to the planning application DM/25/0589 for the installation of a 30-metre (approx. 100ft) lattice communications tower, associated antennas, cabinets, and fencing on the above site.

In my view this proposal is entirely inappropriate for a predominantly residential and environmentally sensitive area. I believe it runs counter to both local planning policy and national guidance, and would cause lasting harm to the local community. My concerns are outlined below:

1. Unsuitable Location and Lack of Proper Consultation

Placing this kind of infrastructure in the middle of a residential neighbourhood, especially one designated as a public green space, is not in keeping with the principles of good planning. This location is simply not suitable for a 100ft industrial-style mast and its supporting structures, with a total footprint of 150 square meters.

What is also concerning is the limited notification of residents. It appears only a small number of nearby households were informed, leaving the wider community unaware and denied the opportunity to raise any objections, during the formal consultation period. This undermines the inclusive and transparent engagement required under the **Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**. All those in the local community likely to be affected deserve the chance to have their say, especially when such a significant structure is proposed.

2. Harm to Visual and Practical Amenity

This 100ft mast would dominate the skyline, standing well above the tree line and visible from all directions. It would be a stark, industrial feature in a much valued grassy, woodland area surrounded by residential dwellings, undermining the visual character of the neighbourhood and affecting the enjoyment of nearby homes.

Under **Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, planning decisions should ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and maintain a high standard of amenity. This proposal does neither.

Local community views may not be a formal material consideration, but they are undeniably tied to residents' sense of well-being and mental health. Losing that outlook to a towering metal structure can have real and lasting effects on quality of life.

3. Environmental and Wildlife Disruption

The area has only recently begun to recover from major railway embankment works carried out toward the end of 2020. Introducing a large-scale mast and associated infrastructure risks setting back that recovery, disrupting habitats, disturbing wildlife, local flora and adding further noise and construction impacts.

The site lies within a sensitive ecological zone, and both the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** and **Paragraph 174 of the NPPF** stress the need to avoid harm to biodiversity and support habitat recovery. This proposal is entirely at odds with those principles.

4. Failure to Properly Assess Alternative Locations

The applicant's dismissal of other sites, arguing that part of the railway's position lies in a cutting, is unconvincing. Local residents familiar with travelling on the pertinent railway line know this explanation doesn't accurately reflect the diversity of the area's topography, nor the communications signal currently available from the railway. The objective to improve mobile communications for railways commuters can still be met through using a less intrusive site. These alternatives should therefore be comprehensively examined.

Furthermore, a development with such clear negative impacts should only go ahead after a thorough and transparent exploration of all viable alternatives. **Paragraph 81 of the NPPF** underlines the need to ensure that developments are well-placed to minimise harm, and that simply hasn't happened here.

5. Wider Social and Economic Impact

While issues like "impact on property value" and "loss of view" may not carry formal weight in planning decisions, they are real and tangible concerns for residents. Numerous studies have shown that communications structures like these can reduce property values and affect residents' mental well-being, especially when they are so visually dominant in a peaceful residential area.

These broader impacts on mental health, confidence in the local planning system, and community morale should not be dismissed lightly. They reflect how deeply people care about their surroundings, and how much is at stake here.

6. Public Concern Over Electromagnetic Radiation and Health

Although the applicant has submitted a Declaration of Conformity confirming compliance with **ICNIRP** guidelines and the **EU Council recommendation 1999/519/EC** for public exposure to electromagnetic fields, this alone doesn't resolve wider community concerns.

Many members of the public, rightly or wrongly, remain concerned about the health implications of EMF exposure, particularly around 5G infrastructures. These concerns, even if not always supported by current science, can have real psychological impacts. They often lead to anxiety, mistrust, and a sense that decisions are being made without full transparency or sensitivity to public feeling.

While EMF compliance may satisfy technical planning requirements, it does not address community wellbeing, which is an important aspect of planning under **Paragraph 92 of the NPPF**, which calls for healthy, inclusive, and safe communities. The Council has a duty of care to the community and should consider not just technical safety, but also the perceived and emotional impacts **on** local residents, particularly when such infrastructure is proposed close to homes and public green spaces.

Conclusion

This proposal is wholly out of place in its proposed location. It conflicts with key principles of the **NPPF**, the **Town and Country Planning Act 1990**, and local development policies, all of which seek to protect residential amenity, the natural environment, and community interests.

I urge the planning authority to reject this application and to require a full and open exploration of more appropriate locations. At a minimum, a proper inclusive consultation should be carried out to enable anyone potentially affected to have the opportunity to voice their opinion.