

Sarah Valentine

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 May 2025 11:10
To: planninginfo
Subject: DM/25/1129 Foxhole Farm Planning Application

[REDACTED]

To: Planning Department
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands, Oaklands Road,
Haywards Heath, RH16 1SS
Re: Objection to Planning Application DM/25/1129 – Foxhole Farm, Bolney

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to formally object to the above planning application for the proposed development of approximately 200 dwellings at Foxhole Farm, Bolney. My objection is based on multiple **material planning grounds** as detailed below, aligned with the relevant policies of the **Mid Sussex District Plan**, the **Bolney Neighbourhood Plan**, and the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**.

1. Conflict with Policy DP6 and Bolney Neighbourhood Plan Policy BOLBB1

Foxhole Farm is located **outside the defined built-up area boundary** of Bolney and lies within open countryside. Under **Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy**, Bolney is identified as a **Category 3 village** appropriate only for **limited development** to meet local needs. The proposal to build a large-scale housing estate is **not supported by the adopted Development Plan** and **was explicitly rejected in the Bolney Neighbourhood Plan**, where this site was considered but not carried forward.

While the site is proposed for allocation under Policy DPA14 in the emerging Regulation 19 District Plan, that plan is **not yet adopted**, and therefore carries **limited weight** in decision-making. Approval would undermine the democratic plan-making process and **set a dangerous precedent for speculative development**.

2. Harm to the Countryside – Policies DP12 and BOLE2

The proposal is contrary to **Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside**, which states that development should only occur in the countryside where it **enhances the landscape** and is necessary (e.g., for agricultural use). This speculative housing development does **neither**.

Bolney's landscape is one of **intrinsic rural value**, and this proposal would lead to a **suburbanisation** of the countryside. The development would represent **urban sprawl** and undermine the principles of **landscape conservation**.

3. Contravention of Character and Design Policies – DP26 and BOLD1

The scale and design of this development would fundamentally alter the **rural character** and **identity** of Bolney. According to the **2021 Census**, Bolney has just **259 households** and a population of under **650 residents**. Adding 200 new homes—an increase of nearly 80% in dwellings—would **dwarf the existing village** and result in an **unbalanced, disproportionate expansion**.

This clearly fails **Policy DP26** and **BOLD1** of the Neighbourhood Plan, which require development to **respect local scale, character, and identity**.

4. Unsustainable Transport Proposals – Fails Policy DP21

The developer's Transport Assessment suggests the site is sustainable due to proximity to bus services and cycle routes. However, in practice:

- **Public transport is limited**, with no guarantee of permanent enhancements to the **273 bus route**.
- The **lack of safe pedestrian or cycle access** to essential services in Cowfold or Cuckfield (e.g., GPs, schools, supermarkets) means **residents would remain car-dependent**.
- Increased traffic on **Foxhole Lane and surrounding roads**—which are narrow, rural, and lack pavements—poses a **clear highway safety risk**.

This proposal **does not align** with the aims of **Policy DP21** or the NPPF's requirement for **genuinely sustainable development**.

5. Concerns Regarding the “Community Hub” and Associated Impacts

The inclusion of a “community hub” in the proposal raises additional concerns:

- Is this facility genuinely for the **benefit of the wider Bolney community**, or primarily to support the new estate?
- Its presence would likely **increase vehicle movements**, service traffic, and general activity, **worsening safety and congestion** on rural roads already under pressure.

6. Insufficient and Vague Planning Obligations (Section 106)

The Draft Heads of Terms for the Section 106 Agreement, dated April 2025, provide **little clarity** on the level and delivery of key infrastructure contributions:

- **Affordable housing** is proposed at 30%, but there is **no detail** on tenure, type, or location.
- **School places, healthcare, recreational space**, and other essential infrastructure have not been adequately addressed.
- The document does not specify **how community contributions would be spent**, raising concerns about the proposal's ability to **deliver long-term benefits** for either new or existing residents.

7. Challenge to the Developer's Evidence

I also reserve the right to **challenge and object** to specific elements of the applicant's technical documents, including the **Transport Assessment, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and Planning Statement**, where they:

- **Underestimate the harm** to the landscape and setting of the village;
- **Overstate the accessibility** of the site;
- **Downplay cumulative impacts** on highways and services.

Should the planning authority require more detailed analysis or specific rebuttals of these documents, I am happy to provide them.

Conclusion

This application represents an inappropriate, large-scale development in a **sensitive rural location**. It is **inconsistent with the adopted Development Plan**, fails multiple key policies, and would cause **irreversible harm** to the character, countryside, and infrastructure of Bolney. I respectfully urge Mid Sussex District Council to **refuse planning application DM/25/1129**.

Yours faithfully,
Dr Jonathan Olney

Old Mill House, Cowfold Rd, Bolney W Sussex RH17 5SE

