

Peter Davies

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 June 2026 13:19
To: planninginfo
Subject: DM/26/1228 Land West of London Road, Handcross

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

[REDACTED]
Dear Sir/Madam,

Please note I would like to object to the above Planning Application, my comments are below.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Ref: Application Number DM/26/1228

Conflicts with District Plan

DP12 in the District Plan says that "The primary objective of the District Plan with respect to the countryside is to secure its protection by minimising the amount of land taken for development and preventing development that does not need to be there. It aims to enhance the countryside, support the rural economy by accommodating well-designed, appropriate new forms of development and changes in land use where a countryside location is required and where it does not adversely affect the rural environment." This proposal does not satisfy this condition based on my comments below.

As the proposer states "The Site is outside the defined Built-up Area Boundary for Handcross (DP Inset 18b). The defined boundary also excludes the existing built forms of housing and community development located adjacent to the Site's southern boundary. As such, the proposed development would conflict with DP Policies DP6 and DP12."

They go on to say "However, the Built-up Area Boundary was established to deliver what is now an out-of date spatial strategy" and uses this argument to justify the proposal.

It is not in the remit of the Proposer to alter and change these DP policies and they should be adhered to and not waived aside as "out-of date".

Change in land use

As a Handcross resident whose property is close to the field in question, I and my neighbours are very concerned about the proposed change in use from agricultural land to building residential properties.

Even the applicant states "The erection of built development on grazing land will cause a change to the landscape character of the Site and will have a visual impact."

I am particularly concerned that this change in use will be against the need to safeguard valuable resources such as good agricultural farmland, which this is an example of.

Once this is done it is not easy to reverse and is also likely to then lead to further development of additional, adjacent agricultural sites immediately to the north. This would then further erode the boundaries between Pease Pottage and Handcross, especially given the proposed development of land south and west of Pease Pottage in the Old Brighton Road and Golf course etc. plots.

One only has to look at the expansion of Crawley and Horsham over the last 30 years to see that what were individual, small villages and towns are now becoming one big mass of housing, with loss of green spaces, woodland etc.

Thanks to the recent developments up towards Pease Pottage on the B2114, the field in question is one of only a few pieces of open land still existing between Pease Pottage and Handcross and should be maintained as such, to preserve wildlife and act as a carbon sink for the traffic pollution from the nearby A23.

Size and type of development

There is no obvious indication of how many bedrooms in total this development will have – 55 dwellings could be as many as 250 or more extra inhabitants adding to already inadequate or struggling infrastructure.

I am also concerned that the proposal is now completely different to the one for elderly persons' accommodation which is not of the same type or size.

Just because there is a lack of progress being made with development or delivering the housing allocations at St Martin Close, Handcross, or other locations in Handcross or Pease Pottage doesn't mean this one should be bulldozed through as a short-term sticking plaster, to boost the numbers of houses in the area.

There is no substantiation of the proposer's assessment that there is a "lack of demand for elderly person's accommodation" other than the proposer being unable to find "specialist developers" that are willing to consider this site for such a purpose. This is not a lack of demand but a financial or business justification and does not warrant allowing this development in place of that for elderly people. Granting of planning permission or not for previous proposals that are totally dissimilar to this should not be a reason to grant permission for this development.

(One could also argue that a development for elderly people might free up more properties in the village, as local residents would age and prefer to stay living locally rather than move outside the village.)

Local housing allocations and character of area

Looking at census records for Handcross and Pease Pottage (Slaugham parish), the number of residents has already grown by over 120% in the last 35 years or so. Compared with similar sized areas in Mid Sussex this is an increase of up to 10 times the increase than that of similar villages / parishes.

This has resulted in our small villages being expanded and overdeveloped to the detriment of their local character. I have lost count of the number of times I have heard the words from local residents "this is no longer a village it's more an outskirt of Crawley".

There was also comment from a local meeting that we are to consider taking some of Crawley's housing allocation, which seems to be pushing the problem out of existing areas which could still take new development. There are plenty of brownfield and other sites in Crawley that are alternatives to this one.

Whilst I recognise that new homes are needed and that Mid Sussex must be open to development, it seems that we have already taken more than our fair share of the new houses that are being built.

Flooding, Pollution and site of children's play area

I am also concerned that changes to the field's use could have significant impact on possible flooding and pollution in the area and onto the A23 which is adjacent / below the field. Currently there are ditches/drains in and around the field which are used to manage this issue, but they are often full after heavy rain and I am not sure where the run-off goes. If it is onto the A23 and surrounding area, which is likely, any additional input to these drains could contribute to flooding, which already happens on this road..

I am therefore concerned how the sewerage waste and surface water run-off is to be properly managed and suggest the accuracy of the "assessment of flood risk" is doubtful. Not least because the proposal area contains watercourses / drainage ditches that presumably already have water in them. The area does already flood when there is heavy rainfall and this has been noted by the proposer in the application as a "low to high" risk.

The proposal does not adequately address this risk of increased flooding to not only the Site but to surrounding areas.

Also, putting a children's play area in the vicinity of the flooded/wetland basin area in the south-west corner of the development, must surely be a safety concern.

Impact on local traffic/air quality and access to site

I am concerned the about the increase in traffic in a rural area and the lack of available parking (there is already an issue with this as the site is very close to 2 schools and parents' parking is already a huge problem, causing very dangerous conditions during school drop-off and pick-up times.) Cars already regularly park on verges, block footpaths and park on zig-zags and yellow lines. The lay-bys all the way up the B2114 to Coopers Wood are already used by those dropping children off. There seems to have been no planning for this in the proposal, and it will negatively impact this existing issue.

The proposer also agrees that "These additional traffic movements may cause additional queuing at local junctions." Also "Following the completion of the development, there is predicted to be an increase of 16.5% or less in 24-hour traffic flows" which is not insignificant and no solutions are proposed.

Entry to the site is proposed via a new entryway which goes directly onto the B2114 in a 50mph zone. I am surprised that the traffic surveys that were undertaken did not show the reality, which is that the road is very straight and drivers often speed up well before they reach the village gates (and often past the school), are well above the speed limits and not between ~35-48mph as the traffic survey measured.

The Brighton Road Industrial Estate and BP Petrol station are hardly indicative of the employers that anyone living in the development would be employed by.

Most people living in the area work in Crawley (the closest and at least 90 minutes walk time), Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Horsham, East Grinstead, Brighton and London etc. and which are not easily accessible without a car. I would therefore expect the majority of residents in the new development will commute by car to their place of work. The local busses are infrequent and rarely used for people to get to work.

The extra vehicles and traffic will have a negative effect on air quality. It is not obvious that the modelling used in the reports supplied have taken this into account.

Access to amenities

The proposer states "It is recognised that any increase in population at Handcross would lead to increased demands on social and community facilities," but again, there are no proposals here to mitigate these issues.

The walking times to nearby amenities and places of employment listed in the proposal are incorrect or very selective. The South Cliffe Dental Service closed down many months ago and relocated to Bewbush in Crawley which is not 4 minutes walk away.

I also wonder if anyone has approached the local doctor's surgery and schools to ask them if they can accommodate extra patients and the children such a development would bring?

It is already difficult to access appointments at the surgery as they now serve over 10,000 patients. Their catchment area already includes parts of Crawley and the new developments in Handcross and Pease Pottage. This has meant many residents now have issues accessing these services, which were previously efficient and effective.

The Proposer agrees that "An increase in the population of Handcross would increase the demand for public transport and access by non-car modes of travel to local facilities, services and employment opportunities. Local transport infrastructure may need to be improved to accommodate additional demand."

None of these issues are addressed / mitigated by the proposal.

Gates and Village boundaries

There are also potential issues with moving the village gates and the speed limit restrictions further north, past the proposed development entrance.

How will this affect the village boundary and services that West Sussex CC / Mid-Sussex DC and Slaugham Parish Council provide? Will it extend their responsibilities for upkeep etc. such as path maintenance/ mowing or verges etc? Have they been approached for comment about this proposal?

Road Traffic Accidents

There are already regular instances of deer and other mammals and birds being hit by traffic on that stretch of road near Hyde Lodge. These are rarely if ever reported as official accidents and happen at least every 3 months or so.

Comments made in the transport statement also confirm that the constant use of the layby outside Hyde Lodge by people who park cars and other vehicles there, mean that stationary vehicles within the layby will limit the level of visibility that is achievable for those exiting the site. Limited visibility could result in a motorist attempting to exit the site road when it is not safe to do so and lead to a collision.

There are also concerns about siting an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing so close to the school and the traffic that inevitably builds up there. Although, this may help with controlling the speed of traffic, (but there is no indication of this) there are still concerns about the lack of adequate lighting meaning that pedestrians using the crossing may not be seen during the night.

Wildlife and protected species / biodiversity, AONB/SSSI

This field and the surrounding trees, ditches and banks are home to many types of bird and other wildlife. These include buzzards who feed on prey that is caught in and around the field. Significant numbers of insects, birds, invertebrates, reptiles and mammals such as bats, badgers, rabbits, foxes, dormice, hedgehogs and deer are also visiting or living and feeding in the field and its environs. The presence of construction and personnel permanently on site and moving around the field would seriously disrupt their ability to feed, nest, breed and live. Erection of new buildings will significantly impact local wildlife, flora and fauna disrupting movement paths / wildlife.

Although the applicant has looked at the environmental impact of the proposal, I do not believe that insignificant damage will be done to the habitat of these creatures. Putting new bat boxes and dormice homes up after the field has been cleared will not bring back those lost in the clearing of the site. These designated, priority habitats are irreplaceable.

The various biodiversity and ecological reports submitted failed to note the extent of wild bluebells in the wooded area on the eastern side of the site. There may well be others on the other sides of the field. These are a protected species and will be impacted by the construction of the new entrance and also the new footpath / cycleway at the south-east corner.

Other significant flora and fauna may have been missed owing to the season / time of year the surveys / reports were made.

There is a significant amount of ancient woodland / deciduous woodland priority habitat either adjacent to or opposite the site. This is also within the High Weald AONB and close to SSSI sites, the constant erosion of our green spaces is detrimental to both of these.

I have also accessed historical data from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre which details historical sightings of biodiversity within the site boundary and environs dating from 2006-2023. This shows a much richer diversity of species than has been recorded by the proposer and which shows this site is probably used by a significantly larger number of species than they recorded/report.

Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) and Landscape Buffer Strips (LBS)

Sussex Wildlife Trust have published guidelines regarding the use of TPZ and LBS.

This can be found here [LBS brochure FINAL lores.pub](#).

Unless open and green spaces, and areas of protected woodland and meadows are suitably protected and interconnected, any isolated patches will not continue to exist as viable ecological habitats without the use of appropriate TPZ and LBS.

It is not clear that the proposal takes appropriate TPZ and LPS into account, both during and after the development. This needs to be addressed.

Water / Utility supply

Importantly, provision of the significant additional amounts of fresh water required is not adequately addressed and is of enormous concern, when this public utility is already stretched locally.

Although South East Water (SEW) have said that they can supply the properties, there are significant caveats mentioned such as water pressure etc. This together with SEW's recent track record of not being able to manage the supply to their existing customers (at the beginning of this week 16,000 properties in Kent, who are supplied by SEW, were without water for days, and as I write this, nearby Staplefield residents have been without water for days) should cast doubt on their being able to supply this new development without causing additional issues.

Handcross residents have also had numerous water cuts and shortages over the last 5 years. Ranging from hours to days to over a week at a time. This has been noticeably worse since additional strain was put on the system from the Crest-Nicholson and Woodgate developments in Handcross and neighbouring Pease Pottage – an additional 750-800 properties built ~2020-2024. We are constantly being told by SEW to save water and reduce demand on the system, whilst having to endure water cuts and hosepipe bans.

The applicant's proposal says that water use will be limited to 110 litres per person per day. Given that SEW's figures say that the average person uses 230 litres per day, and even "efficient" users use 147 litres per day (figures taken from a recent letter SEW sent), this seems highly unlikely.

Adding any kind of development such as this to the existing system would put more strain on the provision of already poor services.

Conclusion

I respectfully ask that you do not approve of a plan that is not appropriate, and that the proposer and developer consider alternative sites for this planning application.

Alternatively, a number of suitable conditions should be placed on any planning permission granted, that address all the concerns above.