

DM/25/0827

Land east of Lunce's Hill, Fox Hill, Haywards Heath

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, together with the change of use of an existing barn for a flexible community and/or commercial use, along with associated outdoor space and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, parking, access and associated works (all matters reserved except for access)

Planning Policy Comments

24.04.2025

Development Plan

The development plan comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (adopted 2018), saved policies in the Mid Sussex Local Plan (adopted 2004), the Small Scale Housing Allocations DPD (adopted 2008), the Site Allocations DPD (adopted 2022) and made neighbourhood plans (the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2016).

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. The Stage 1 Hearings were held in October 2024. At this stage, policies within the draft District Plan have minimal weight.

The site is not allocated for development in the adopted or emerging development plan.

Site description

The site is to the south of Haywards Heath but crosses the administrative boundaries of Mid Sussex District Council (West Sussex) and Lewes District Council (East Sussex).

The Illustrative Masterplan [604-PO1 February 2025] shows the proposed access to be just within Lewes District. The majority of the site (6.98ha) is within Lewes District with the remaining 1.90ha within Mid Sussex District. It is anticipated then that the majority of the proposed 130 dwellings will be within Lewes District.

Built-up area boundary

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.

Local gap

The site is identified as a local gap in Policy E5 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan. The policy states that land outside the built-up area boundary is designated as a local gap between Haywards Heath and neighbouring towns/parishes in order to create a landscape buffer that will support and enhance ecological connectivity, maintain the landscape character of the area and individual settlements. The policy states that new development outside the built-up area will only be permitted if it would not unduly erode the landscape character of the area or its ecology, would not harm the setting of the town and would retain and enhance the separate identity of the communities.

Infrastructure

Whilst the majority of the site is within Lewes District, the development of the site will be an extension to Haywards Heath, rather than relating to any settlement in Lewes District.

Therefore, future residents will use and increase demand on services and facilities in Haywards Heath. Should it be granted permission, the Planning Policy team would request that any infrastructure contributions for the entire site are directed towards services and facilities in Haywards Heath.

Good pedestrian and cycling connectivity to Haywards Heath is important to encourage active travel and to avoid the development being too heavily car dependent.

Housing land supply

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.

At the outline stage it is not clear how many additional homes will be provided in Mid Sussex should planning permission be granted.

Other relevant matters

Cleavewater is a Grade II listed building located immediately to the north of the proposed access. The Planning Policy team will leave it to other consultees such as the Council's Conservation Officer to comment on heritage matters including the historic barn within the site that is proposed to be used for community and/or commercial use.

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 design matters.

Development should be directed away from any areas of flood risk associated with the Pellingford Brook that runs through the site in line with national policy and an appropriate flood risk assessment and drainage strategy should be prepared.

Other policies

There are other Adopted District Plan policies relevant to this planning application including DP21: Transport, DP26: Character and Design, and DP31: Affordable Housing. There are also other relevant policies within the made Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan including:

- Policy E6 – Green infrastructure
- Policy E7 – Flooding and drainage
- Policy E8 – Sustainable development
- Policy E9 – Design
- Policy E11 – Visual impact
- Policy E13 – Outdoor space
- Policy T1 – Pedestrian and cycling connectivity
- Policy T2 – Cycle route contributions
- Policy T3 – Car parking