

Peter Davies

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 November 2025 16:42
To: planninginfo
Subject: Fwd: Objection to DM/25/2661 - Land at Coombe Farm, Sayers Common

[REDACTED]

4 Berrylands Farm

Sayers Common

Hassocks

West Sussex BN6 9XH

Hopefully this is satisfactory for your needs

Public Comment – Objection to DM/25/2661 (Land at Coombe Farm, Sayers Common)

I wish to object to planning application DM/25/2661 – Land at Coombe Farm, Sayers Common, on the following material grounds.

1. Lack of Proper Consultation

I was never sent notification that the developer had applied for Planning Permission. There seems to be a failure in the notification process.

2. Loss of Farmland

There has already been comment in the press recently about the threat to food supplies due to expanding immigration, farmland being shifted to housing development, or farmers having to sell up due to the threat of IHT. If we had another war, with the US taking an increasingly isolationist viewpoint, it is unlikely we could protect food supplies coming in from abroad with our hopelessly under-resourced Navy and RAF. The whole population would be under threat of starvation. I have seen sheep and other animals grazing this land for many years.

3. Wholly Unsustainable and Completely Premature Proposal

The proposal for up to 210 dwellings lies outside the built-up-area boundary and is part of a group of uncoordinated developments totalling around 2,400 homes.

This unco-ordinated inefficient proposal arrogantly predetermines decisions that should properly be taken via a well thought through properly up-to-date regional plan with local involvement. This conflicts with NPPF rules and also falls foul of Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the Mid Sussex District Plan. As many as six unco-ordinated developments will likely lead to farcical results, such as six children's playgrounds, lack of linked up pathways, no Post Office and suchlike, missing out completely on facilities needed by residents who have been allowed no say in these imposed developments. It is scandalous that local people's voices have been ignored.

4. Coombe Farm has Listed Buildings

There are listed buildings nearby on Coombe Farm. The proposed development badly encroaches on their surrounding land. With the five attenuation ponds and the 3 storey mini-skyscrapers, it seems they will look something like a failed Children's Theme Park. Surely this would be against planning regulations?

5. Coalescence of two Villages and Loss of individual Settlement Identity

At present there is a clear and present gap between Albourne and Sayers Common. The MidSussex District Plan pursued an imposed policy of urbanising rural villages without any proper consultation with the villagers; the developer here has capitalised on that to give full flow to their greed for profit at the expense of the two communities. Albourne and Sayers Common have been separate communities from Saxon times, surviving William the Conqueror, The Plague and various national crises only it seems, to be wilfully destroyed by Mid Sussex District Council and Welbeck Homes - without any proper consultation..

The developer claims that "there is a strong sense of separation" - this is complete poppycock and utter self delusion. This proposed development effectively merges and combines the two communities completely damaging and ignoring what is clearly a rural location. This is urbanisation without consultation and totally disrespects the two communities into the bargain. I understand this is contrary to NPPF paragraph 8(c) and Neighbourhood Plan policies on local character and settlement separation. There used to be more local equitable democracy afforded to people here back in the Saxon times of Alfred the Great.

6. Density of Development, Overall Design and Proposed Height of Dwellings

A proposed density of 37 dwellings per hectare and proposed three-storey buildings are completely and utterly inappropriate for this corner of the village site. This is an elevated location and the three storey houses could potentially be seen for miles around - a complete ugly, anti-aesthetic, obscene blot on the landscape clearly visible from the South Downs. The views from the Downs have had high praise from past writers and poets. John Constable described the view from Devil's Dyke as "The grandest view in the world". No longer - it will be destroyed. Why is the Developer treating a rural location like Tower Hamlets? 210 buildings on elevated ground, some three storey mean a great deal of concrete, hardstanding and roads which will funnel excess water down a steep incline towards the B2118 which is susceptible to flooding as you come into Sayers Common. Both the Wintergreens and Furzelands Way estates are low-lying. Heavy rain would run down the proposed new roads facing West, flooding into the houses on the low-lying clay terrain which will not absorb this water. We have recently had flooding events on London Road and near the Village Pond - especially in the cottages near the Duke of York and The Coach House.

The buildings would be visually out of keeping with their environment when seen from the B2118 and nearby pavements and pathways - it totally ignores the local spirit of place. This contravenes NPPF paragraphs 135 and Policy DP12 (Design and Character).

There have also been recent reports in the Media about the need for more bungalows to be built - demand is high. Governments moan about older people not moving out of houses which are too big for them and freeing up the market, but how can they if there are no bungalows being built? Developers do not like constructing bungalows as there is less profit to be made, but how can the various housing chains move efficiently if older people locally only have a choice of staying put or going in a Care Home?

7. Oversight Relating to Active Travel and Issues Re Transportation

The Travel Plan and Transport Assessment do not hold water and also fall short on the matter of national standards set to achieve safe walking and cycling.

There is no ongoing unbroken delineated and defined cycle or pedestrian route to the village centre, the main community facilities or even the various bus stops. There is certainly not one safe crossing of the main London Road. This has got increasingly busy in the past few years with ongoing developments. The four way pivot point between Berrylands Farm and Linden Homes and North - South on the London Road is getting increasingly dangerous for vehicle traffic. Cars particularly career at high speed out of Reeds Lane. I am very surprised that a 20 mph speed limit has not already been imposed in Reeds Lane and the London Road through the entire village of Sayers Common.

The above runs foul of NPPF paragraphs 109–118 and Gear Change (2020), this stipulates that any new buildings be "built around making sustainable travel the first choice for journeys".

Active Travel England should be asked to review this proposed development, as it is Government Policy that they are to be consulted under statute for large proposals of this size. At a bare minimum, any plan should have a crossing controlled by signals and a separate cycleway which links up to the overall Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan network to be compliant with LTN 1/20 Design Principles.

I need to add additional information regarding traffic on London Road. Traffic is already heavy around rush-hour and school pick-up times. There is increasing pressure to limit working from home, a hangover from COVID, and a likely 400 cars or 800 daily journeys (for all developments

4,000 cars and 8,000 daily journeys) or so will be added to the mix. The likely destination will be Burgess Hill or to travel North on the A23 for other work places as salaries tend to be higher away from the coast. Burgess Hill is the easiest place to park a car for the station for London, and is the nearest potential spot for numerous job options. There is a real danger traffic will back up coming on and off the A23 as the slip roads coming up to the roundabouts at Hickstead are far too short and small. This is dangerous and will lead to drivers taking desperate measures.

8. Complete and Utter Deficiencies regarding Infrastructure

The nearest supermarket is at Burgess Hill, if you need a big four bank, Haywards Heath, no other significant shopping need can be satisfied locally. Hurstpierpoint has several small outlets, but is frequently clogged with traffic. The station at Hassocks has to be reached through Hurstpierpoint, further clogging up traffic and adding further to the pollution at Stone Pound crossroads. The alternative station is Burgess Hill. The bus service is very poor and ends at 6pm. The nearest Doctor is at Hurstpierpoint as is the nearest viable school. There are Post Offices at Hurstpierpoint and Burgess Hill. It is inevitable the new arrivals will have to frequently use their cars, clogging up our roads.

9. Houses of Multiple Occupancy

How many of the proposed houses are Houses of Multiple Occupancy? Are there any Plans for Government to rent these houses and place legal / illegal immigrants in them? The Government / Councils in Bournemouth appear to have placed migrants in housing under the radar. In Bournemouth, vigilante groups have had to be formed by existing residents to protect women, children and old people locally. Will we have to plan to do this here? There is little going on in Sayers Common or Albourne, migrants would probably focus on Hurstpierpoint as there are a number of shops, community facilities, cafes, takeaways and restaurants and a school within easy walking distance.

10. Ever Present Risk of Flooding and Drainage Issues

The basic Flood Risk Assessment only looks at on-site attenuation and the blessed attenuation ponds; it ignores surface-water flows in the Furzeland Way area, London Road and leading towards the A23 corridor. It also completely ignores the Wintergreens which is right in the line of fire down the slope. It is possible the developer does not even know The Wintergreens exists as it did not appear to be on their initial map.

There are ongoing drainage ditch issues - these also do not appear to be shown on your map. Does this mean you are intending to bulldoze them over? Running approximately parallel to the London Road, these ditches cross through the land in question at the bottom of the field, passing through Sayers Common Wood, behind the Duke of York and running alongside the Village Pond. These provide essential drainage outlets to obviate flooding in the village of Sayers Common. The landowners (including the developers) need to keep these clear and maintain them properly - otherwise flooding around the Village Pond area, the houses alongside the ditches, even extending into the Linden Homes development, is probable.

Without a Master Plan which is comprehensive and giving an overall solution - not a piecemeal one - this development can only increase the risks of causing greater flooding events, both in number and in volume. The local drainage ditches have been overlooked for many years - there is no plan to maintain and look after them - even on sites which are the responsibility of the local Councils. There is great local concern that the ditches on site will be filled in by the developer, this would exacerbate the issue considerably resulting in major flooding events in Sayers Common. The developer needs to be more of a macro-planner and less micro-planner in his approach. We live here and will have to live with the consequences of his short-sighted tunnel vision. This is also another argument for a MasterPlan to be constructed before any approvals are given.

This proposed development therefore contravenes NPPF paragraphs 167–172 and Policy DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage).

At a bare minimum, a properly and regularly maintained culvert or properly controlled overflow to the western basin should be implemented and maintained if this proposal is approved.

11. So-called "Attenuation Basins"

These stretches of water are not self-balancing ponds and are based on non-porous clay. When heavy rain occurs they will retain water and then flood the surrounding land and new buildings to the West. The excess will flow down into Wintergreens and Furzelands Way, likely carrying on to central Sayers Common. The local Mid Sussex Council does not even maintain the Sayers Common Village Pond properly - it claims it cannot afford to. This was badly over-grown with Bramble and Bindweed, and was only recently partially cleared up by the good offices of a Voluntary Group. Eventually the local house-owners will have to carry out this maintenance of what is Council Land. This problem started about 20 years ago, only about 10 years after the houses in Berrylands Farm were built. The water sump that was built in Dunlop Close is also not maintained properly. What chance is there that the five attenuation basins will be properly maintained in the long term? Very slim or none in my view - there is an established pattern already - these are not sustainable assets. Not to mention the danger to any young families.

12. South East Water

We are regularly receiving emails from South East Water telling us continually to cut down on our water usage. There is a hose ban in force already and we are told this year there will be a Winter drought. The company is complaining about the surge in water usage locally, but there has been a corresponding massive surge in housing over the past ten years. Sayers Common has increased three or four fold in that time. Another 210 houses will increase the pressure on water supply even more. Can the Water Company cope with this?

13. Victorian Sewer Network - the sewer network in Sayers Common dates back to Victorian times, the pipes are extremely small and the rural system was designed for a village of only 150 - 200 houses. There are instances of sewage emerging from the drains and entering Ponds after heavy rain; a particularly bad instance of this occurred on 16th / 17th November 2022. Several houses in Berrylands Farm / The Chestnuts came extremely close to sewage entering their homes; one garage was fouled / inundated with sewage. Houses in London Road have been flooded out several times. The Linden Homes development regularly experiences flooding. How will the sewage from the new development be handled and to what extent will it impact or overload the existing central Sayers Common sewage system?

14. Destruction of Biodiverse, Rare and Irreplaceable Habitat

The applicant's own ecological survey identifies ancient / semi-natural woodland near to and at the site. Surely it is destructive to existing biodiversity to swap ancient highly diverse irreplaceable woodland for low distinctive grassland - much of which is already in existence now in abundance before the bulldozers are sent in. The Biodiversity Net Gain calculations appear to be total bunkum and should be rigorously checked. They make no sense at all to any sensible fair-minded person, not sure how they could manage to keep a straight face writing this sort of stuff. The whole direction of travel of this proposal conflicts with NPPF paragraphs 180–182 and Policy DP38 (Biodiversity), as well as the Environment Act 2021 requirement for a genuine 10 % net gain based on habitat value and irreplaceability. See further comments on Woodland being destroyed below.

On several occasions, we have witnessed deer crossing the London Road going to and coming from the ancient woodland areas near the proposed development. With potentially an extra 800 car journeys a day, accidents and collisions, likely resulting in deer deaths will become more likely. This hardly helps wildlife.

Presumably the farmer currently looks after the Woodland areas. Who will maintain it - or what is left of it afterwards - bearing in mind the Council seems very reluctant to maintain what it should already currently be maintaining? Please note, this is not a request to cut it all down, quite the opposite in fact.

15. Is the irreplaceable Ancient Woodland around the sides of the building site being wantonly destroyed?

On the Mid Sussex Planning website it clearly shows the development area cutting into ancient woodland to the East, West and South of the site. If this is so, this is complete mindless vandalism and wanton destruction on a massive scale and should not be allowed under any circumstances. It is not just the trees that are lost but a whole ecosystem, the plants, fungi, mosses, insects, birds and animals which make it their home and their mutual dependency. In many cases, specialist species live there. Only 2.5% of the UK is classified as ancient woodland which is recognised as our richest and most diverse land habitat. Ancient woods are irreplaceable. We can't replace the complex biodiversity which has built up over centuries. Many species that enjoy ancient woodland conditions are extremely slow to colonise new areas. All ancient woodlands are unique, and are very distinctive and peculiar to their own locality. Once what little we have left is gone, it is gone for ever, crushed under the developer's boot. It seems this developer plays only lip service to biodiversity, just ticking boxes, and may be seeking to fell ancient woodland to make even more profit for themselves - if so this is wanton, cynical, scandalous destruction of a valuable irreplaceable habitat, completely and hypocritically turning their backs on valuable diversity - a genuine local asset. The developers should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

16. Heritage Impact

The development would severely damage the location and surrounding space containing the listed buildings at Coombe Farm. This ancient site is important because of the open space around them, demonstrating an agricultural asset of long standing in the environment which gives them their true meaning and underlines their purpose in the landscape. Also these are low rise and would be swamped by the totally incongruous proposed three storey mini sky-scrappers, densely packed proposed new builds and ineffective attenuation ponds.

It would seem that the developer has been totally unable to give a proper heritage impact assessment or mitigation which holds any weight. This contravenes NPPF regulations and Policy DP34 (Heritage Assets).

17. Cumulative Buildup Adversely Impacting Infrastructure

It is crazy to pass judgement on this development without seeing the overall impact of all the proposed developments on the village and surrounds as a whole. The overall effect of the various different proposed developments on flood risk, drainage, sewage dispersion, habitat destruction, local facilities, traffic and the overall rural landscape has been completely ignored. The cumulative effect of different over-layered developments has a massive change on numerous local issues on what is a rural location not a town: increased flood risk, increased sewage disposal, the overloading of already busy roads with increased traffic and overloading community hubs has not been taken into account, this contravenes NPPF paragraphs 24–28 (duty to co-operate).

I strongly advocate that a masterplan or infrastructure strategy must be prepared before even considering this or any further approvals. Without this approach, the Council is taking a big risk by jumping blindly into the unknown, triggering all sorts of inter-dependent potentially threatening variables without having a clue as to the end result - maybe even incurring legal liabilities as well. A bad outcome would hardly enhance the Council's reputation.

18. Integration of The Development / Public Health

This isolated development looks in on itself at a location with limited permeability and five attenuation ponds which are not sustainable and will likely overflow in bad weather. In terms of infrastructure this is virtually non-existent and there is only limited access to those facilities which do exist locally either in Hurstpierpoint or the centre of Sayers Common. The layout creates an inward-facing enclave with limited permeability and inferior access to existing facilities.

It does not give the "healthy, inclusive and safe places" required by NPPF paragraphs 96–101 and Policy DP24 (Open Space and Recreation).

And on the GP front, good luck with getting on a local Doctor's list.

19. Ultimate Conclusion

I understand that some additional housing is required, but not all in Sayers Common - the rest of Mid Sussex seems to have been ignored. This proposal, in its current form, is unsympathetic to its location, seems intent on completely urbanising and concreting over a rural community against their wishes and is clearly contrary to national and local planning policy.

In my view it should be withdrawn and designed in a proper way respecting both villagers and the rural environment, or refused, unless the developer can convincingly show - and not pay lip service to - complete compliance with:

- Mid Sussex District Plan Policies: DP6, DP12, DP21, DP34, DP38 and DP41;
- NPPF paragraphs: 7–12, 50–51, 109–118, 129–135, 167–172, 180–182, 208–214; and
- Government Active Travel Policy (Gear Change, DfT 2020) and LTN 1/20 design standards.

For these reasons, I respectfully request Mid Sussex District Council refuse outright planning application DM/25/2661 or demand its withdrawal until a properly prepared, thought through masterplan appears which is totally compliant with regulations and particularly takes account of and respects local people's wishes and does not focus solely on two small villages, totally overloading the local fragile environment. We need something sustainable that really enhances quality of life and cherishes the environment in Sayers Common and does not set out to merge us with Albourne or carry out an enforced tarmaced urbanisation programme which smacks of "1984" or a little Tower Hamlets. Our very precious rural environment should be properly appreciated, recognised and respected; this proposed application does not do any of these things - in fact it seeks to actively destroy valuable and irreplaceable habitat and is a tribute to phillistinism.

"Where they make a desolation, they call it peace" (Tacitus)

Bearing in mind I never even received notification of planning permission being applied for this development, I also respectfully request confirmation of receipt of this email - thank you.

Signed:



Sayers Common