

Susan Dubberley

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 September 2026 11:29
To: Susan Dubberley
Cc: Graeme Collins
Subject: DM/26/2178 - Objection

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Dear Susan Dubberley,

I am writing to formally register my **strong objection** to planning application **DM/26/2178**, for the erection of six dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and drainage on land between Nos. 149 and 161 College Lane, Hurstpierpoint.

I have reviewed the application documentation, including the Transport Statement, Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, Design & Access Statement and the Council's previous pre-application correspondence. Having considered these documents, I believe there are a number of significant planning issues which have not been adequately resolved and which, taken together, warrant refusal of the application.

The site is countryside outside the existing built-up area

The starting point must be the status of the site itself.

The Council's own pre-application advice expressly confirms that "**the site lies in the countryside**" and that the countryside policies therefore apply. It identifies Policies DP6, DP12 and DP15 as being relevant to the principle of residential development in this location.

The Council's advice subsequently summarised the position by stating that the application site lies "**in countryside, outside the built up area**", and that general housing development would ordinarily be contrary to the relevant countryside policies.

I do not believe that the applicant has demonstrated sufficient justification for departing from that important planning restraint.

The argument that the proposal constitutes "infill" appears to rely heavily upon the recently approved seven houses immediately to the south. However, the existence of another planning permission does not automatically convert adjoining countryside into an appropriate housing site. This application must be assessed on its own merits and against the policies and planning circumstances that apply to it.

Indeed, the Council's own officer recognised the potential argument regarding infill but **still expressed specific concerns about the scale and quantum of development at the rear of the site.**

The Council has already identified that six houses remain too much for this location

This is particularly important.

The original proposal was for seven dwellings. It was subsequently reduced to six, but the Council's own pre-application advice makes clear that this was not regarded as a meaningful reduction in the impact of the development.

The officer specifically noted that the reduction was achieved by combining two smaller dwellings into one large four-bedroom dwelling and therefore resulted in **little visual reduction in footprint, scale or mass**. The officer concluded that the development still felt **"too urban for what is an edge of settlement rural location."** Transport.pdfPDF

That concern has not been satisfactorily overcome.

The current proposal remains a substantial residential development comprising six houses, an internal access road, parking, garages/car barns, visitor parking, hardstanding, private gardens, landscaping and an attenuation basin.

The fact that the number of units has technically reduced from seven to six should therefore not be allowed to disguise the fact that the overall built form remains substantial.

The development would urbanise the rural character of College Lane

The application site represents an important transition between the existing built-up area and the open countryside.

Turning this open land into a residential estate would inevitably change the character and appearance of this part of College Lane.

The Council's own officer has already expressed concern that the rear element of the proposal is too urban for this rural edge-of-settlement location.

The proposed landscaping may soften views of the development but it cannot eliminate the fundamental change in land use or the urbanising effect of introducing six substantial dwellings and an internal estate layout into this location.

This is therefore not simply a matter of architectural appearance; it concerns the **fundamental character and settlement pattern of College Lane and the relationship between Hurstpierpoint and the surrounding countryside**.

The emerging District Plan makes this application particularly concerning

There is an important additional consideration which should not be overlooked.

The emerging Mid Sussex District Plan identifies **MM72 – Land east of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint** as a strategic housing allocation of approximately **75 dwellings on 5.3 hectares**.

That emerging allocation is accompanied by specific requirements for infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes, a shared-use path along College Lane, highway works, green corridors, landscape buffers, drainage considerations and contributions towards infrastructure.

This is highly significant because it demonstrates that the wider area is now being considered through the strategic planning process as a **comprehensive development opportunity**, rather than as a series of unrelated small infill sites.

In those circumstances, I believe it would be premature and inappropriate to grant permission for this six-house scheme in isolation.

There is a real danger that piecemeal development could prejudice the comprehensive planning and delivery of the wider allocation, particularly in relation to access arrangements, pedestrian infrastructure, drainage, landscaping and connectivity.

The Council should therefore be satisfied that this application does not compromise or prejudice the emerging MM72 allocation before granting permission.

Pedestrian safety and sustainable transport are significant concerns

The applicant places considerable emphasis on the sustainability of the location and the ability of residents to walk and cycle.

However, its own Transport Statement acknowledges that there are **no dedicated footways along College Lane**. It also places the site approximately 2.1 km from Hurstpierpoint village centre, approximately 2.6 km from Hassocks railway station and approximately 2.8 km from Hassocks itself.

This means that residents are not being provided with the type of safe, convenient pedestrian environment that one would reasonably expect when claiming that a development represents a genuinely sustainable location.

This is particularly relevant to:

- children;
- elderly pedestrians;
- people with mobility difficulties;
- pedestrians travelling in darkness;
- pedestrians during periods of poor weather;
- residents wishing to access public transport.

The emerging MM72 allocation itself recognises this deficiency by requiring a **shared-use path along College Lane**, together with pedestrian and cycle connections.

It is therefore difficult to reconcile the applicant's assertion that the existing arrangements provide "excellent pedestrian connectivity" with the emerging strategic planning requirement to provide precisely the infrastructure that is currently missing.

The cumulative highway impact needs much greater consideration

I am not persuaded that the relatively modest number of vehicle movements predicted by the applicant adequately addresses the real planning issue.

The Transport Statement estimates approximately 30 vehicle movements per day from the six houses. However, this should not be considered in isolation.

There is already an approval for seven houses immediately to the south, and the emerging District Plan is contemplating approximately 75 further dwellings in the wider College Lane allocation.

The NPPF requires cumulative transport impacts and reasonable future scenarios to be considered.

The relevant question is therefore not simply whether six houses, viewed in isolation, are capable of generating an acceptable number of vehicle movements.

The question is whether **College Lane and its existing pedestrian and highway infrastructure can safely and sustainably accommodate the cumulative development pressure being placed upon it.**

I believe this issue requires considerably more weight than appears to have been given to it in the application.

The proposed drainage solution is dependent upon infrastructure which has not yet been secured

I also have significant concerns regarding surface-water drainage.

The Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the underlying geology is clay and that infiltration has not been pursued as a drainage solution. It also confirms that there is **no existing below-ground surface-water drainage system in the vicinity of the site.**

The proposed solution is to discharge surface water into the existing highway carrier drain along College Lane at a restricted rate of **2.9 litres per second.**

However, the Flood Risk Assessment expressly states that the existing highway carrier drain is 225mm and that, in order to provide sufficient capacity, it would need to be **upsized from 225mm to 300mm.** It also states that the proposed connection needs to provide a **betterment to the existing drainage system.**

Furthermore, the correspondence within the Flood Risk Assessment makes clear that the proposed connection to the highway drainage system is subject to approval by West Sussex County Council.

Consequently, I do not believe that the drainage issue can simply be treated as a matter which can be resolved at a later stage.

Before permission is granted, the Council should establish that the necessary drainage infrastructure is technically achievable, acceptable to the highway authority, properly funded and capable of being delivered before occupation.

This is particularly important given the clay geology and the absence of an existing dedicated surface-water system.

The drainage strategy also has an acknowledged residual risk

The Flood Risk Assessment itself acknowledges that there remains a residual risk arising from blockage, failure or poor performance of the drainage infrastructure and that regular maintenance will therefore be required by the future site management company or its agents.

Again, this does not necessarily make the proposal unacceptable in itself, but it reinforces the importance of ensuring that the drainage infrastructure is robust, properly secured and capable of being maintained for the lifetime of the development.

There is also a discrepancy in the stated site area

I would ask the Council to clarify an apparent discrepancy in the application documentation.

The Planning Application Form identifies the site area as approximately **0.54 hectares**, whereas the Flood Risk Assessment refers to approximately **0.487 hectares**, and the Design & Access Statement refers to approximately **0.48 hectares**. [Planning app.pdf](#)[PDF Flood risk .pdf](#)[PDF Design access.pdf](#)[PDF](#)

For a relatively small development site, a difference of approximately 530 square metres is not insignificant.

The Council should establish the correct red-line site boundary and site area before determining the application, particularly because site area affects density, drainage, landscaping and biodiversity calculations.

Biodiversity Net Gain does not overcome the wider planning harm

I acknowledge that the applicant proposes biodiversity enhancements and claims a biodiversity net gain.

However, Biodiversity Net Gain should not be regarded as a justification for development which is otherwise unacceptable in terms of countryside character, settlement form, landscape impact or infrastructure.

The loss of an open field and the urbanisation of an edge-of-settlement location remain separate and important planning considerations.

The application should not be determined in isolation from the emerging strategic planning framework

Overall, I am concerned that the application is attempting to establish residential development on an individual parcel of land at precisely the time when the wider area is being considered through the emerging District Plan.

The emerging MM72 allocation demonstrates that the Council recognises the need for a **comprehensive approach** to development in this area, including proper pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, highway arrangements, drainage, landscape buffers and other supporting infrastructure.

Granting this application now risks establishing piecemeal development before those wider issues have been properly resolved.

Conclusion

For all of the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that **planning application DM/26/2178 be refused**.

In particular, I ask the Council to give significant weight to:

- the fact that the site is currently countryside outside the existing built-up area;

- the Council's own previous concerns regarding the scale and urban character of the development;
- the fact that the reduction from seven to six dwellings has resulted in little meaningful reduction in footprint, scale or mass;
- the impact upon the rural character and appearance of College Lane;
- the lack of dedicated pedestrian footways;
- the inadequacy of the current pedestrian and sustainable transport infrastructure;
- the cumulative highway impact of existing and proposed development;
- the emerging MM72 allocation and the need for comprehensive rather than piecemeal development;
- the proposed shared-use path and other infrastructure identified within MM72;
- the fact that the proposed surface-water solution depends upon upgrading the existing highway drainage system and obtaining the necessary approvals;
- the clay geology and reliance upon engineered drainage;
- the unresolved discrepancy regarding the stated site area; and
- the fact that biodiversity net gain does not outweigh other identified planning harm.

Most importantly, I ask the Council not to consider these six dwellings simply as an isolated six-house development.

The planning context has changed. The wider College Lane area is now being considered as a comprehensive strategic allocation, with approximately 75 dwellings and significant associated infrastructure. This application should therefore be considered in that wider context rather than being allowed to establish piecemeal development ahead of the comprehensive planning of the area.

I would also respectfully ask that the Council give particular consideration to its own officer's previous assessment that the rear element of the proposal remained **"too urban for what is an edge of settlement rural location"**, and that reducing the proposal from seven to six dwellings had achieved **little visual reduction in practice**. Transport.pdfPDF

For these reasons, I strongly object to application **DM/26/2178** and respectfully request that planning permission be refused.

Yours faithfully,



Crossways, Belmont Lane, BN6 9EP.