

December 22, 2022

**PRESS RELEASE: CPRE Sussex calls on Mid Sussex District Council to withdraw draft District Plan update**

***Charity says council should seize opportunity to ‘fundamentally rethink’ its plan ahead of potential Government changes to housing targets.***

Environmental campaigners are calling on Mid Sussex District Council to withdraw its draft District Plan update.

CPRE Sussex volunteers and staff say the review, which updates the 2018 District Plan, includes excessive housing targets and major site allocations.

With central Government indicating it may change the rules governing housing targets, the charity says the council should withdraw its current plan and explore the opportunity to rewrite it.

It has also criticised the amount of time residents and other interested parties have been given to comment and a complete lack of targets on climate mitigation and environment policy.

“Mid Sussex District Council has been working on this update for two years but only exposed its ideas to the public for the first time in November,” said CPRE Sussex director Brian Kilkelly.

“This means people have had a paltry six-week consultation period to comment on more than 3,000 pages of plan and complicated evidence documentation. How can the council even begin to claim it has given the people of Mid Sussex an opportunity to contribute and support these plans?”

Last February, leader of the council Jonathan Ash-Edwards wrote to Michael Gove telling him the Government’s algorithm is ‘simply not an accurate reflection of local need’ and imposing it would make it ‘highly probable that Mid Sussex cannot achieve a reviewed Plan with community support’.

Analysis by CPRE Sussex has shown applying flawed Government algorithms requires Mid Sussex District Council to plan for about 10,000 excess homes from now until 2039.

Despite this, the draft, which extends the Plan period from 2031 to 2039, imposes the same housing targets Mr Ash-Edwards criticised.

It proposes allocating 28 new sites for future housing development, including three new '20-minute communities', each made up of between 1,400 and 2,300 houses.

"To make matters worse, Mid Sussex District Council is proposing to locate the bulk of that new housing in the countryside, including three large greenfield sites that are as unsustainably located as they are unnecessary," said CPRE Sussex volunteer Michael Brown.

"What happened to the government's commitment to 'brownfield first'?"

"Mr Ash-Edwards should be putting his money where his mouth is.

"We call on him to withdraw his draft Plan and work on revisions which the Mid Sussex community could rally around to meet local housing needs without such terrible damage to our countryside."

Read the full letter to Mr Ash-Edwards at [cpresussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/12/Letter-to-Mid-Sussex-Council-leader-17.12.2022.pdf](https://cpresussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/12/Letter-to-Mid-Sussex-Council-leader-17.12.2022.pdf)

Read the full consultation response from CPRE Sussex at [cpresussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/12/Mid-Sussex-District-Plan-Review-CPRE-Sussex-submission.pdf](https://cpresussex.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/12/Mid-Sussex-District-Plan-Review-CPRE-Sussex-submission.pdf)

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For press inquiries and interview opportunities contact [sheena.journalism@gmail.com](mailto:sheena.journalism@gmail.com).

#### **Notes for editors:**

##### **About CPRE Sussex**

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex. Our priorities are:

- Beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities
- Countryside and green spaces which are accessible to all, enriching lives and health
- Sustainable development for thriving communities
- Effective responses to the climate emergency

We engage with decision makers, influencing them and challenging them to protect the Sussex countryside and green spaces. We inform on environmental issues and empower individuals and communities with robust evidence to defend and enhance the green spaces they love. We believe in collaborating with others to ensure a greener future for our county. We research and provide advice on planning issues. Together we can shape a greener future for Sussex.