

Attention: Mrs K Roberts

Name WDC Planning & Environmental Services
WD/2026/1679/MAO

Date 12 September 2026

Address LAND TO THE NORTH OF MILL LANE AND WEST OF GROVE HILL, HELLINGLY

Proposal OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION (WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT THE MEANS OF ACCESS) FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 280 DWELLINGS INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, TOGETHER WITH THE FORMATION OF A NEW ACCESS AND RECONFIGURATION AT MILL LANE, FORMAL AND INFORMAL OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPE PLANTING, DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS.

CPRE wish to register our objection to this proposal and ask that approval be refused; our objections and concerns to this Outline Application are explained below.

1 Major urban extension of Hailsham

This proposal is for a major large-scale extension of Hailsham into the Wealden countryside, outside any settlement boundary. This is contrary to all existing plans, this site is not designated as a development site and no locally valid reasons are provided to justify the proposal.

2 The site is not a sustainable development site

If this site were to be developed with 280 properties, it would be totally dependent on people driving for all facilities, the area has no shops or local amenities, and limited public transport. There is no indication that the local infrastructure can meet the extra demands, for GPs, for schools, for nurseries, for public transport, or even for water supplies in this dry area with its annual crisis with droughts.

3 Severe affect on the local character

The site is an essential part of the local rural character, it provides an open agricultural setting for the local listed buildings by the mill on the Cuckmere and Shawpits Farm, and also the conservation area of the village. The landscape would be ruined if this site were to be developed, the whole character of the area would be destroyed. In particular the existing access across the fields to Shawpits Farm, which is an essential part of the setting for this listed building.

4 Traffic problems

Mill Lane is an old single track route connecting the village with the local farms and country, it is totally unsuitable as a busy link road, and adding passing places to it would make things worse, encouraging more traffic to use this unsuitable route into the conservation area. The proposed access is not suitable for such a large development in this rural area. Also the other local road, Grove Hill, is not a route suitable for heavy traffic, it is already struggling with the on-going developments to the South and East. No large-scale development should be allowed in this area as the local roads cannot safely cope with any further increases in traffic. Also to claim that the Cuckoo Trail which is a valued recreational asset to the area, would help the transport situation

might be reasonable for a summer afternoon, but to suggest that people could use this as their regular transport in the dark (no lighting!) and the wet (yes it does suffer) is clearly wrong.

5 Waste Water

There are severe drainage issues here, the Cuckmere floods regularly, and this includes blocking the roads and flooding properties downstream. This proposed development can only make this situation worse, replacing agricultural land with concrete and tarmac must and will increase the total run-off, which will worsen the Cuckmere flooding, locally and down the river to the sea. As for sewerage the existing network cannot apparently cope with the present still increasing volumes, the extra 280 connections again can only make things worse.

6 The environment

The existing site provides a suitable environment for a range of varied wildlife. Despite what is said by the applicants changing this to a large scale housing development can only make things worse. Think of the lights, the sounds, the cats and dogs, not to mention the traffic! The existing trees and shrubs and the farmland provides food and shelter for all of the existing wildlife, the trees situated in this agricultural setting provide decent shelter/accommodation compared to trees close to a huge housing development with its lights, sounds and domestic animals.

Overall this application is for too large a development on a site that is really best kept as the setting for the existing listed buildings and the conservation area. The applicants own photographs within the Design and Access documents demonstrate the scenic character and landscape value of the existing site, see pages 7, 31 and 78, none of the drawings of the future development approach these for landscape merit. As for suggesting that a large housing development would be a better replacement for this rural site as a northern boundary of Hailsham, it is clearly wrong. Let us hope that this land continues to provide some of the country's much needed food, **please refuse planning permission for this development.**

Thank you John Hurwood For CPRE Sussex

This is the formal response of CPRE Sussex – the Sussex Countryside Charity - to the above application. CPRE Sussex works to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of the Sussex countryside by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.