



THE RT HON NICK HERBERT CBE MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ARUNDEL & SOUTH DOWNS

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Kathryn Hall
Chief Executive
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

26 November 2018

Dear Kathryn

Thank you for advising me of the Council's position on the new planning application for Land at Friars Oak Fields in Hassocks (DM/18/2342). However, I am concerned about the conclusions you reach and the Officers' recommendation to allow the application, and I urge the Planning Committee to reject it.

This renewed speculative application by Rydon is once again undermining the neighbourhood planning process in Hassocks. Furthermore, Mid Sussex is considering site allocations for its Local Plan next year. The Council should not be rewarding a speculative developer with planning permission on a site which does not sit in an emerging neighbourhood plan and is pre-empting the Council's own review.

Mid Sussex has already imposed a strategic allocation of 500 houses on Hassocks which gave the Council its five-year land supply. On top of this, another speculative development has since been approved to build 129 houses on the nearby Ham Fields, meaning that any further development on the west side of the village would greatly increase traffic passing through Stonepound Crossing, an Air Quality Management Area. There are therefore substantive planning grounds to reject the application apart from the railway issue.

If this application were to be approved, within the next five years the village of Hassocks will bear the burden of over 1,000 new houses, a 30 per cent increase, in a very short time. These are numbers which are difficult for the village to absorb, placing an increased burden on already inadequate local infrastructure, with much of the building on sites forced upon the village by the developers. The identified local housing need for Hassocks is 270 houses.

TEL: 020 7219 4080

E-MAIL: NICK@NICKHERBERT.COM WEBSITE: WWW.NICKHERBERT.COM



I believe that the Council should support the neighbourhood planning process and resist speculative applications by developers who should be required to follow due process. The Government has reiterated the importance of neighbourhood planning, and measures in the updated National Planning Policy Framework are intended to prevent emerging neighbourhood plans from being undermined by speculative development. Public support for Hassocks' neighbourhood plan will be further eroded if it is once again pre-empted by a major development. This would be particularly regrettable when the plan is due to come forward to a local referendum next year.

I am copying this letter to the Leader of Mid Sussex District Council, and I would be grateful if you could ensure that it is drawn to the attention of the Planning Committee ahead of its meeting on Thursday.

I have approved this letter personally but signed electronically.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Nick Herbert

NICK HERBERT