

Application Reference: LW/25/0339

Address: Land At Cooksbridge Road Cooksbridge East Sussex

Proposal: The provision of 151 residential dwellings (Class C3) including 40% affordable housing and commercial floorspace provision (Class E), with public open space, soft and hard landscaping, play space, community orchard, vehicular access, car and cycle parking provision and associated infrastructure including SUDS provision

Case Officer: James Smith

Your Title:

Your First Name:

Your Surname:

Address:

Town/City:

Postcode:

Your Tel. No:

Your Email Address:

Commenter Type:

(Member of the Public/Neighbour/Town Parish/Council Ward/Councillor)

Stance:

(Object/Support/Neutral)

Reason for comment:

	Building in Countryside		Loss of Open Space
	Conservation Significance		Loss of Trees
	Contextual Significance		Noise and Disturbance
	Contrary to Policy		Not Sustainable Out of Character
	Drainage		Outside Planning Boundary
	Effect on AONB		Over-development
	Effect on Town Centre Viability		Overbearing Building/Structure
	Effect on Wildlife		Overlooking, Loss of Privacy Overshadowing
	Flooding		Parking Issues
	Highway Hazards		Smell/Fumes
	Historical Significance		Support Application
	Inadequate Access		Traffic Generation
	Insufficient Information		Traffic on A259
	Lack of Infrastructure		Within the Conservation Area
	Loss of Light		

Comments

- Inconsistency with Planning Policy and Rural Character
 - Contravenes Hamsey Neighbourhood Plan (2014–2030), emphasizing proportionate development.
 - Exceeds Local Area Assessment (LAA) density recommendation (20 dwellings/ha) at 28–30 dwellings/ha, conflicting with LDC's dispersed growth policy and SDNP conservation duties (Levelling-Up Act 2023).
 - Doubles Cooksbridge's size (162 existing dwellings), transforming its rural character into a suburban estate, unsuitable for a 'local village' with limited services.
 - Flawed site selection based on land availability, not landscape-led principles, contradicting NPPF and SDNPA's 2012 Landscape Capacity Study.
- Low-Quality Design
 - Generic, repetitive house designs fail to reflect Cooksbridge's low-rise, vernacular typology, using cheap materials and lacking innovation.
 - 2.5–3-storey buildings, including apartment blocks, are inappropriate, causing overshadowing and loss of outlook.
 - Road-centric layout with minimal landscape integration undermines rural aesthetic and pedestrian-friendly design, failing National Design Guide and NPPF standards.
- Environmental and Landscape Impacts
 - Underestimates site visibility from SDNP viewpoints (Mount Harry, Blackcap), contradicting DUH's photographic evidence and SDNPA's warnings.

- Permanently alters rural landscape to suburban, harming SDNP's setting and unspoilt views, breaching DEFRA guidance (2024).
 - Loss of high-quality agricultural land contradicts food security priorities; risks to 313 protected species and Northend Stream (chalk stream) from runoff and sewage.
 - SDNPA not included as a consultee, despite legal duty to protect SDNP.
- Flood Risk and Drainage Concerns
 - Underestimates groundwater and surface water flooding risks, with inadequate monitoring and unviable drainage strategies (e.g., soakaways).
 - Southern Water's capacity limited to 70 houses by 2050, far below 151 proposed, risking sewer strain and downstream issues.
 - No mandatory maintenance for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS), risking neglect.
 - Local evidence of sewage overflows (26 spills, 290 hours) and water supply stress highlights infrastructure inadequacy.
- Lack of Community Benefit
 - Minimal benefits: community shop viability uncertain, green spaces/orchard tokenistic, and existing amenities (Beechwood Hall) sufficient.
 - Hamsey Primary School (capacity 13–14/year) cannot accommodate 418 new residents, increasing car use.
 - Tenure mix lacks affordable home ownership or self-build options, targeting national rather than local housing needs.
 - No focus on social/mental health or wellbeing, ignoring NPPF's healthy communities' policies.
- Inadequate Amenity and Accessibility
 - Affordable apartments lack private outdoor space; refuse collection impractical (drag distances >10m).
 - Sustainability measures (e.g., no photovoltaic panels, noisy air source heat pumps) inadequate, risking affordability issues.
 - Tokenistic play spaces surrounded by roads, disconnected from community needs; flood-prone green spaces lack maintenance plans.
 - Accessibility claims (Part M4(2)) unsupported for some units, lacking stairlift/wheelchair provisions.
- Flawed Site Selection and Evidence
 - Relies on inaccurate AECOM assessments mischaracterizing Cooksbridge's settlement pattern and site visibility.
 - Contradicts SDNPA's 2012 study and 2014 SHLAA rejection without justification.
 - LDC's passive reliance on flawed data ignores SDNPA and community critiques, breaching SDNP duties.
- Transport and Highway Impacts
 - Underestimates traffic impacts (339–378 parking spaces, ~900 daily trips), exacerbating congestion on A275, a dangerous road.
 - Inadequate mitigation for level crossing delays (8-minute queues) and unsafe cycling infrastructure (narrow carriageways).
 - Outdated 2011 census data underestimates car dependency; no PROW enhancements or LCWIP integration.
 - Insufficient junction capacity modelling (e.g., A27, Lewes Prison Crossroads) and no assessment of cumulative impacts or potential train service increases.
- Poor Community Engagement
 - Limited, tokenistic engagement by applicant, with coercive cold-call surveys and no meaningful community input.
 - Three pre-application discussions with LDC excluded Parish Council, undermining NPPF's emphasis on community involvement.
 - Community consultation (3 July 2025) showed 98% opposition, reflecting distrust in LDC's process and applicant's motives.
- NPPF Tilted Balance (Paragraph 11(d))
 - Adverse impacts (unsustainable location, landscape harm, poor design, infrastructure strain) outweigh housing delivery benefits.
 - Fails NPPF sustainability (Paragraphs 7–12, 77), environmental (174–182, 176), design (134), and engagement (16) principles.

Personal Comment:

Signature: