

ANDREW GRIFFITH MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ARUNDEL AND SOUTH DOWNS

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Arun District Council
Planning

May 2024

Dear Arun District Council,

AL/11/24/OUT - Land East of Westergate, Westergate

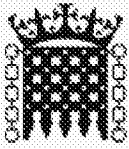
I am writing to object to the planning application to build 400 houses on land East of Westergate. These are views informed by residents and the parish council who I have met with and who have written to me. I align myself to all of their comments, and especially those from Aldingbourne Parish Council and residents in Pine Close.

The application imposes unwarranted over-development on green field sites in a rural part of the district. It proposes to bury rare species habits under concrete, fragment a vital green corridor for wildlife, reduce farmland which could be used for local food production and promotes the creation of an unsustainable community in a rural area which has little by way the way of major social and physical infrastructure, creating a dependence upon motor vehicles for access to essential services.

If this application is to form part of the Barnham Eastergate Westergate Strategic Allocation, then there must be an agreed Framework Masterplan which comes before housing. The A29 realignment needs to be completed first and still awaits a timetable for the southern section. Yet the application is seeking assessment in isolation from the road plans and any other planning proposals which, quite frankly, skews any reports and evidence submitted by the developer.

Unsustainability - This is an unsustainable volume of housing that amounts to the over-development of Westergate. This level of building will put an enormous strain on the doctors, schools, roads, and the natural environment, and on the water and sewerage infrastructure in the area which has been inundated in recent months and requires upgrading.

Southern Water have previously commented on another proposed housing development in the Barnham area, stating that the local catchment area is being overburdened during periods of rainfall. This has been evident especially during the recent winter months. The Lidsey Sewage Treatment Works is operating beyond capacity.



Neighbourhood plan - This site and this intensity of concentrated housing goes against the wishes of residents who gave their support to the Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2021). This document has set out policies for local planning including surface water management and protection of watercourses, affordable housing, and the protection of trees and hedgerows which are not met through this application.

It was the wishes of local people, through the Neighbourhood Plan - which received a strong 95% yes vote - to see this area designated as a Country Park for bio-diversity net gain. The neighbourhood plan is a material document for planning and should be given significant weight in planning.

Flooding – The area is prone to flooding from surface water and foul water sewers. The local sewerage system often becomes inundated causing spills. Concreting over these green fields will likely exacerbate the many issues seen with surface water and outfalls into the Lidsey Rife which is a delicate chalk stream and a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Traffic – This development will add significant pressure to local roads and exacerbate existing traffic congestion. There is little by way of public transport services in and out of Westergate, the nearest railway station being at Barnham. There will be a reliance on cars, which would amount to at least 400, but quite likely double this number, as well as the delivery vehicles servicing the estate, and visitors.

The proposal would also impact existing footpaths, designated as Public Rights of Way, and are used by children going to school. Where sustainable transport links should favour cycling and walking routes, it seems illogical to remove footpaths.

Conservation area – 400 new houses would be detrimental to the local setting, especially to the Eastergate Church lane Conservation Area. It's rural character, flint walls and historical buildings of the Manor House and church benefit are visible from the open views across fields.

For the reasons I have set out, I do not think that planning permission should be granted, and I would be grateful if you could take my views into consideration.

Kind regards,



Andrew Griffith MP