

[REDACTED]

Sent: 21 September 2025 20:19
To: Planning
Subject: [REDACTED] West of ifield development plans - DC/25/1312
Categories: Comments Received

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of up to 3,000 homes West of Ifield. While I recognise the need for housing, this scheme is fundamentally unsuitable and should be refused for the following reasons:

1) Speculative and Premature

This development is not in the adopted Local Plan. The NPPF (paras 15 & 33) requires a plan-led approach; proceeding outside a sound plan undermines sustainable planning and democratic scrutiny.

2) Highway Safety, Traffic and Parking

The scheme would introduce very large traffic volumes to constrained roads in Ifield, Rusper and Langley Green, creating unsafe “rat-runs” and parking pressure. NPPF 110–112 requires safe and suitable access and says refusal is justified where impacts are severe. Recent decisions confirm that where junction design/modelling and local network constraints are inadequate, appeals are dismissed on highway safety grounds (e.g., APP/D1265/W/23/3336518 – 1,700 homes: “serious negative consequences for highway safety”; Keynsham Garden Centre appeal: cumulative layout deficiencies → unacceptable highway impact).

3) Flood Risk and Drainage

Parts of the site are floodplain linked to Ifield Brook and wetlands. NPPF 159–161 require the sequential test and avoiding risk. Inspectors have dismissed schemes where sequential/exception tests or on-site siting fail (e.g., APP.P1045.W.24.3353350—policy shift requiring broader sequential testing of surface water risk).

4) Biodiversity, Trees and Green Infrastructure

The proposal threatens mature trees, hedgerows and wildlife corridors. NPPF 174 requires protection and measurable net gains—recent decisions refuse where tree loss and biodiversity gains aren't robustly demonstrated.

5) Heritage and Listed Buildings

The Ifield Village Conservation Area and St Margaret's (13th-century) would suffer less-than-substantial harm that is not outweighed by benefits. NPPF 199–202 gives great weight to conserving heritage; Inspectors regularly refuse where that balance isn't met.

6) Loss of Ifield Golf Course and Recreation Land

Closing Ifield Golf Club removes a valued sports facility and green lung for Crawley. NPPF 99 protects open space, sports and recreation land unless equivalent or better provision is secured. Appeals on golf courses have been dismissed where applicants failed to prove surplus or provide true like-for-like replacement:

- Widnes Golf Course (233 homes): Appeal dismissed—Inspector held the club was not shown surplus, and 9-hole reconfiguration/new clubhouse was not acceptable replacement under NPPF 99. (APP/D0650/W/21/3285817).
- Broke Hill (former golf course): Appeal dismissed—scale/urbanising effect on open land and Green Belt; retained character of former course weighed against development. (APP/G2245/W/21/3273188).
- Sport England consistently objects where playing fields/open space would be lost without proper replacement; Inspectors give this substantial weight.

7) Residential Amenity – We live directly behind the site

We would experience construction and operational noise, overshadowing, loss of privacy, dust/odour, and the loss of the existing tree/green buffer. NPPF 130 requires high standards of amenity for existing as well as future users. Recent decisions dismiss schemes for overbearing, overlooking and overshadowing harm (e.g., APP/Z0116/W/23/3327804).

8) Design, Appearance and Character

The scale/density, materials and massing are out of keeping with Ifield's rural/historic setting, contrary to NPPF 130. Appeals on former golf/green sites emphasise retained landscape character and openness as reasons to refuse.

9) Health & Social Infrastructure (GPs/Hospital Capacity)

Local GPs and Crawley Hospital are already under serious pressure. NPPF 20 requires adequate infrastructure. Inspectors expect secured and deliverable mitigation (often via S106); where not convincingly provided, harm carries weight against proposals.

10) Case Law and Decision-Making Framework

The Supreme Court in *Suffolk Coastal v Hopkins Homes* and *Richborough Estates v Cheshire East* clarified that when housing policies are out-of-date, the tilted balance (now NPPF 11(d)) may apply—but it does not override specific protective policies (heritage, flood risk, open space). Decision-makers must still give the development plan primacy and weigh harms robustly.

Conclusion

For the reasons above—highway safety and congestion, flood risk, ecological and tree loss, closure of Ifield Golf Club (contrary to NPPF 99), heritage harm, unacceptable neighbour impacts (noise, privacy, overshadowing), poor design/character fit, and unproven infrastructure capacity—the proposal conflicts with multiple NPPF policies and should be refused.

