

Planning Policy
Rother District Council
Town Hall
Bexhill-On-Sea
TN39 3JX

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a resident of Kingsdale Close, Battle, East Sussex, I am writing to voice my objection to the proposed plans to build over 250 new homes as described in Rother District Council's Proposed Allocation Policy BT1, BT8 and BT10 on the Hastings Road at Battle.

As the Council is aware, there already is a large ongoing housing development on the Blackfriars site in the town with the Tapestry New Homes project which, when complete, will exert considerable strain on the infrastructure of Battle, with increased pressure on schools, doctors/dentists, and presumably a further increase in traffic congestion on the Hastings Road.

Adding another major housing project to the area would simply exacerbate these problems even further, and together with the environmental destruction that would result and its impact on the National Landscape of the High Weald, I object in the strongest terms to these proposals and am enclosing a signed copy of the example objection letter with this document.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.A large black rectangular box redacting the address of the sender.



To: Rother District Council Planning Department

Re: Objection to Proposed Allocation Policy BT1, BT8, BT10 (Land south of Hastings Road, Battle) Draft Rother Local Plan (2025-2042)

Date:

We are writing to formally submit our objection to the proposed allocations of site BT1 and adjacent sites. As residents of Hastings Road, we have direct, daily experience of the site conditions. This development is unsupportable based on material planning considerations, the democratically adopted Battle Neighbourhood Plan (BNP), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024/25 (and the subsequent 2025/26 updates regarding National Decision-Making Policies).

1. Traffic Congestion and Safety on Hastings Road

Hastings Road (A2100) is already at breaking point. Traffic is backed up every morning and evening, creating a bottleneck that cannot accommodate the additional vehicle movements generated by a minimum of 250 new dwellings (sites mentioned above). The Battle Neighbourhood Plan (Battle NP) explicitly identifies traffic congestion as a critical weakness of the parish. Adding a major junction to this existing chaos without significant infrastructure upgrades is negligent.

Junction Interference and "Staggered" Conflict At a distance of less than 200 metres, these two major junctions will interfere with one another. Turning movements into BT1 (250 dwellings) will frequently be blocked by "tailback" traffic exiting or entering Blackfriars (210+ dwellings). This creates a high risk of "rear-end" collisions and "side-swipe" accidents as drivers attempt to navigate emerging traffic from two major hubs in such a short span.

The 30mph to 40mph Transition Danger The sites sit at a critical transition point where the speed limit increases from 30mph to 40mph.

- **Acceleration Risk:** Vehicles traveling outbound (towards Hastings) are legally accelerating exactly where the BT1 entrance is proposed.
- **Braking Distance:** Vehicles entering the 30mph zone from the south (inbound) often carry higher speeds before decelerating.

Placing two high-volume junctions in a high-speed transition zone is fundamentally unsafe. The **NPPF Paragraph 115** requires that "safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users." Given the topography and speed transition here, this requirement cannot be met.

2. Environmental Impact and Air Quality

Unjustified Harm to the National Landscape (AONB) and Greenfield Land

- **Greenfield Loss:** BT1 proposes building on 11.09 hectares of Greenfield land. This directly contradicts the Battle NP's vision to prioritise brownfield sites and protect the countryside.
- **National Landscape (AONB) Impact:** The site is within the High Weald **National Landscape (formerly AONB)**. Under **NPPF Paragraph 190**, National Landscapes are afforded the highest level of protection. A density of 40 dwellings per hectare is urban, not rural, and is entirely out of keeping with the character of the High Weald. Major development should only occur in exceptional circumstances (**NPPF Paragraph 189**).
- **Wildlife and Trees:** The proposal threatens "fields, paddocks" and "High Weald Wildflower Meadow Priority Habitat". The construction of a minimum of 250 homes will inevitably sever wildlife corridors and destroy hedgerows, regardless of "buffer zone" promises.

Flooding Risk and Surface Water (NPPF Paragraph 170) The policy text for BT1 explicitly acknowledges a "surface water flooding risk to the southern boundaries of the site". Replacing natural drainage (fields) with impermeable surfaces (housing/roads) on 11 hectares of land already identified as a flood risk is reckless planning that endangers existing properties downhill, contradicting **NPPF Paragraph 170** and failing the current Climate Resilience tests.

3. Infrastructure Deficits and Delivery Failures

Critical Lack of Infrastructure (GP, Dentistry, Schools) The town lacks the capacity to support this population increase. The NPPF (Para 35 and 20) requires Local Plans to set out other infrastructure required (Education, health, transport, flood and water management)

- **Medical:** East Sussex is currently facing a documented "dentistry crisis" with reports indicating 8 in 10 NHS dentists are not accepting new patients. GP practices are similarly reporting "increasing demand" and workforce challenges that make appointments difficult to secure.
- **Schools:** The Council's own supporting text for BT1 admits the site is "some distance from primary schools" and implies a reliance on "active travel" which is unrealistic given the topography and traffic conditions.
- **Precedent:** We have seen this failure before. The Blackfriars development was approved with promises of infrastructure that have been slow to materialise or insufficient.

The Blackfriars Precedent: "Watered Down" Commitments We have no confidence in the "policy compliant" assurances for BT1 because we have seen the Council fail to deliver on similar promises at Blackfriars. That development was sold as a "gold standard" of green, high-tech housing. However, documents show it faced an £8 million funding gap and underwent "redesign" to "better align with market demand" and "improve efficiencies" due to rising costs. If the flagship Blackfriars project had to be value-engineered due to market pressures, the high-quality, landscape-led masterplan promised for BT1 is likely to be similarly watered down once permission is granted.

Conclusion

This proposal expands development to 250 units on a Greenfield National Landscape site amidst an infrastructure crisis. The plan is unsound as it ignores statutory environmental duties and local experience. I urge the Council to remove development pressure from this area before progressing the plan further.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Address]