



Land at New Monks Farm, in Lancing, is unsuitable for housing because of flood risk, according to campaigners. Pictured is historic flooding at New Monks Farm, supplied by Bill Freeman

# Flood plain housing 'could be district's biggest mistake'

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A last-ditch effort to all but scrap plans to allocate up to 600 homes on a flood plain was defeated on Monday.

UKIP councillors wanted New Monks Farm, in Lancing, effectively deleted from the Adur Local Plan because of flood risk concerns.

But Conservative councillors blocked the move, arguing it would see the plan thrown out and leave the

district open to speculative development.

Geoff Patmore, UKIP councillor for Widewater ward, said: "I consider, along with those residents in Widewater surrounding the flood plain, that Adur District Council is making the biggest mistake in its history to cram 600 houses on a flood plain which is at critical risk and already overwhelmed."

The issue was debated at a fiery full council meeting, in front of a packed public gallery at the Shoreham

Centre, in Pond Road.

Bill Freeman, of Adur Floodwatch, called for the authority to conduct more stringent flood assessments to demonstrate New Monks Farm could cope with housing.

But Tory councillors said the onus was on the developer to provide relevant assessments once firm plans for the site had been set out.

The meeting was held after minor amendments were made to the plan - which maps out sites for potential

development across Adur over the next 15 years.

The New Monks Farm allocation was previously set at between 450 and 600 but the plan has been amended to the maximum 600.

Tuesday's debate was supposed to be limited to the amendments - not the suitability of sites - which was established in 2014.

Mr Patmore's initial proposal to delete New Monks Farm entirely was, therefore, deemed invalid.

An alternative - reducing

the maximum housing to one - was defeated.

Leader Neil Parkin said the motion would have led to the plan being 'thrown out' by a government inspector.

Speaking after the meeting, cabinet member for regeneration Pat Beresford said: "The plan will lay down the rules by which developers have to play, including a flood management plan."

The plan will shortly go out for final consultation before a public examination later in the year.