

Sarah Valentine

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 April 2025 11:18
To: planninginfo
Subject: Re: Outline Planning application DM/25/0445 - Land At Colwell Farm Lewes Road Haywards Heath

[REDACTED]
For the attention of Joanne Fisher

I am writing further to CPRE Sussex's 19th March representation in respect of this planning application.

I have noticed that there is what appears to be a widespread misunderstanding (including amongst the Haywards Heath Town Council and your own landscape consultant) that the site involved forms a large component of an area that is designated in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan as just being a local gap to which policy E5 of that Plan applies. It is indeed so designated but, if you look at the Plan's Proposals Map (Fig 4 on page 80), you will see that this area is additionally designated there as a green corridor.

This raises an additional set of reasons why the proposal is contrary to national, District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies, reasons that we tried to address in our own 19th March submission, but which other respondents that you have consulted have not focussed on.

Whilst the purpose, and importance, of preserving a local gap is to preserve the separate identity and integrity of individual communities, green corridors provide a different, and no less significant, function. This is defined in the glossary to Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan itself as being to provide "*avenues for wildlife movement, often along streams, rivers, hedgerows or other natural features. They connect green spaces together, and often provide pleasant walks for the public away from main road*".

The creation and maintenance of green corridors is a specific objective of your own District Plan. That objective given effect in

-
policy DP37 which specifies that "*Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted*" and that "*Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development does not sever ecological corridors created by these [i.e. green corridor] assets*", and in

-
policy DP38 which provides that "*Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors.*"

The site's identification within the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan is relevant to the Plan's objective 6C and the related Green Infrastructure section of that Plan, and specifically to paras 4.4 - 4.5, 6.1, 6.2 and policy E1, which specifies that: "*Planning applications which would result in the loss of existing open spaces of public value will generally be resisted except where: • They are supported by an open space assessment that demonstrates the open space is no longer needed or • Proposals for equivalent or better alternative provision are made in a suitable location or • There is a proven need for essential utility infrastructure where the benefits outweigh any harm or loss and it can be demonstrated that there are no reasonable alternative sites available.*"

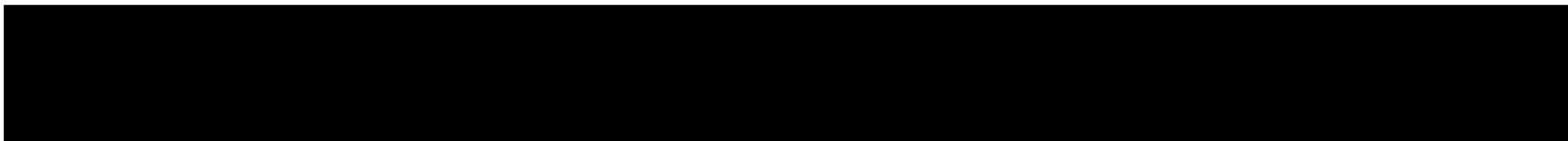
At national level NPPF para 192 requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity including, specifically, wildlife corridors.

The ecological impacts of the loss of a green corridor are a material planning consideration. However, the implications of the proposed development on these national and local policies has not been considered by any of your principal consultees, so far as we can see. That the development would result in the complete loss of the wildlife corridor purpose for which the area was so designated as it would substantially sever the connective corridor. The development also involves the severing of the vital hedgerow separating the individual fields. It would therefore breach all the policies quoted above, and would further demonstrate that the cumulative downsides of this proposal do significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits.

We are also concerned that, whilst your ecology consultants have considered the possibility of ecological mitigation measures, they have not advised on the likely practical effectiveness, or otherwise, of the potential measures that they mention. For example: the site is a regionally important bat area with a number of rare species known to be present. Whilst low-lit bat flying corridors might be maintainable, the bats use the area for foraging because of the rich insect population that depend on the grassland and plant life of the fields - largely undisturbed for some decades - which will be lost to the new housing and infrastructure proposed. Without those fields and its biodiversity, the value of the area as a bat foraging area will be substantially lost, and hence, potentially, its regionally important significance.

Yours sincerely

Michael Brown
on behalf of CPRE Sussex, the Sussex countryside charity
www.cpresussex.org.uk



For the attention of Joanne Fisher

I am writing on behalf of CPRE Sussex, the Sussex countryside charity in respect of the above planning application.

For the reasons explained in our attached letter, CPRE Sussex urges you to reject this application, whose adverse impacts in our view significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits taken as a whole.

Yours sincerely

Michael Brown
on behalf of CPRE Sussex, the Sussex countryside charity
www.cpresussex.org.uk

<25:DM:0445 North Colwell Farm 25.3.18.pdf>