

Steve Ashdown

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 09 December 2024 09:23
To: Steve Ashdown
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application DM/23/2867

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 09/12/2024 9:22 AM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land East Of Ansty Way Cuckfield Bypass Cuckfield West Sussex
Proposal:	Change of use of farmland and woodland to parkland reserve to include public access and instigation of long-term management and rewilding regime, including establishment of pedestrian and cycle tracks, with new pedestrian and cycle access points off Cuckfield Road to the south and Staplefield Road to the north. Proposals to include the addition of two wooden viewing platforms and two hides. Sports pitches at Beech Farm Field to remain in sports use. (Additional information received on 8th November 2024).
Case Officer:	Stephen Ashdown

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	Quinces Courtmead Cuckfield
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	I object to the proposal because In the current district plan (2014-2031) from 2018, policy DP16 states that "Development will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty". This application serves neither purpose, and in fact will damage and deplete the local area and landscape. The High Weald National Landscape has a high sensitivity to change where even modest changes to visitor numbers, footpath construction or car parking can have a significant effect on the landscape fabric. It has the serious the potential for a destructive impact on the environment. The erection of fencing (post and wire) will form barriers to existing wildlife such as deer and small rodents. Fencing is also disapproved of by the National Landscape (AONB) authorities

as it disrupts historic field boundaries. It is also visually unattractive.

The "rewilding" "light touch management regime" will not enrich the existing habitat but merely replace an already bio-diverse natural environment with another more alien one. There are several references in the documentation to learning from the re-wilding at Knepp Estate, at odds with the objections submitted by the owner of the Knepp Castle Estate, making it clear that the documentation is full of errors and the site is too small to be viable.

The purpose of the "Parkland Reserve" or "Country Park" is confused and contradictory. It claims to provide a recreational resource to local people whilst at the same time limiting access to enhance biodiversity. It cannot achieve both aims in such a small area as they are mutually incompatible.

The special landscape qualities of the High Weald are the result of interaction between rural people and the natural landscape over centuries. It cannot be improved upon by the revolutionary imposition of a new land management regime.

It will not deliver recreational facilities. The developer's own documentation makes it clear that public access to the site will be limited to less than a third of the overall site. This application appears to be for the sole purpose of the developer trying to deliver a biodiversity net gain to offset the destruction of biodiversity at the proposed Ansty Farm site and the new footpath would be closed during February to August each year for "ground nesting birds".

National Planning guidelines state that Biodiversity net gain should be achieved ideally at the development site itself rather than on an alternative one. The two sites are physically quite separate and the activity in one cannot compensate logically for destructive activity in the other. The evidence of Biodiversity Net Gain aggregated across both sites has been estimated at 18.2% has not been provided using the objectively assessed statutory biodiversity metric but instead by desk based assessments, calling into question their validity. The proposed cycle path runs close to and damages the setting of listed buildings in the area such as Old Mill cottage and Pondtail cottage. Cyclists could also come into conflict with users of existing bridleways such as horse riders.

The proposal provides nothing for local communities in terms of access to the countryside and its enjoyment. It is also hard to see how the current measure of biodiversity in this special area could be improved upon.

Kind regards