

Steve Ashdown

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 11 December 2024 16:05
To: Steve Ashdown
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application DM/23/2866

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 11/12/2024 4:04 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land East Of Ansty Way Cuckfield Bypass Cuckfield West Sussex
Proposal:	Outline planning application (All matters reserved except for access) for the redevelopment of land to the east of Ansty to create a new Garden Community, comprising of the erection of up to 1,450 homes (including 30% affordable housing), up to 90 residential care units (C2 class), a primary school, a SEND school, health hub, sports facilities including all weather hockey pitches and tennis centre, allotments, retail, community and employment uses together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes, open spaces, and landscaping. (Additional information received on 8th November 2024).
Case Officer:	Stephen Ashdown

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	4 Jubilee Cottages Broad Street Cuckfield
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Planning and Sustainability Objections For DM/23/2866 - The Ansty Farm development site This application remains contrary to the MSDC District Plan process that is currently under examination. MSDC has already assessed the Ansty Farm site as not suitable for development. MSDC has assessed Ansty as a category 4 settlement that has very limited scope for development. The Ansty Farm site is NOT a sustainable site and cannot be made so despite all the promises made by Fairfax. It does not meet the definitions of a 20 minute community and the site is too small to provide a realistic prospect of being able to provide or sustain all the

facilities that are suggested by Fairfax in their application.

Retail provision will be too small for anything other than a small convenience type store so residents would need to travel off site for retail purposes

There would be too few residents to support a 4 GP practice, a practice of this size is likely to be too small to be commercially viable and the delivery of GPs is not within the gift of Fairfax anyway

Work opportunities will be off site

Secondary education will be off site and Warden Park is unlikely to be able to take yet more pupils anyway

In other words, most daily needs cannot be delivered on a site of this scale. The site is not sufficiently close to an existing urban area to be able to share facilities nor is the existing population in Ansty near enough to the site or of sufficient volume to make the site sustainable. The site will therefore be no more than a dormitory housing estate.

The promised improvements to reduce car dependency are not realistic.

The only new onward connections for cyclists and pedestrians from this site are

Out on to the A272 bypass where a new shared foot/cycleway has been proposed to run alongside this busy route

A new footway alongside the B2036 towards Burgess Hill (there will be no buffer for the pedestrian walking along a narrow and winding country road).

The train station is too far to walk and the cycle option is via a convoluted route when on site and via the busy A272 when going off site.

The promised bus services are still not clearly set out, presumably because after several years of discussion it is obvious that the site is too small to sustain a new 20 minute daily service from the site to Haywards Heath other than via a hefty subsidy that is unlikely to be sustained as the level of bus usage from such a site will never be economical. There is no mention of a service to Burgess Hill in the latest documentation either.

The Fairfax proposals will in reality do little to encourage reduced car usage nor has any evidence been provided to support their grandiose claims that they would.

Landscape: The various harms to the countryside are significant.

The quality and features of the landscape have been recognised as being commensurate with that of the AONB/National Landscape that it sits alongside. The site is adjacent to the Great Wood and Copyhold Hanger LWS. The Cuckfield Conservation Area is nearby and the site forms part of the setting to the historic Holy Trinity Church. There are also a number of heritage assets that sit next to or would be encircled by the site, all of which would have an adverse impact to their setting.

Trees, hedges and green space that support a host of wildlife and are enjoyed by local residents would all be lost.

To build homes here would be an act of reckless vandalism of an area that is not capable of being made sustainable and therefore cannot deliver benefits that would offset all these harms.

Traffic and Transport - The impact to traffic along the A272 and B2036 in particular but also in all surrounding areas would be severe, especially given that some of the routes are already overloaded and the Northern Arc/Brookleigh site which is not yet built will only add to existing issues. The introduction of 3 additional roundabouts and 3 additional signalised crossing points will also compound these issues. Both National Highways and the West Sussex Highways Authority have raised serious and so far unanswered questions with regard to the Fairfax plan.

Why no good for Ansty - The Ansty Farm site would deliver next to nothing to existing residents of Ansty.

Ansty itself is akin to a ribbon development and those at the far end of the village would face a walk of at least 20 minutes to the nearest proposed on site bus stop

The so called cycle & walking route improvements when looked at in detail will provide nothing new to encourage an increase in cycling or walking

Other on site facilities will either not be delivered (e.g. GP service) or not required (e.g. there are very few primary school age children in Ansty) or already available in Ansty (e.g. Village Centre with sporting facilities).

In other words, existing Ansty residents will continue to use their cars and would not gain anything from the Ansty Farm site, they would instead lose a highly valued asset that provides access to walks through beautiful countryside contributing to their wellbeing.

The proposed design of the housing is generic and suburban in nature.

For DM/23/2867- The Country Park/Parkland Reserve

It is clear that this application is for the sole purpose of Fairfax trying to deliver a biodiversity

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

In the current district plan (2014-2031) which was adopted in 2018, policy DP16 states that "Development will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty". This application serves neither purpose.

The ancient woodland on the site (Walks Wood etc) will have a cycle path running through it linking up with other public rights of way which will be destructive to the tree roots and smaller plants. The activity of cycling will also adversely affect the wildlife. The cycle path will consist of a rolled hoggin surface that will compact the soil.

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. The latest documentation suggests that there will be no parking facilities in one document yet in another document is the suggestion that endowment fees to maintain the site could be reduced by car parking income for 100 visitors per week, a cafe or a concession of say a van selling food and drinks. There also seems to be nothing in place to prevent the use of parking at the football ground. The concept seems confused and contradictory with 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, this is completely at odds with the objection submitted already by Sir Charles Burrell, owner of the Knepp Castle Estate. He makes 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. On the one hand 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 because 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 imposed from above.

National Planning guidelines state that Biodiversity net gain should be achieved ideally at the development site itself rather than on an alternative one. Common ownership aside the two sites are quite separate and the activity in one cannot compensate logically for destructive activity in the other.

Evidence of Biodiversity Net Gain aggregated across both sites has been estimated at 18.2%. However this figure has not been provided using the objectively assessed statutory biodiversity metric but instead by desk based assessments undertaken by advisers who have no practical experience of re-wilding schemes. Sir Charles Burrell (the leading expert in re-wilding in this country) has already dismissed these plans as not serious.

The introduction of the 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.

Once land ceases to be used for agricultural purposes, it becomes much easier to subsequently develop at a later stage. This has frequently happened elsewhere.

In short you could sum up by saying that the Fairfax proposal in terms of access to the countryside gives local people nothing they don't already have 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