

Steve Ashdown

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 05 January 2024 16:13
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 05/01/2024 4:12 PM.

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.
Case Officer:	Stephen Ashdown

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Customer Details

Address:	Quinces Courtmead Road Haywards Heath
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	The Applications DM/23/2867 (Parkland Reserve) cannot be considered separately from DM/23/2866 (Ansty Farm development site) because the would be developer Fairfax in its supporting documentation makes clear that the mandatory 20% bio-diversity net gain (BNG) is to be provided by compensatory "improvements" to the Parkland Area. 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 AONB 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. As conceived the "Parkland Reserve" is likely to attract additional numbers of people onto the site that would have 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.

The purpose of the "Parkland Reserve" or "Country Park" is confused. 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 contradictory.

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 from above.

National Planning guidelines state that Biodiversity net gain should be achieved at the development site itself rather than on an alternative one. Despite efforts to link the two sites, they are quite separate and the activity in one cannot compensate for activity in the other.

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 horseriders.

Once land ceases to be used for agricultural purposes, it becomes much easier to subsequently develop.

In summary, Cuckfield, Ansty and their surroundings are already blessed with natural beauty, open spaces which will be irreparably damaged by the proposed development and the cynical proposal for a "parkland reserve".

Kind regards