

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 05 January 2024 16:45
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 4:44 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:	5 Mantell Drive Cuckfield
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	The correlation between the DM/23/2867 (Parkland Reserve) application and DM/23/2866 (Ansty Farm development) is notable, as Fairfax's proposal hinges on compensatory "improvements" in the Parkland to fulfill the mandated 20% biodiversity net gain. Contrary to the stipulations of the 2014-2031 district plan, this development falls short in its duty to either conserve or enhance natural beauty. Additionally the accuracy of the 20% net gain is highly questionable given that the area is already high in biodiversity, and the land on which development is being proposed will be stripped of almost all of its biodiversity. The proposed cycle path weaving through ancient woodland raises concerns about potential harm to the intricate root systems, adverse effects on wildlife due to increased cycling activity, and the compaction of soil. These aspects contribute to a looming threat to the delicate

ecological balance within the area.

The introduction of the cycle path poses threats to the setting of listed buildings such as Old Mill cottage and Pondtail cottage. Furthermore, potential conflicts between cyclists and users of existing bridleways, particularly horseriders, highlight additional challenges.

Critiques against the proposed fencing, constructed with posts and wire, highlight concerns about forming barriers detrimental to existing wildlife, disrupting historic field boundaries disapproved by the National Landscape (AONB) authorities, and the visual unattractiveness of such structures. Additionally, the proposed "rewilding" with a "light-touch management regime" is questioned for its potential to replace an already biodiverse natural environment with a less familiar one.

The ambiguity in the stated purpose of the "Parkland Reserve" or "Country Park" is another point of contention. On one hand, it claims to offer a recreational resource for local residents, while simultaneously restricting access to enhance biodiversity. This dual objective appears contradictory, especially considering the limited size of the area.

The unique landscape qualities of the High Weald, shaped by centuries of interaction between rural communities and the natural surroundings, stand at risk of disruption. The imposition of a new land management regime from above is argued to be incongruent with the organic evolution of this landscape. I am also concerned that if the Ansty Farm development is proposed (to which this is joined at the hip) the "Country Park" will be out of bounds to the public and be used to place development spoils for a significant number of years.

National Planning guidelines emphasise achieving biodiversity net gain on the development site itself, rather than seeking alternatives. Despite attempts to link the two sites, DM/23/2867 and DM/23/2866 remain distinct, and activities in one cannot adequately compensate for the impact on the other.

Lastly, the cessation of agricultural use raises concerns about the potential for future development, adding another layer to the complexities surrounding these proposals.

Kind regards