

Steve Ashdown

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk
Sent: 18 June 2025 20:51
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 18/06/2025 8:50 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. (Additional information and amended plans received 27th May 2025).
Case Officer:	Stephen Ashdown

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Customer Details

Address:	Holly Bank Broad Street Cuckfield Haywards Heath West Sussex
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour or general public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	I believe the green spaces between our villages and towns are essential to mental heath, air quality and bio diversity. The South East of England is already significantly populated and housing expansion should be directed toward town centres and brown field sites where greater population density will provide a more sustainable solution, as opposed to housing sprawl. Green space is key to the United Kingdom identity and allows higher speed access between conurbations. Whilst the objection is reasoned as above, the following points also align with this: 1. The site is not sustainable. The Ansty Farm proposal is not an extension to either the established settlements of Ansty or Cuckfield but is instead an unrelated dormitory housing estate situated well away from existing facilities. These facilities include but are not limited to,

Schools, Retail, GP provision, employment opportunities, sporting provision and public transport.

Although Fairfax have promised these in their master plan they cannot provide any evidence as to how this would be done. The facilities described are not in their gift to provide but are dependent on other outside bodies none of which have made any definitive statement in support of it or a business plan to achieve it. Likewise retail provision is dependent on there being sufficient local customers to support it. The size of the development is such that only the most basic general store would be viable.

2. Because the site is not sustainable, there would be an inevitable increase in the volume of traffic using the already congested local road network. As parents take their children to school, go to the shops, travel for work or leisure there is no realistic alternative but to use private motorised transport. The alternative of "active" travel by foot or bicycle is unrealistic as the distances are too far and the danger from the surrounding roads is too great.

The evidence by Fairfax that the road network can be engineered to ensure traffic moves freely is disputed and widely ridiculed by independent transport analysts and by West Sussex's Highways own modelling.

3. Multiple Harms to high quality natural and historic landscapes. The natural and built historic landscapes (which contain best and most versatile farming land) includes ancient woodland, ghyll valleys/streams, wildlife and a substantial number of grade 1 or 2 listed properties that rely for their context on this ancient landscape. There is also an impact on dark skies and the view from the High Weald and the South Downs. It should also be noted that any re-engineering of the surrounding road network to accommodate additional traffic will involve the wholesale clearance of habitat rich hedgerows and trees from the roadside verges.

4. The Proposed Country Park or Parkland reserve is not a serious mitigation for the loss of biodiversity net gain on the development site. The proposal to create a Parkland Reserve was allegedly inspired by Sir Charles Burrell's wilding work at Knepp. Sir Charles however has ridiculed this claim and made it clear that the proposals by Fairfax are not credible. Fairfax have also not been able to explain how the management of this land would be carried out, how it would be paid for and what the governance structure would be. The whole project is also entirely contrary to their other claim that this land (Beechy Bottom) is a recreational facility for the people of the new development. If the land is to be 'wilded', access has to be restricted and therefore cannot serve as a "country park".

5. This development would represent a creeping coalescence between Cuckfield and Ansty. Despite the fact that the development is related to neither the category 4 settlement of Ansty or the category 2 settlement of Cuckfield it nonetheless effectively coalesces the two. It is the worst of all possible worlds.

6. There is no benefit to existing residents, only to developers. Fairfax claims that in the provision of affordable homes they are providing for desperate local need, but the reality, as shown by our evidence, is that they are doing the bare minimum allowed and nothing more. This is also against a backdrop of MSDC having met their housing targets in previous years, i.e. a speculative development in an area that would cause such damage and is not outweighed by the benefits.

Kind regards