

Sent:

09 January 2026 13:27

To:

Subject:

CALL FOR CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL TO HOST INTERNATIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE TO CREATE 'IFIELD PARK - GATWICK'

Attachments:

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Categories:

Comments Received

[CALL FOR CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL TO HOST INTERNATIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE TO CREATE 'IFIELD PARK - GATWICK'](#)

Dear Cllr Michael Jones - Leader, Crawley Borough Council,

I am writing to invite Crawley Borough Council to host an international planning conference entitled:

Making the Case for Ifield Park – Gatwick:

A Democratic Alternative West of Ifield (Ifield Brook Meadows)

This would be a serious, policy-focused conference addressing democratic planning, environmental protection, and cross-boundary governance, using West of Ifield as a case study of national and international relevance.

Below are seven clear reasons why Crawley Borough Council is uniquely placed—and well advised—to host this conference.

1. Democratic Leadership at a Moment of Public Concern

Public trust in the planning system has been visibly eroded. By hosting this conference, Crawley Borough Council would demonstrate democratic leadership—showing that when confidence is strained, the answer is more transparency, more dialogue, and higher standards, not less.

2. A Council-Led Alternative, Not a Protest Platform

This would not be a protest event, but a council-hosted, professionally curated forum examining lawful, democratic alternatives to speculative development. Hosting signals that Crawley is committed to evidence-based planning rather than developer-led fait accompli proposals.

3. Reframing West of Ifield as a Model Case of National Significance

The West of Ifield issue raises questions that go far beyond Crawley:

1. democratic consent,
2. cross-boundary planning,
3. environmental limits,
4. and the role of communities in shaping growth.

Positioning Crawley as host places the Borough at the centre of a national and international discussion on best practice, not merely a local dispute.

4. Strengthening Cross-Boundary Cooperation

The conference would explicitly involve Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, West Sussex County Council, and Gatwick Airport Ltd. Hosting it in Crawley signals a commitment to joint planning solutions rather than fragmented decision-making.

5. Showcasing Ifield Brook Meadows as an Asset, Not an Obstacle

Ifield Brook Meadows is a strategic ecological, hydrological, and heritage asset for Crawley as well as Ifield Parish. Hosting the conference allows Crawley to help reframe the area as part of a positive green infrastructure solution—such as Ifield Park – Gatwick—rather than a constraint to be overcome.

6. Enhancing Crawley's National Reputation

Councils that host serious international policy discussions are seen as confident, outward-looking, and responsible. This conference would position Crawley as a borough willing to lead on democratic planning reform, at a time when such leadership is notably rare.

7. A Constructive Pathway Forward

Crucially, hosting the conference does not pre-judge any planning outcome. Instead, it creates a structured, lawful pathway for exploring alternatives should the current application fail, be withdrawn, or require reconsideration. That is prudent governance, not opposition.

In short, this conference offers Crawley Borough Council the opportunity to restore trust, raise standards, and lead the national conversation on democratic planning—while protecting its long-term interests and reputation.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you and your team at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

The Ifield Society

2 Lychgate Cottages

Ifield Street, Ifield Village

Crawley, West Sussex RH11 0NN

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CALL FOR CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL TO HOST AN INTERNATIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE

MAKING THE CASE FOR IFIELD PARK – GATWICK

A Democratic Alternative to West of Ifield

Purpose

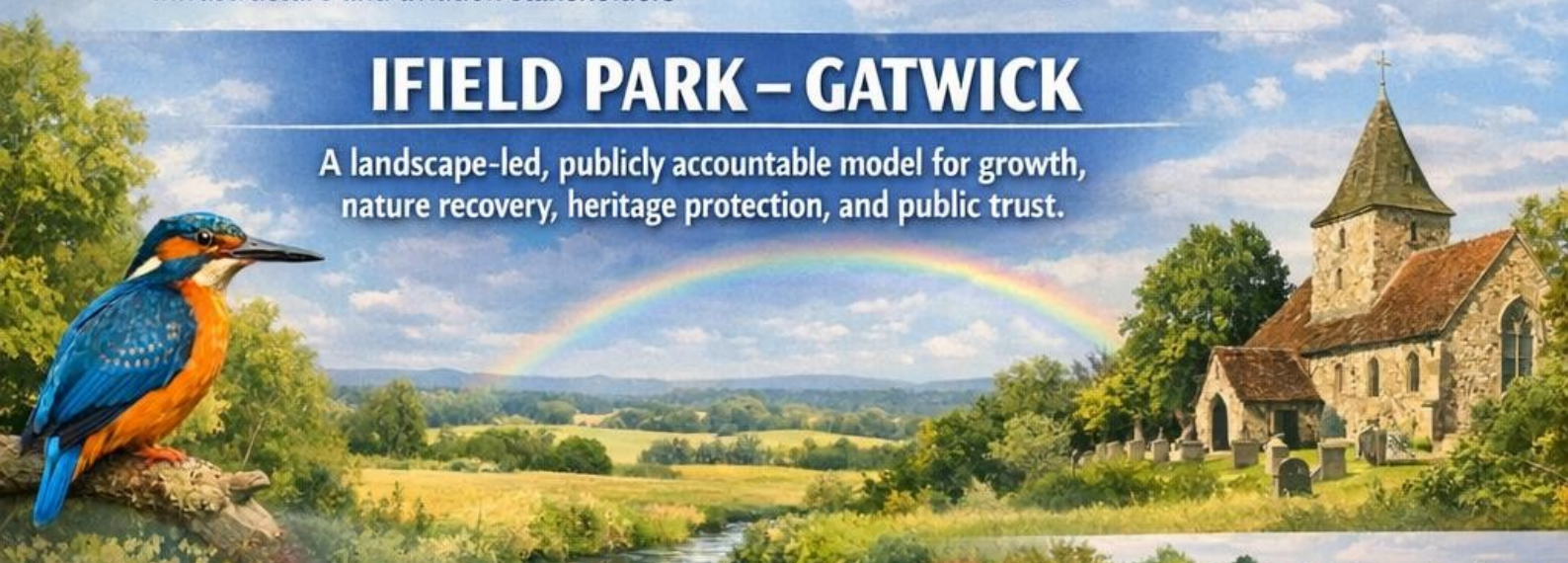
To convene an international planning conference in **Crawley** bringing together:

- Democratic planning authorities
- Environmental and landscape experts
- Planning Inspectors and legal specialists
- Community and parish representatives
- Infrastructure and aviation stakeholders



IFIELD PARK – GATWICK

A landscape-led, publicly accountable model for growth, nature recovery, heritage protection, and public trust.



Why Crawley?

- Crawley stands at the strategic heart of the **Gatwick** corridor.
- The **West of Ifield** proposal raises issues of national and international planning relevance
- Crawley Borough Council is uniquely placed to host a neutral, authoritative forum.
- The outcome could inform best practice for democratic planning across the UK and beyond

Conference Themes

- Democratic consent and legitimacy in large-scale development
- Landscape, heritage, and ecological resilience
- Strategic alternatives to speculative master-planning
- Public trust, governance, and planning reform
- Airport-adjacent growth models that work

The Ask

We call upon Crawley Borough Council to:

- **Host and lead an international planning conference** to examine *Ifield Park – Gatwick* as a democratic alternative.

THE IFIELD SOCIETY

Protecting the People, Protecting the Past

IFIELD PARK – GATWICK

A democratic alternative to Homes England's masterplan



1 STOP PREMATURE DEVELOPMENT

Refuse or withdraw the unsound West of Ifield masterplan.



2 RESTORE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Councils convene a joint planning forum with the parish.



3 PROTECT THE LAND NOW

Safeguard recreation, ecology, and floodplain function.



4 DESIGNATE A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Secure Ifield Brook, meadows, and landscape corridors.



5 CREATE A HERITAGE & ECOLOGY CENTRE

Celebrate parish history, water, wildlife, and learning.



6 WORK WITH STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Align with aviation safety, biodiversity, and climate duty.



7 ADOPT THROUGH FORMAL POLICY

Lock the Park into Local Plans or a Joint Action Plan.

Protecting the Parish. Restoring Trust.

This proposal restores public trust, protects an ancient parish, and delivers a lawful, democratic future for West of Ifield.