

Having spoken to other local residents and reviewed the documents of the dismissed planning appeal (**APP/Z3825/W21/3266503**), we wish to object to the current application (**DC26/0671**) for up to 120 dwellings on land east of Crawley Road and south of Old Crawley Road, Horsham. Although the application is for a reduced number of dwellings, it is on part of the same land that was the subject of the dismissed planning appeal which the Planning Inspector concluded that the development would cause significant harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty, would represent an inappropriate incursion into the countryside and would conflict with the districts' spatial strategy.

The findings of the Planning Inspector are still valid and the main issues are as follows :

A. Harm to the High Weald National Landscape

The application site lies within the nationally protected High Weald Landscape (formerly the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The Planning Inspector previously undertook a detailed assessment of this site and concluded that residential development would not conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the protected landscape.

The Inspector found that the site forms part of an important mosaic of fields, woodland and historic routes that contribute to the character and natural beauty of the High Weald. Particular importance was attached to the eastern field, which was identified as having a strong rural character, a close relationship with the wider landscape and an important function as a gateway into the countryside.

The Inspector concluded that development of the site would :

Result in a significant incursion into a rural and sensitive landscape.

Cause moderate to major adverse effects on landscaper character and visual amenity.

Diminish the appreciation of the area's natural beauty.

Erode the sense of tranquillity experienced by users of the public rights of way crossing the site.

Fail to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the protected landscape.

B. Conflict with National Landscape Protection Policies

The Inspector specifically found conflict with policies designed to protect the High Weald landscape and countryside. The site remains within the same protected designation and continues to perform the same landscape function.

National policy affords the highest status of protection to landscapes of this importance. Major development should only be permitted in "exceptional circumstances" and where it can clearly be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

The applicant has not demonstrated any "exceptional circumstances" that outweigh the significant and acknowledged landscape harm associated with developing this site.

C. Inappropriate Encroachment into the Countryside

The Inspector concluded that the eastern part of the site has only a tenuous relationship with the existing settlement edge and that development would amount to a clear incursion into the countryside.

The conclusion remains highly relevant. The site continues to form part of the rural setting of Horsham and contributes to the transition between the built-up area and the wider High Weald landscape.

Development would urbanise an open greenfield site that currently provides visual separation, landscape character and recreational value.

D. Harm to Public Rights of Way and Recreational Enjoyment

The Inspector recognised the Public Rights of Way and associated routes are highly valued by local residents and provide opportunities to experience the rural qualities of the landscape.

The previous appeal decision concluded that residential development would fundamentally alter the character of these routes and diminish their tranquillity and enjoyment.

The same concerns apply to the current proposal. Increased urbanisation, housing, roads, lighting and associated infrastructure would materially change the experience of users of these well-used countryside routes.

E. Conflict with the Spatial Strategy for Horsham District

The Inspector found that development on this site conflicted with the District's spatial strategy because it lay outside the built-up area boundary, was not allocated for development and would fail to protect landscape character.

The application remains contrary to the principles of plan-led development and would extend housing into countryside that has not been allocated for this purpose.

Approval would undermine the strategic approach to managing growth and protecting the countryside around Horsham.

F. Cumulative Landscape Impact

The Inspector specifically considered the relationship between this site and the wider pattern of development around Horsham, including strategic growth to the north.

Granting permission on this site would further expand urban development into the High Weald landscape and contribute to the gradual erosion of the countryside setting that planning policy seeks to protect.

Horsham has experienced considerable expansion in terms of housing provision. The nearby development of 3500 dwellings and an industrial site (Mowbray) will add to this. With the continuing expansion of the Kilnwood Vale development the 'gap' between Crawley and Horsham has been eroded further and this development would add to this.

Up to 120 dwellings will produce approximately an additional 200 cars, plus trade vehicles. The Crawley Road is already heavily congested and this additional traffic would feed onto it.

The infrastructure/facilities (Doctors, Health Centres, Schools, Hospitals – the nearest main ones are in Brighton and Redhill) – etc., etc can no longer support the existing demand properly, let alone any additional development.

CONCLUSION

The Planning Inspector's detailed assessment of this site remains a highly material consideration. The appeal was dismissed because the development would fail to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald, would represent an inappropriate encroachment into the countryside and would conflict with the spatial strategy for the district.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuse planning **DC26/0671**.

It is noted that the applicant's own pre-application advice from Horsham District Council recorded that the proposal remained unacceptable in landscape terms and that the Council's view was that "no exceptional circumstance(s) exist to justify major development within the HWNL as a protected landscape".

For these reasons we respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuse planning application DC26/0671.

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78 Beech Road
HORSHAM
West Sussex
RH12 4TX