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From: Fiona Hook [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 11:44 AM
To: Planning <Planning@arun.gov.uk>

Subject: Planning Application – AL/11/24/OUT

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Fiona Merker-Hook

St Richards Road, Westergate

Objection

The Aldingbourne Parish neighbourhood plan has a number of policies which protect this special area; namely, EH4 Protection of watercourses, EH2 Green infrastructure and ecosystems and EH6 Protection of trees and hedgerows.

The Ecology Officer at Arun District Council has objected to this application, citing a lack of detail from the Cala application regarding the impact and mitigation for the species and habitats there. The objection also cites a lack of full species surveys, and a concern the proposal shows a net loss of biodiversity with, and very importantly, 'priority habitats being removed and potentially significant impacts to bats, reptiles and birds. Fragmentation of habitats is also a concern.'

It should be noted that the habitat assessment was sneakily undertaken at a sub optimal time in January, which presents a significant limitation for the assessment results, especially for migrating birds.

Furthermore, and more crucial, water voles HAVE been recorded on the proposed area. The Water Vole Mitigation Guidance (2016) recommends at least TWO surveys to meet best practice. The ONE survey which was completed also suspiciously did not cover the whole length of Lidsey Rife nor did it survey upstream of the site.

In regards of bats, surveys were conducted but again, the results of the trapping survey are missing from the EIA report. Bechstein have been recorded in the woodland. Also, rare Barastelle and Plecotus species have both been recorded across the proposed site and would be severely affected during and after any development.

I see that bird boxes will be fitted but what's the point if most of the hedgerows and trees have been removed and the vast insects that populate the area are gone? What will they eat?

We're all aware of the volume of rain we are currently experiencing. Shipney Road south of Woodgate severely floods and then is closed for periods of time. Barnham Road continues to flood and was closed for some weeks while the sewage pipes and sink hole were hurriedly amended – and still the water continues to overflow there. Hook Lane continues to turn into a lake during any downpour. Nyton Road, the list goes on. We have road closures after road closures, making it almost impossible for anyone to get around easily. This adds to the already heavy traffic down Westergate Street and Barnham Road. The queues at certain times of the day are unbelievable, the traffic backs up from the train barrier to the war memorial. And I understand that

Southern Rail are going to be increasing the train journeys, which will mean that the barriers will be down for longer, causing even more delays.

Southern Water has 'strongly advised against', additional homes under a recent planning application in the Barnham area, as the local catchment area is already being overburdened during periods of rainfall. I believe a recent application for just 2 houses was refused. 400? Regarding this application, anyone can go and witness the sewage flowing from the inspection covers in the fields south of the proposed application area. Our system is barely able to cope with what we have. And we have raw sewage.

We have two, full Primary schools in our Village, people are having to get their children to Crawley for a place in a primary school! The secondary school is full, they've had to close the sports centre to make space. Now we have nowhere local to go for fitness. We have one Doctors which is almost impossible to get an appointment at. And even with the new part being built, its already oversubscribed. How is our village going to accommodate the residents of 400 extra dwellings? None of this appears to have been considered and seems absurd that an application of this size has even made it this far. We already have a large number of new builds that have/are being built. I understand that some have been sold off cheap to the council due to not selling and also residents are aware that recent new builds in Eastergate are being reduced in price. The talk is this is due to them not being able to sell. If true, then is 400 plus more dwellings really appropriate?

I think this application is extremely short sighted in regards to local amenities, safety and wellbeing. And I object most strongly.

Fiona Merker-Hook