

## Comments Template

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| <b>Title of theme that you are commenting on</b>  |
| Landscape & Ecology   |
| <b>Brief summary</b>  |
| <p>The Proposal by virtue of its scale, layout and design is contrary to the site's capacity and Chichester District Council's (CDC) own landscape evidence-base. This scheme is of a significant scale, in a landscape characterised by its small-scale farms and isolated dwellings. Its development will fundamentally change this character and the valued tranquil, rural undeveloped landscape, contrary to CDC Policy.</p> <p>Whilst an outline application only, the application is poor, and there are significant shortcomings technically in both the landscape and ecology information submitted. Overall, the effects of this scheme have not been fully acknowledged, some are underestimated and poorly explained.</p> <p>Recommend objection on the grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the countryside. Through inappropriate scale, design (layout and buildings) and access - leading to a significant change to rural, landscape character and tranquillity, contrary to CDC Policy. Effects upon ecology are currently under-estimated due to lacking evidence, but it is clear ecological evidence has not informed the scale, uses, layout or design.</p> <p><b>Summary of Effects</b></p> <p>In overview the effects of this proposal are likely to largely be negative and significant. The proposal will fundamentally change the undeveloped rural character of the site to one of a busy holiday suburb.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Change in character from rural and undeveloped to an intense, busy and incongruous holiday village.</li><li>2) Erosion of the characteristic rural, small-scale settlement pattern.</li><li>3) Loss of historic landscape character.</li><li>4) Significant loss of tranquillity and other valued perceptual qualities resulting from landscape character, such as sense of place.</li><li>5) Visual impacts of the development from local vantage points, especially in winter.</li><li>6) Dark skies locally would be affected and potentially undermining the setting of the SDNP, at least in terms of dark skies and potentially in some views (not assessed). Potential effects upon the International Dark Skies Reserve (IDSR) status (not assessed).</li><li>7) Urbanisation of historic rural lanes, as physical changes are needed to enable the proposed volume of traffic to access the site. These will be highways-led and thus likely not sensitive or appropriate in an undeveloped, rural landscape. Further impacts on local lanes from expected trips generated by visitors, with potential further pressure for highways 'improvements' in years to come. A piecemeal, death by a thousand cuts on characteristic, low key rural lanes, well-used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.</li><li>8) Direct and indirect impacts upon ancient woodlands, poor 'buffers', missed enhancement opportunities and indirect disturbance from noise and lighting.</li><li>9) Impacts upon Ecology - likely far reaching, but notably bats and amphibians and potentially many other (protected) species not surveyed for (dormice, breeding birds). Impacts upon the Mens SAC are likely, but not known.</li></ol> |

**Detailed comments/areas requiring further information / questions to raise with CDC planning officer** – to include document and page references if appropriate. Please draw out specific questions/queries to be drawn to the full Council and planning officer’s attention.

### **Issue 1 - Landscape Capacity**

If a proposal exceeds a landscape's capacity for change, negative effects are likely to arise. Landscape Capacity should therefore determine the principle and the design from layout to details, should a landscape's character be sought to be conserved and enhanced [Policy 25 and 48].

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) refers to the Landscape Capacity Study's guidance. It reiterates from this guidance that small-scale development could be integrated 'subject to avoiding landscape harm' at [9.2]. Then at [11.1] it goes on to identify at year 15, the **moderate adverse** impacts on the landscape caused by the proposed scheme.

The LVIA demonstrates the proposal far exceeds this site's capacity. See **Issue 3**. The above statement makes two key points; i) small-scale and ii) subject to the avoidance of harm. These are explored in more detail below.

#### *What is small-scale?*

Both Chichester District Council's Landscape Capacity Study (terra firma, 2019) now referred to as 'CDC's Study' and Policy 45 (reiterated by the Appeal Inspector) make reference to 'small-scale'.

The application of the term 'small-scale' in coming to a decision, ought to be contextually appropriate. This is because small-scale in one landscape, might be very different to small-scale in another.

This landscape characterised by its small-scale and dispersed pattern of settlement. Evidence for this pattern can be found in published Landscape Character Assessments;

National Character Area Profile 121: [Low Weald](#)

*'Isolated farmsteads, often occupying ancient sites (some moated), form the predominant settlement pattern, intermixed with small villages, often with Street or Green names suggesting secondary settlement.'*

- This LCA suggests farmsteads dominate - small-scale being a farm, a group of buildings.
- Locally small villages could be understood by number of dwellings - Plaistow = XX Kirdford = XX BUT the site is outside of a village where settlements are even smaller.
- The Plaistow & Ifold Neighbourhood Development Plan identifies the uniqueness of Ifold in its evolution, character and pattern. This village is an anomaly in its landscape context, it is recent, has no village green and it is not characteristic, so doesn't help us to understand small-scale in terms of landscape. It is not a positive precedent nor is characteristic of its context.

West Sussex LCA: [North Western Low Weald](#)

*'Wealden villages, some centred on village greens, scattered farmsteads and cottages.'*

- Again these descriptions reiterate farms and isolated dwelling characterise this rural landscape.

The Appeal Inspector further corroborates this evidence with his finding that even 10 dwellings close to the historic farmstead would adversely affect this landscape's rural, and undeveloped character. *'the proposal would nonetheless have an adverse effect on the undeveloped character of this part of the countryside.'* (Appeal APP/L3815/W/18/3206819)

*'The LVIA has been undertaken in response to Chichester District Council's Landscape Capacity Study (2019), which included the northern part of the Site, and identified that there was the capacity for development, provided it is informed by further landscape and visual assessment and that the design is sensitivity integrated into the landscape.'* (LVIA, edla).

Contrary to this statement, following a review of the application it is advised that the Landscape Capacity evidence has not been responded to, and the layout fails to sensitively integrate into this landscape.

### *Avoidance of Harm*

CDCs Study concludes (for the northern part of the site only) with a summary:

*'It is possible that a small amount of additional development may be accommodated within existing clusters of settlement and equestrian centres/ paddocks provided it is informed by further landscape and visual impact assessment and sensitively integrated into the landscape, respecting the historic settlement pattern and local distinctiveness, although great care would need to be taken to avoid any landscape or visual harm.' [my emphasis]*

1. The proposed scheme is not a 'small amount', it is significantly too big to be successfully integrated into this rural landscape with a cited (Appeal Inspector) 'undeveloped character'.
2. The proposed scheme is for 120+ permanent, inhabited buildings (not pods, or tents) on greenfield land, accessed by private car. These are facts shared with a residential scheme and their effect upon the landscape is largely the same as if they were residential dwellings.
3. The northern part of the site is described in the CDC Study as '*reasonably rural and sparsely settled*', the southern part (and majority) of the site lies outside sub-area 161 and could not be considered to be within or well-related to an existing settlement. Yet, the proposal in the southern area is extensive in area and intense in use and is not well-related to an existing farmstead contrary to Policy [45]. Its repetitive house-types, curved routes and poor layout demonstrates no respect for settlement pattern, or local distinctiveness.
4. There is no evidence submitted to demonstrate that this landscape has been understood, without which, great care cannot be demonstrated.

It is important to note, the majority of the site was not assessed at all by this Study. The capacity of the *whole* site is therefore not understood, nor has the applicant sought to commission an objective, independent capacity study.

CDCs Study includes Landscape Guidelines - those most relevant are:

- *Protect the character of rural lanes - not achieved* Foxbridge Lane would need to be widened to provide adequate access for this scale of development and passing places - suggesting the lanes do not have capacity for this scale of development. This, in addition to a second access and loss of vegetation will exert an urban character upon this sensitive, narrow, historic route, contrary to **Policy 25** and **48**. The indirect impacts of a significant number of additional cars will be both physical and perceptual (damaged verges, noise, air quality).
- *Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness. - not achieved* These proposals fail to integrate, forcing a new and alien pattern and form of development into this landscape. Curved routes, repetitive buildings in their form and layout all (sub)urbanise this rural landscape. Local distinctiveness would be undermined, contrary to **Policy 48 2**.
- *Consider the cumulative impact on landscape character of small developments and change. Avoid the introduction of suburban styles and materials. - not achieved.* The visualisations in the DAS demonstrate the use of suburban styles of curved routes, none of which are seen in the wider landscape. These create a villegeous, not rural character. Repeating housing 'types' fail to speak of the Low Weald, rural character.
- *Conserve existing tranquil rural and predominantly wooded character of the area and avoid loss of tranquillity - not achieved.* Whilst the rural, sparsely settled landscape and its tranquillity is clearly a draw for the developer, the development itself fails to acknowledge or be designed sensitively to conserve and enhance these qualities, contrary to **Policy 48 1**.

The CDC Study then suggests under Landscape Mitigation & Contribution to GI:

- *Restore the small-scale field pattern - not achieved.* Field pattern has not been understood in the baseline (LVIA), nor used to inform either opportunities or constraints in the layout.
- *Conserve the character of rural lanes - not achieved.* Instead a new access is introduced, in addition to an existing over-sized access. Together these would undermine, the low-key, historic narrow character of Foxbridge Lane. The significant number of vehicles requires the lane to be widened, urbanising this route and further eroding this character directly with overrunning and indirectly through noise, pollution and a busyness not characteristic of this landscape.
- *Retain the undisturbed rural setting of nearby listed buildings (Foxbridge farm house) - not achieved.* The car parks, and proposed accommodation removes the open rural setting to the farmstead and its listed house. The change of use and subsequent change in character and sheer numbers are likely to negatively impact upon the setting and context to both the medieval farmstead and its listed house.

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## Issue 2 - Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

There are some fundamental flaws in the LVIA. The methodology is poor and has not been discernibly followed. Some aspects of the method do not make sense and the assessment includes poor judgements, conflicting statements and missing processes. Please read alongside matters raised under **Issue 5**.

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3, 2013 (GLVIA3) set out the need for designs to iterate, i.e. changes in the design are taken to account for landscape or visual sensitivities and to first avoid then reduce harm in line with the mitigation hierarchy. No discernible design iterations have been demonstrated, suggesting the great care needed has not been taken.

The following presents a few examples of shortcomings in the LVIA and their implications:

1. All of the 'opportunities' identified in the LVIA are actually 'a lack of constraints to development'. They're not landscape opportunities or ways in which one might deliver *characteristic* development - so have no place in an independent, objective LVIA.
2. Conversely, some positive, characterising or valuable elements of landscape are viewed as constraints and not opportunities from which a sensitive proposal could perhaps be conceived.
3. This confirms the concern that this is a constraints-driven scheme. It has failed to positively respond to landscape and this is why it appears so incongruous/uncharacteristic in both scale and design.
4. Baseline Studies are inadequate, notably but not limited to missing historic landscape understanding. An incomplete baseline leads to an underestimation of effects.
5. A poor selection of receptors allows many effects to go unnoticed/unacknowledged, because individual elements have not been chosen. There is no break down of how the proposal impacts upon *all* elements that together characterise this landscape. This means iterative design and mitigation measures have not accounted for *all* of the effects.
6. Perceptual qualities (tranquillity, sense of place etc.), historic landscape character, settlements, historic lanes all have gone unassessed, the effects upon these elements are unknown.
7. The LVIA demonstrates a highly selective approach to assessment - which fails to meet any good practice standards, and along with the choice of receptors, significantly under-estimates impacts (one example is provided at point 14 below).
8. The LVIA suggests the holiday lodges are somehow different to dwellings or other aspects of the proposal in terms of the harm they cause. This should be challenged as this distinction is irrelevant in landscape terms. The holiday lodges appear to be permanent new buildings in the countryside. The impacts are largely the same whether dwelling houses or holiday homes.
9. In landscape terms the proposal constitutes a significant new settlement, comprising permanent buildings, inhabited year-round. This fact of the proposal has been under-played in the LVIA and the assessment of effects underestimated as a result.
10. The mitigation hierarchy has not been followed (a requirement for both landscape and ecology).
11. The LVIA identifies the South Downs National Park as a receptor of effects, but it is stated the site is not within its setting. Confirmation is needed. The site could comprise the visual, or landscape setting, or both (see **Issue 5**).
12. Foxbridge Farmstead is a surviving medieval farmstead. The evidence suggests it is likely to be considered a significant survival by Historic England, and therefore I would expect to see a farmstead [assessment](#) used to inform how it might change. In this case, it has not been understood, therefore the proposed pattern of development and changes in land use (largely to car parks) are likely to generate harm upon its rural and undeveloped setting.

13. The Study Area is not shown on a plan - but it is described as 'up to 5km' from the site. This fails to be transparent or help people understand the extent of the predicted effects of this proposal. Such a plan should be requested. The Study Area described includes parts of the South Downs National Park, suggesting effects upon this designated landscape are likely. These effects have not been identified either way, by the assessment (see **Issue 5**).
14. The LVIA suggests at [10.61] that the tranquil rural character sought to be conserved by Policy 48 would not be affected by 121 holiday lodges and up to 1000 people using the site, by virtue of the site's vegetated boundaries. This finding is not supported. Whilst vegetated boundaries may go some way to provide visual screening in summer months, they are wholly insufficient to mitigate for a fundamental land use change and the direct effects of such an intense year-round use on locally valued perceptual qualities. See the Noise Report which identifies that the baseline of noise is very low here (because it is a sparsely settled landscape), so little development is needed to adversely affect this important quality. This should have been used and cross-referenced in the LVIA.

#### *Visual impacts*

1. Please read alongside matters raised under **Issue 5**.
2. Based on the information provided it is difficult to understand where views were taken from, no grid references are provided and the scale and aerial imagery on the plans makes it difficult to discern.
3. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) figure in the LVIA fails to extend into the SDNP, despite the Study Area including it. So it is not possible to understand how Viewpoint 19 was selected, and why this was the only viewpoint chosen.
4. Apparently, within the SDNP, no effort has been made to seek higher ground where a view may be possible. The process of viewpoint selection remains confused and unclear.
  - A. Is the site discernible from Blackdown Hill where characteristic and celebrated long-distance views across the Weald are possible?
5. There is no clear consideration of seasonal variation. Winter time year 1 is compared with summer time at year 15 - making a direct comparison and understanding of mitigation impossible.
6. Only motorists are assessed along Foxbridge Lane - what about walkers, cyclists and horse-riders? These are more sensitive receptors, but have not been included.
7. The proposal relies upon the boundary vegetation as screening as set out in the visual assessment. This in itself suggests the scheme *needs* to be screened and without screening it would appear incongruous and uncharacteristic. The LVIA refers to the boundary vegetation as key visual mitigation but this relies upon a number of things. i) it being healthy and lasting long-term and ii) the new buildings being lower than the trees - 3 storeys are referenced in the DAS.
8. No assessment of visual impacts in winter when all the lights are on. The boundaries are all deciduous, so no leaves will be present. The units currently suggest significant amounts of glazing.

### Issue 3 Design (layout) Appraisal

Whilst outline only, the following provides a brief appraisal of the submitted layout/parameter plans, which illustrate the lack of response to local.

- A constraints and opportunities plan is included in the LVIA, it shows no evidence about ecology or settlement/buildings and overall it has failed to inform the layout.
  - Small-scale of settlements is not communicated in the identification of opportunities and constraints.
  - Ecological sensitivities have not been incorporated. Figure 1.1. (Ecology) shows development proposed in areas of known sensitivity.
  - The proposals sever key habitats (ponds) with development, preventing GI/connectivity for wildlife and isolating these features.
  - Curved routes, repetitive types of units with off-the-peg/pre-fab designs all create suburban 'anywhere' character. Together with the excessive numbers form a 'village' character, far removed from the small-scale historic farmsteads and isolated cottages of this landscape.
  - The proposals rely heavily upon a borrowed landscape (i.e. woodlands outside of the site) to make the scheme acceptable. If these woodlands were no longer there, the proposal would be unacceptable. They are outside of the applicants control and could easily be felled, or thinned or succumb to disease or wind blow. The tree planting proposed as mitigation is insufficient - 'woodland belts' proposed are 10m wide. Forestry Commission advise new woodlands must be a minimum of 20m wide.
  - No characteristic precedent for repeating use of 3-storeys in this rural landscape.
  - The DAS takes precedent images from different landscapes. Petworth is not in the Low Weald, and its historic development, materials, and character are very different to the rural, undeveloped agricultural Low Weald within which the site sits.
  - Clear opportunities to connect isolated ancient woodlands in the north are ignored, favouring development.
  - No restoration of lost field boundaries. These were present before the golf course and back to at least the tithe map (1845). Recommended to be restored in the CDC Study.
- The presence of so many bat species in particular, suggests the capacity of the site is far less than proposed. The amount, intensity of use and consequential recreational pressure (especially noise, light) is likely to have detrimental effects upon tranquillity, dark skies and ecology, notably bats. This appears to have had little influence over the proposals.
- Barbastelle bats in particular, have not been accounted for in the parameter plans. Their foraging and commuting routes *within* the site have not been protected through the parameter plan or detailed layout (see Ecology Report). Instead the layout is complex, producing no functionally linked GI or new meaningful habitats for bats. Opportunities to protect dark corridors through the site have not been taken.
- As Barbastelle bats were seen using the eastern boundary with Wephurst Wood in particular, this boundary should be treated more carefully. It has not been and only a 10m buffer is proposed. Less than the 15m *minimum* buffer advised by NE, who go on to recommend that each woodland is considered carefully and an appropriate buffer used for each circumstance.
- Bats commute along the leylandii trees which borders Foxbridge Lane. Their removal and replacement is positive in landscape terms, but it will negatively affect the character of the lane and views into the site for years until it establishes.
- The PEA concludes there would be no disturbance from lighting on bats. There is insufficient information to draw this conclusion and it appears to be contrary to the significant use of the site by bats evidenced in the transect.
- Fish, fishing and swimming will negatively affect wildlife. Great crested newts live in metapopulations - moving between water bodies, and large parts of their lifecycle are on land.

Roads/tracks, and development isolate these ponds, reducing connectivity for this species and other amphibians.

#### **Issue 4 - Ecology & Trees**

Overall the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) lacks clarity on some key important aspects, and fails to be transparent about the differences between the 2016 and 2022 surveys. The following considers technical aspects of the Report. A summary of how the Proposals have accounted for Ecology is included under **Issue 3**.

- PEA suggests Barbastelle bats recorded on site are part of the functionally linked habitats of the SAC at the Mens. The PEA goes on to suggest they along with many other bat species were recorded using the transects, foraging and commuting over the ponds, and scrub within the site, as well as boundaries (3.3.2.5 PEA).
- This suggests an Appropriate Assessment and shadow HRA may be needed.
- No static surveys were undertaken for bats - meaning all surveys included people on site. Why were no static surveys undertaken?
- The Ecology evidence has not been clearly presented - the difference between 2016 and 22 has not occurred. The badger sett is shown in an image, but no commentary provided about whether this sett was present in 2016 or whether it was being used.
- No breeding bird surveys have been undertaken. Assumptions made about significant opportunities in the hedgerows and trees, but none for ground-nesting birds and no consideration of the implications of disturbance.
- The land management has included taking a hay cut, this suggests there are opportunities for breeding birds, particularly ground-nesting birds. These haven't been surveyed for.
- The PEA does not distinguish in the text which Phase 1 survey it is referring to. So when dormice were surveyed for, was this in 2016 or 2022? There is a lot of ambiguity in the Report like this which I recommend is clarified by CDC.
- Barn owl and dormice are known locally, but neither surveyed for. Retention of the boundary vegetation is considered sufficient in the PEA but this fails to consider disturbance and provision of enhancements to their habitats.
- There is no tree removal plan or Tree Report, just plans and survey results. What is the Arboricultural advice for this site, and what are the implications of the parameters plans/layout for trees?

## Issue 5 - Setting of the South Downs National Park

Landscape setting is not defined in Guidance or Policy, be it the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Chichester District Council (CDC) Local Plan or South Downs National Park (SDNP) Local Plan or their Management Plan. This is correct, as setting cannot be defined, every site is different and every setting is correspondingly, also different. The importance of setting to protected landscapes, including the South Downs National Park, is set out in a number of places:

1. The update to the NPPF (July 2021) has strengthened the landscape paragraph to include reference to setting (176), it now states:  
*'The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas'*
2. CDCs own policies recognise the importance of the setting of the South Downs National Park, which is directly referenced under **Policy 48 - Natural Environment** which requires *'no adverse impact upon the setting of the National Park'*.
3. All public bodies - including CDC are also obliged to 'have regard' to National Park's Purposes and Duty through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Details of the legislative requirements on public Authorities are set out in the Defra Circular 2010.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/221086/pb13387-vision-circular2010.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221086/pb13387-vision-circular2010.pdf)

The Applicant's landscape specialist provides very limited, poor and confused advice in relation to setting, and clarification should be sought to enable the above points to be properly considered. The following sets out some examples and shortcomings:

- No method has been included in the LVIA explaining how the setting of the National Park has been considered. This is a problem as the LVIA should be transparent and clear in all matters against which the site and changes proposed to it have been assessed. So in this regard best practice has not been followed and no definitive answer is provided about to what extent the site contributes to the setting of SDNP.
- The LVIA states there are no notable views towards the site from with the SDNP [6.5]. Yet a visual receptor is chosen with the SDNP. Then at [6.6] it states that views across the Weald are identified as a Special Quality of the National Park, which should be conserved and enhanced.
  - Which views have been checked to reach this conclusion?
  - Does the site form part of one of these valued views?
- At [1.3] the LVIA states that the site does not contribute to the setting of the National Park but then copies out some of the aspirations of the NDP which includes *'recognise the importance of the Parish in contributing to the setting of the National Park.'*
- The LVIA includes 'LLCA9 - setting of the National Park' as a receptor. Receptors are *'components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the scheme'* (GLVIA3). So its selection as a receptor suggests the National Park is considered by the applicant to be affected somehow by the proposal. Again the method or process behind identifying receptors is far from clear enough.
- Only a single viewpoint has been assessed from within the National Park.
  - What fieldwork was undertaken to reach the above conclusions, what viewpoints were tested? It is recommended these are requested and considered.

### *Dark Night Skies*

The SDNP is an International Dark Skies Reserve. To maintain this status dark skies need to be maintained, this is the responsibility of decision-makers within and around the SDNP (see above duty of regard).

- The character of the night sky is included in the LVIA method at Appendix I, but unfortunately the method does not explain *how* effects upon this have been assessed. The GLVIA3 recommends working closely with Lighting Professionals to undertake both qualitative and quantitative

assessments in relation to landscape and views. Only qualitative have been undertaken, but not in a transparent way.

- The text suggests the assessment of impacts of lighting has been made across the Study Area (which is not shown on plan - see **Issue 2**). No assessment of effects has been made on the dark skies experienced at this site, from viewpoints close to it, or indeed impacts upon the IDSR status of the National Park.
- Thus stating that ‘..this increase in lighting would be consolidated to a part of the study area between Ifold and Costrong, which exhibit higher levels of lighting, such that the overall E1: Natural and E2: Rural Zone is considered to remain across the study area’. The reality is the site is not currently lit and will be lit, both externally and via light spill from buildings and cars. The effect therefore cannot be neutral as the LVIA suggests.
- Yet at 10.48 the LVIA identifies the change in environmental zone from E1 to E2 brought about by this proposal. The implications of this for the IDSR and/or setting of the NP have not been understood.
- The ZTV or Study Area appear to have not considered lighting in their creation.
- The LVIA determines the site lies within both E1 and E2 zones - this is disputed. The site is E1.

### **Conclusion**

In 2019, 10 dwellings and a new golf club house was deemed unsuitable for this site, largely for landscape reasons. Now the proposal is for 120 holiday ‘dwellings’, with new spa, farm shop and restaurant, with associated parking. These holiday dwellings, are permanent buildings, lived in year-round and accessed by private vehicle. Their impact upon the settlement pattern and undeveloped, rural and tranquil character is the same as if they were dwellings - whether people live there for a week or 10 years makes little difference to the negative effects in landscape terms. Indeed some effects, may be worse as a result of their holiday use.

This landscape and its capacity remain unchanged in the 3 years since the Appeal Statement was produced. The scale, form and type of development are at odds with this landscape’s character and generates significant negative effects which have largely not been acknowledged, or avoided through poor use of language and conflicting statements in the LVIA. The applicant has not sought to undertake a sensitive response to landscape character or its capacity resulting in a change of the site’s rural undeveloped character to one of an intense, suburban use.

The heavy reliance upon visual screening to demonstrate acceptability suggests the proposal is incongruous and needs to be screened to be *made* acceptable. Landscape harm is separate from visual harm and can occur whether or not a site can be seen. The implications on Ecology and the Mens SAC and the setting of the South Downs National Park and International Dark Skies Reserve are unknown.

## APPENDIX

**Landscape definition** (European Landscape Convention, 2004 (Council of Europe)):

*'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of nature and/or human factors'*

- This means, landscape is everything people perceive. It includes; roads, buildings, water, soils as well as the countryside and qualities like tranquillity. It also makes clear it includes landscape's that are outstanding, everyday or degraded.

**Landscape Character definition** (Natural England, 2014):

*'A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.'*



