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If calling ask for

Our reference

Your reference

Fiona MacLeod

2nd October 2008

**West of Bewbush Submission – Joint Area Action Plan – Alternative Development Sites and Boundary Changes**

Further to my letter and detailed comments on behalf of the Forum on the JAAP dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008, I am now responding to the above consultation regarding the development sites and boundary changes.

The Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS) is **an independent statutory advisory body** set up to give access advice to a number of bodies, including all levels of government. The Forum is keen to contribute to this process to ensure that proposed changes meet the needs of local people and that the chance is taken to improve opportunities for countryside access for present and future users. As a result, some new routes may be necessary and existing paths upgraded.

Before commenting on this latest consultation, CAFWS would like to emphasise again the importance of considering the needs of the three main users of public rights of way (prows):

- **Walkers** – the need is to access the countryside, especially using circular routes of various lengths; internal paths need to link up with the wider network of prows and other means of accessing the countryside. Areas for **dog walking** must be accommodated.
- **Cyclists** – using cycle tracks and bridleways – an improved network will contribute to sustainable access to work and school
- **Horse riders** – riding is becoming a more and more important recreational activity around the urban fringe and contributes to the local economy

In addition, attention must be given to recreational access for all types of mobility impaired user groups, and Government initiatives highlighting the benefits of walking for health.

CAFWS welcomes the opportunity to comment on this document and has confined its comments to its primary function – to protect and improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside on foot, by cycle and on horseback. Horsham District Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this Forum in carrying out its functions.

CAFWS believes that, when rural paths are absorbed into a new area of housing development, it is important to aim to retain some of the rural character and link these routes with the adjacent countryside. Existing trees and shrubs should be

retained wherever possible and strengthened where necessary. Old field divisions can be used to align new paths and cycle tracks. Planning guidelines should deter the urbanisation and enclosure of paths, which should be open, attractive to use and safe.

The comments in the attached Appendix 1 have been submitted by the High Weald Sub Forum on behalf of CAFWS.

In closing, may I emphasise that the Forum is keen to continue to contribute to the Action Plan process to ensure that the needs of all users are delivered. We look forward to consultation on similar Plans and hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona MacLeod  
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Copy for information to:

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## Appendix 1

### COMMENTS FROM THE HIGH WEALD SUB FORUM ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM FOR WEST SUSSEX (CAFWS)

#### WEST OF BEWBUSH SUBMISSION - JOINT AREA ACTION PLAN (JAAP)- ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT SITES AND BOUNDARY CHANGES

We would draw your attention to the detailed comments made in our response dated 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008 to the consultation on the JAAP.

Although we have issues with the preferred option in the submission document, as the plan for the bridleway crossing on the eastern side of the development does not, at present, include access for equestrians, the location of the development, as shown, does offer excellent opportunities for increased and improved access to the countryside for the local community.

The creation of a new circular multi-use route will be of great benefit to present local rights of way users, and to the new community. The restoration of a safe bridleway crossing of the A264, enabling access to St Leonards Forest and the AONB to the south, is one of the aims of West Sussex County Council's recently published Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Whichever sites are ultimately chosen for new housing development, CAFWS would like to emphasise the following:

1. Any existing rights of way should be protected - not only the route but where possible they should be landscaped to provide a link with the wildlife and landscape of the surrounding countryside.
2. Paths should wherever possible be multi-useable
3. Internal paths should link up with paths leading into the wider countryside.
4. Increased development means more cars on the road and CAFWS is particularly concerned about the impact on existing country lanes that become "rat runs" and become dangerous for cyclists and horse- riders

Comments on particular paragraphs are listed below:

#### **West of Bewbush Alternative Development Site (WoB ADS) 1**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. However, if in the future the same new multi-user access routes and links as the preferred location are provided, this site could then be supported.

#### **WoB ADS 2**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. However, if in the future the same new multi-user access routes and links as the preferred location are provided, this site could then be supported.

#### **WoB ADS 3**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. The site of a Major Acute Hospital here is likely to be detrimental to new access routes and links.

#### **WoB ADS 4**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. The site of a Renewable CHP Scheme here is likely to be detrimental to new access routes and links.

**WoB ADS 5**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. This site could not provide improvements of equal importance for multi-use countryside access as the preferred location.

**WoB ADS 6**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. This site could not provide improvements of equal importance for multi-use countryside access as the preferred location.

**WoB ADS 7**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. This site could not provide improvements of equal importance for multi-use countryside access as the preferred location.

**WoB ADS 8A**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. This site could not provide improvements of equal importance for multi-use countryside access as the preferred location.

**WoB ADS 8B**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. This site could not provide improvements of equal importance for multi-use countryside access as the preferred location.

**WoB ADS 9**

**Object.** Relates to Test of Soundness 7. This side could not provide improvements of equal importance for multi-use countryside access as the preferred location.

On behalf of CAFWS  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2008