

Secretary to the Forum

(01243) 753542 (Direct)
(01243) 753522 (Fax)
fiona.macleod@westsussex.gov.uk

www.westsussex.gov.uk

**Countryside
Access Forum
for
West Sussex**

County Hall
West Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RQ
01243 777100

If calling ask for

Our reference

Your reference

Fiona MacLeod

14th December 2007

Dear Sir,

**Reserved Matters applications (fp/220/07, BE/131/07 & fp/251/07)
for Site 6 at Bognor Regis (N. Bersted and Felpham)**

The Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS) is an **independent statutory advisory body** established by West Sussex County Council (WSCC) under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Members are volunteers and represent a great range of experience and knowledge of access issues in the county. They are able to comment with authority on access matters relating to conservation, landscape, farming and forestry as well as all matters referring to public rights of way for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The Forum is keen to contribute to the process to ensure that the proposed large-scale development meets the needs of local people and that the chance is taken to improve opportunities for countryside access for present and future residents. Some new routes may be necessary and, with an increase in population of several thousand, existing paths will need to be upgraded.

Before commenting on documentation, CAFWS would like to emphasise 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.

Arun 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.

This preliminary response on behalf of the Forum covers key issues such as maintaining the links between communities, retaining where possible the rural character of paths, and design of new/existing paths for multi use. A major concern already identified is the protection of the cycleway at Felpham and to ensure that there is a grade separation where it crosses the new bypass.

Due to the revised timescales, the documentation has not been fully reviewed and this response has not been ratified at a full Forum meeting. It was disappointing that such short timescales had been put in place for such an important consultation phase and I was surprised to find that your standard consultation period is only three weeks. For future reference, could you clarify if this is a statutory time limit, or an internal limit imposed by Arun District Council.

In closing, may I emphasise that the Forum is keen to continue to contribute to the process to ensure the design of this area meets the needs of this part of the county in terms of access to the countryside. We will be taking steps to work with all concerned to bring forward specific proposals to enhance the network for all users. The Forum hopes these comments are helpful and looks forward to being involved at all stages of this and future consultations. I

Yours sincerely,



Fiona MacLeod
Secretary
Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex

Stephen Cantwell
Planning Advisor to Bognor Regis Regeneration Task Force
Arun District Council

CC
Ronnie Perrin – Chairman, CAFWS
Peter Brown – Vice Chairman, CAFWS
Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Group Manager, Rural Strategy, WSCC
Louise Goldsmith – WSCC Cabinet Member for Environment & Economy
Jane Noble – Senior Access Officer, WSCC