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THIRKELL, M

Wealden District (Incorporating part of the South Downs National Park) Representation on the Proposed Modifications to the Core Strategy

Wealden District Council

Working in Partnership

South Downs National Park Authority

This response relates to the proposed modification	
MM 33	**WS** 35
(Please add numeric reference e.g. MM22 or Wealden District Council/ South Downs National Park Authority modification WS e.g. WS 23)	

Declaration:	I consider the proposed modification will assist the submitted Core Strategy to be found ~~sound~~/unsound (*delete as applicable) for the following reasons:
Reasons Given:	See attached. (3 sheets)

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
46824.
13 JUN 2012
ACTION PCR GA
BY
PLANNING POLICY

If this is a new matter that you have raised please complete the following
I wish/ ~~do not wish~~ (*delete as applicable) for this matter to be heard in front of the Inspector

Signed:	

Name and Address:	
E-Mail Address:	
If on behalf of a company, please state:	
Date:	13 · JUNE · 2012

Please delete as appropriate	
I would wish to be notified of the publication of the recommendations of any person appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Core Strategy	(Yes) / ~~No~~
I would wish to be notified of the adoption of the Core Strategy	(Yes) / ~~No~~

Note: If completing this in hardcopy form, please use additional sheets if necessary.

Please return this form by **5pm on Wednesday** ~~**23rd May 2012**~~ 13 JUNE

By post to: Head of Planning and Environmental Policy, Wealden District Council, Freepost SEA 10959, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1BR

By email to: ldf@wealden.gov.uk

DISTRICT
13 JUN 2012

Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000

Representations cannot be treated in confidence. Regulation 30 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended, requires copies of all representations to be made publicly available. The Council will also provide names and associated representations on its website but will not publish personal information such as telephone numbers, e-mails or private addresses. By submitting a representation on the Proposed Modifications you confirm that you agree to this and accept responsibility for your comments.

Please telephone 01892 602007 or e-mail ldf@wealden.gov.uk if you require assistance in submitting your representation or if further information is required. If you, or somebody you know, would like the information (guidance notes, forms etc) in large print, braille, audio tape/CD or in another language please let us know.

I wish to add my comments to the amendments to Wealden's Core Strategy.

You will have received many thoughts from independent planning experts but my comments are to be read as from an interested local resident and a lay persons view of Wealden's documents.

The documents, associated papers and discussion documents running to 100's and 100's of pages and many thousands of 'man hours' demonstrate to a lay person the very worst of government intervention and officialdom.

For years there has been encouragement from Government itself as well as local authorities that the general public should enjoy and share ownership of some of our countries marvellous open green spaces.

For years this encouragement has been able to stand alongside the expansion of the area necessary for the economic welfare essential to allow jobs, homes and a vibrant community within Wealden and it's neighbours.

My own concern with the Core Strategy is the effect it will have on the curtailment and taxation within the 0.4, 7 and 15 kilometre boundaries, particularly of small-scale development both for employment and housing which will be strangled and ultimately kill local entrepreneurial spirit, the very core of a successful community.

In simplified form, I read from the Core Strategy amendments that the Inspector (under pressure from Brussels, so we are to understand) is worried that there MAY be a problem caused by the extra usage and pollution of the Ashdown Forest.

This concern is NOT YET PROVEN and will be under review till at least 2015.

I believe that the whole tenor of this document is fatally flawed in its two approaches to the separate problems of visitor number and nitrogen deposition.

Concern for the Dartford Warbler, Woodlark and Nightjar and their habitat, appear to be the driving force for many of the restrictions suggested for the Core Strategy.

Countrywide, much conservation and habitat restoration work has already been implemented already over the last two decades for their preservation.

The report fails to mention the new RSPB site at Broadwater Forest, Tunbridge Wells, well within the 7 kilometre zone.

Opened in 2010, this 300 acre RSPB site is seeking to restore their land to it's original open heathland habitat and protect exactly the same flora, fauna, birds and animals that Ashdown Forest is seeking to preserve. RSPB Broadwater site have made no mention of the problems of visitor number either in terms of footfall or car movements, in fact cars are probably the only method of visiting their site, as no public transport is available nearby and extra visitors are actively being encouraged.

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From conservation work already underway, surveys countrywide by both the RSPB and the Forestry Commission have over the last few years shown a marked increase of all three species.

- Dartford Warbler, in 2006 the RSPB quoted a 70% increase in their numbers since their 1994 survey.

- The Nightjar has seen a 50% increase since the 1980's. (Despite it's close proximity to the Tunbridge Wells and being adjacent to the very busy A26 the RSPB site has had it's first siting of at least 4 pairs of Nightjar this year.)

- Woodlark, RSPB quotes increased figures of between 48% and 88% seen at sites surveyed since 1997. Also now returned to the new RSPB site.

The RSPB add that that dogs off leads, foxes, badgers, crows, adders and magpies are the greatest threat all ground nesting birds at their sites.

All of these threats are far more dangerous than any small development and are very present on the Ashdown Forest. Wealden's Core Strategy does not seek in any way to address them.

Nitrogen deposition is perceived to be a problem but the Inspector agrees that this is not proven and further monitoring needs to be undertaken over the next few years. Surely to impose this proposed level of Core Strategy restriction to the local community when the premise is not proven is grossly irresponsible.

Local businesses and residents are being unfairly targeted. Any possible nitrogen problem is caused by far wider picture of events than any small-scale development.

The Ashdown Forest lies centrally within the South-East of the UK, the most heavily populated part of the country.

IF it is agreed that Ashdown Forest requires further protection to preserve its character and habitat Wealden needs to look at the far bigger picture.

The impact that small-scale developments and a handful of car movements will have on the Ashdown Forest is as nothing compared to the enormous concentration and passage of road and air traffic from all the major roads and airport nearby.

Within 15 miles, 25 kilometres of the centre of Ashdown Forest are Gatwick Airport, the major towns and industrial centres of Crawley , Horley, East Grinstead, Tunbridge Wells, Haywards Heath, Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, Hailsham, Oxted and Lewes, the M23, M25, A22, A26, A264 and A272. These, along with all smaller towns contribute in a far greater extent to any overall pollution of the area.

Restrictions, taxation and responsibility to protect the Ashdown Forest need to be viewed and shared as part of a countrywide policy. This is of course would be much harder to implement and impose so Wealden see it as being far easier to penalise the local community, never mind that this will not have any noticeable difference on the pollution effects to the Ashdown Forest.

Wealden's comments that all applications are to be looked at 'on their own *and* in conjunction with others' is grossly unrealistic and unfair.

Why should the decision making process and implication of one house or small business be judged in the same way and alongside permission for much larger scale developments?

Common sense has to be allowed to bear on the decision making process.

By all means Wealden should be in discussion as to a countrywide, joined up policy to protect all our British countryside but at present it's existing policies more than adequately protect the High Weald area.

Instead of seeking to further strangle, tax and preserve in aspic our countryside Wealden should be working on sustainable, creative and imaginative ways for our countryside to be once again a vibrant, working landscape.

The very countryside Wealden are seeking to preserve is in fact only as it is because of mans influence and intervention.

"High Weald is not a 'natural' landscape but one which has been created by man's activities over centuries" High Weald AONB Unit.

It is Wealden's duty to positively encourage and support the best of 21st century growth and change, which continues this tradition.

I do not find that these documents support this.

I therefore find the present amendments to Wealden's Core Strategy to be unsound.
& Modifications