



HEADCORN PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk, Parish Office, Headcorn Village Hall, Church Lane

Headcorn TN27 9NR

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Majid Harouni
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone Gateway
King Street
Maidstone
Kent ME15 6JQ

March 23rd 2016

Dear Majid

RE: 15/509288/OUT - Land To The North Of Lenham Road Headcorn Kent TN27 9TU

Please find attached a copy of the consultation response from Headcorn Parish Council, together with a briefing note on the relevant legal issues. Headcorn Parish Council considers that on these grounds this application should be refused.

Headcorn Parish Council also considers that it is important that Maidstone is consistent in its decisions. Last week, on the recommendations of the case officer, the Planning Committee refused an edge-of-urban application at Fant Farm on landscape grounds, citing policy ENV35. Like the Medway Valley, Headcorn is a Landscape of Local Value in the emerging Local Plan and development in Headcorn is currently covered by policy ENV34, which provides more stringent landscape protection than that envisaged in ENV35. ENV34 states that:


"particular attention will be given to the protection and conservation of the scenic quality and distinctive character of the area and priority will be given to the landscape over other planning considerations",

while ENV35 simply says:

"in these areas particular attention will be given to the maintenance of open space and the character of the landscape and encouragement will be given to improvements in public access".

Far from protecting the distinctive character of the area, this large greenfield development will contribute to the urbanising of Headcorn village and erosion of its countryside setting, and under Policy ENV34 priority should be given to avoiding this landscape harm. Therefore for consistency the Committee should be recommended to turn this application down on landscape grounds, particularly as an edge-of-village location 15.9km from the nearest employment centre and 11.4km from the nearest secondary school will never be as sustainable as an edge-of-urban development that is within easy reach of employment opportunities, schools, shops, hospitals and public transport.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Carmichael
Clerk