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**From:** planningcomments@highpeak.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 06 July 2024 08:56  
**To:** Planning Comments (HPBC)  
**Subject:** Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : HPK/2024/0154 Site Address: Land Off Cottage Lane Gamesley Glossop Derbyshire  
Comments by: Lauren Gledhill  
From:

Cottage Lane  
Gamesley  
Glossop

sk13 6eq

Phone:

Email:

Submission: Objection

Comments: I would like to strongly object to the proposed plan. I think it is incredulous that this has even been proposed. Please see reasons below:

1. The significant loss of biodiversity, wildlife, habitats, green spaces: the woodland site is a mature, thriving ecosystem, home to deer, amphibians, bats, reptiles, hedgehogs, over ONE HUNDRED bird species recorded within the site area and within 250m of the boundary, according to the Ecological survey (including nesting birds, a Tawny owl, and several plants and species on the Priority Habitats & Species list within the site area), and at least 25 species of broadland and scattered trees. It would be a travesty to bulldoze these irreplaceable habitats. We are already losing significant amounts of woodland and green spaces in the local area, where do we expect our wildlife to keep moving to? A habitat loss of over 76% according to the Biodiversity Report is a significant loss to the area. Even if the ecological recommendations are followed, there will be a significant amount of death, habitat destruction, and subsequently, a negative impact on local wildlife populations. 95% of the public value woodland for their wildlife value.

The Forestry Commission states: "The importance of diversity of habitat and species in small woods must not be underestimated, and also their function as stepping stones for the dispersal of species. Small woodlands may be the remnants of formerly larger areas, and thus have a higher biodiversity importance than might be assumed. Ecological diversity in woodlands is not solely linked to the size of the woodland."

According to the Biodiversity report, "the site predominantly comprises Deciduous Woodland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat anticipated to provide valuable foraging, commuting and refuge opportunities for a range of local fauna. The site is also identified as an "Area of Countryside" within the High Peak Adopted Local Plan (2016) under policies EQ3, EQ2 and E1, and links to Dinting Nature Reserve approximately 20 m east. As such, the strategic significance was defined as "Formally Identified Within Local Strategy". Additionally, according to the Local Plan, the entire area of development will be replacing a "protected tree area". There is also a TPO in place for a tree on the boundary of the plan - even if this is not destroyed, building works next to the tree and within the root area will have a detrimental effect.

Additionally, the site qualifies as an Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the presence of Annex I species merlin (*Falco columbarius*), golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), and short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*).

The site is also located within 1 km of eight Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), the closest of which comprises Dinting Nature Reserve, located approximately 45 m east. Additionally, two Potential Local Wildlife Sites (pLWS) are located within 1 km of the site; the site is used as an important wildlife corridor for an abundance of wildlife. There is significant potential for the development to negatively impact these LWS.

Further, the ecological report was conducted a year ago (2023) and therefore there may be even more flora and fauna present now and prior to any development commencing.

2. Impact on remaining woodland around the development: The Forestry Commission states that “There is the potential for the remaining ancient woodland to be damaged by visitors, new gardens, and domestic pets. Impacts to consider include disturbance to birds, protected species, woodland flora and soil; fly tipping; garden encroachment, and cat predation. Also consider the impact of increased public use near veteran trees.” Currently, access is limited to one path through the woodland, and deeper woodland is rarely accessed. With the current plans, woodland will be removed and access to remaining woodland will be increased. The woodland that will be exposed is ancient woodland and a wildlife site according to the Local Plan, and therefore has higher levels of protection.

According to the Government website, indirect effects on ancient woodland need to be considered, with an ancient woodland assessment completed. “Indirect effects of development can cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees by:

breaking up or destroying working connections between woodlands, or ancient trees or veteran trees - affecting protected species, such as bats or wood-decay insects

- reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitat for woodland species
- reducing the resilience of the woodland or trees and making them more vulnerable to change
- increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution
- increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic
- increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impact of domestic pets
- increasing the risk of damage to people and property by falling branches or trees requiring tree management that could cause habitat deterioration
- changing the landscape character of the area

Fly tipping is already an issue on the Gamesely estate, and the woodland to some extent. The development will undoubtedly increase this issue, as well as being detrimental to the vast biodiversity and habitats within the woodland.

3. Plans do not comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), whereby Paragraph 11 states there is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. This proposition is in no way sustainable. Just some examples of this:

Paragraph 170: 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) the site is of high biodiversity and value, and should be recognised as so.'

Paragraph 171: 'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework<sup>53</sup>; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries; d) the proposed area is of high environmental value, there is no allowance for maintaining or enhancing green infrastructure, or wider natural enhancement.'

Further, the plans go against the recent 'Emergency Tree Plan for the UK' policy which has been delivered to the government by The Woodland Trust - which strongly states that we have to protect the current trees which we already have. Planting new trees will take 10-20 years to have the same value.

4. Plans do not align with local policy. According to the High Peak Local Plan (S1: sustainable development), plans should:

Make effective use of land (including the remediation of contaminated land and reuse of brownfield land), buildings and existing infrastructure 'this is a greenfield site. Also see SO12: To encourage the efficient use of previously developed land and buildings whilst minimising the use of greenfield land.'

Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment of the High Peak 'leaving 10 trees on a currently densely populated woodland is not sufficient'

Minimise the need to travel by promoting development in locations where there is access to a broad range of jobs, services and facilities which are accessible by foot, cycle or public transport with minimal reliance on the private car 'there is a poor, infrequent bus service, no train line nearby, and walking time to the nearest supermarket is 30 minutes. The majority of occupants will have a private car.'

Minimise the risk of damage to areas of importance for nature conservation and/or landscape value, both directly and indirectly and ensuring that there is suitable mitigation for a net gain in biodiversity and the creation of ecological networks 'again, 10 trees is not sufficient. If the plans are to go ahead (which I still object to in any form), then less houses and a wildlife corridor and leaving more trees better meet local requirements'

Ensure existing infrastructure and services have the capacity to support development when required - see point 5 - services are not fit for current use, and especially won't be able to cope with an increased population.

Further, the High Peak Green infrastructure strategy lists Gamesley as a 'major node'; a discrete area of value, which includes open spaces and woodland, bringing much value to the local community, including Biodiversity, Landscape, Recreation, Educational Value, Heritage. The proposed area for development is also within close proximity to various areas within Gamesley such as Robin Wood, Dinting Nature Reserve, Melandra Castle, Dinting Lodge Grassland, and Dinting Woods. The Spatial Strategy seeks to protect and enhance the existing green infrastructure of both local and strategic importance - of which Gamesley is one of these areas, and therefore green infrastructure should be protected, not destroyed.

5. As per the High Peak Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) SPD, developers should contribute to the local infrastructure:

- Critical on and off-site infrastructure needed to achieve the development of the site (e.g. highways, open space, sewer/drainage, nutrient mitigation).
- On-site affordable housing.
- Contributions for education provision.
- Biodiversity and other green infrastructure, playing pitches /leisure facilities, sustainable transport provision directly serving the site.

Only on-site affordable housing has been proposed here. It is quite clear from other comments made that the schools and local health services are oversubscribed, the roads (especially Cottage Lane itself) are incredibly busy and already not fit for purpose. The proposed amount of green space within the development is inadequate. Regarding social housing needs, two local developments have adequate social housing allocation and the area is already significantly high in social housing (771 units out of 1000 in 2021). In the Glossop area alone, over 60% of High Peak's affordable housing was allocated (compared to 18% overall housing development allocation). This is already significantly out of balance.

6. Impact of flooding/land slippage: The currently-halted development across the road (The Crowberries) has, from what I understand, suffered from land movement and building sinkage. This says to me that pre-construction surveys are either not being completed or taken into account and is a concern. The NPFF states that 'preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, [...] and land instability' should be a priority. Trees are vital for soil retention. According to High Peak council information, the area is at risk of surface flooding, and as trees and woodland act in multiple ways to prevent flooding - canopy cover which increases evaporation, root systems which absorb vast amounts of water and also help the water to penetrate the ground. Compared to asphalt, trees absorb 80% more rainwater. This is especially vital due to the increased storms, rain, and unpredictable weather conditions we are facing due to climate change. Further, the trees currently present absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide, effectively slowing down the impact of climate change.

7. Impact on the local area and community health: green spaces have been shown to improve mental and physical health. A large development has already begun adjacent/near to this, thus already reducing green spaces for local

residents. According to the Local Plan, objective SO11: 'Promote opportunities for healthy lifestyles and support developments that minimise risks to health'. By further reducing open and green space, this would likely have a negative impact on the local community, and also links to point 2: local people will have to venture further away from their homes into the woodland (for dog walks, etc), and this will have a detrimental effect on the ancient woodland.

8. Lastly, the impact on the Public Footpath (68). The proposed plans involve a diversion of the current route, and according to the Highways Act 1980, any modifications to public rights of way should not:

be substantially less convenient to the public as a consequence of the diversion

reduce the effect it will have on public enjoyment of the path or way as a whole, on other land served by the existing path or way and on land affected by any proposed new path or way, taking into account the provisions for compensation.

Whilst a diversion has been suggested, this is a longer, protracted route and will significantly impact the enjoyment of the walking on the path, as the new route will be tarmacked and through a housing estate, as opposed to through woodland and open green space. The safety of the route will also be decreased due to vehicle access. The decision regarding changes to public rights of way is a public decision.

9. The site area is listed as a Coal Authority 'high risk development area'. Meaning that development on the site is 'the part of the coal mining reporting area which contains one or more recorded coal mining related features at surface or shallow depth. These features pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety.' It would be against the best interest of the public to allow a development here.

In light of the overwhelming evidence presented, it is clear that the proposed development poses significant threats to the local environment, biodiversity, and community well-being. The destruction of this mature and irreplaceable woodland would result in a severe loss of habitats for numerous species, contravening both national and local policies aimed at protecting our natural heritage. Furthermore, the negative impacts on local infrastructure, increased flood risks, and the detrimental effects on public health and enjoyment of green spaces underscore the unsustainable nature of this proposal.

In conclusion, I urge the planning authorities to reject this proposal unequivocally. The long-term ecological and community costs far outweigh any short-term gains. Protecting our green spaces and ensuring sustainable development is paramount for the well-being of current and future generations. This woodland is a precious asset that should be preserved, not sacrificed, for development that clearly contradicts sustainable and responsible planning principles. Let us prioritise the preservation of our natural environment and uphold the values and policies designed to protect it.

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