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20th November 2016

Mr Jonathan Bore,
Planning inspector into the draft Mid Sussex District Plan,

Please reply to:
Michael A. Brown,
Manor Chase,
Kiln Lane,
Brockham,
Surrey RH3 7LZ
m.brown@zoo.co.uk

Dear Sir,

Draft Mid Sussex District Plan Examination

The imminent public examination of the housing aspects of Mid Sussex DC's draft new District Plan is scheduled to address, amongst other matters, the appropriateness of the proposed allocation of a large site within the High Weald AONB at Hardriding Farm outside Pease Pottage (Policy 9A). The soundness and suitability of that site for development is one of the difficult issues that your independent examination is scheduled to test. Even Crawley BC, the supposed primary beneficiary of any new housing there, objects to it and has called for further discussion of it with MSDC. As you know, CPRE intends to argue the case that the proposed allocation of the site is unsound.

We find it extraordinary that MSDC should have suddenly scheduled Thakeham Homes's planning application to develop this currently unallocated site for determination this coming Thursday, 24th November, just 5 days before the hearings you have called are due to start. Officers are recommending that Thakeham's application should be approved. MSDC gave no indication of this intention in their 8th November response to your questions about the proposed allocation of this site.

A decision on Thursday to approve Thakeham's application would pre-empt and subvert the whole purpose of a public examination into the soundness of the proposed policy to allocate this site. Since MSDC is promoting this unexamined policy, a pre-emptive planning committee decision ahead of your scheduled hearings to approve development at Hardriding Farm would preclude any independent scrutiny of their decision.

We have written to all members of the District Planning Committee calling on them to defer any decision on this application until your views on your draft Plan housing policies, including policy DP9A for the allocation of this site, are published in the next few weeks and have been considered by the Council. However, as the convening of this meeting for 24th November has presumably been deliberately choreographed, we are not hopeful that our plea will be heard.

We do not necessarily anticipate any response from you to this letter. However if your view were that a determination next week of Thakeham Homes's application would be inappropriate, we hope that you would convey that view to the Council leadership.

Yours faithfully,

Michael A. Brown

on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch CIO.