

Item 6 - Application DM/20/2877

Speech by Mrs Lisa Jackson MA BSc MRTPI (Planning Agent)

You have an extremely long report before you and it is impossible for me to explain fully in three minutes why the officer report is not a balanced or reasonable assessment of the application, and is materially misleading in many respects, however there are 4 key points I want to highlight:

1. This application includes the proposal for natural burial, it is on the form, it is in the drawings and description. Nowhere in the report is this part of the proposal properly assessed against policy and the previous permissions for this development. 70% of this proposal is identical to previously approved schemes on this site and this simply does not get a mention in any formal balancing assessment. Looking at this from a landscape perspective only is incomplete and inadequate.
2. The officer's report has introduced a policy test that does not exist in your adopted local plan. The report has introduced two concepts of overwhelming need and overriding need. These are not terms that appear in your local plan policy, they are not in the supporting text. This is not the relevant test. Your Policy DP 25 supports development that meets a community need and the Council's own consultant confirms there is a need for more crematorium capacity in Mid Sussex. This means the proposal is acceptable in principle, this should be the starting point. The officer report says otherwise based on this invented policy test.
3. The Council's own consultant has confirmed that 140,000 residents of which 88,000 are in living Mid Sussex District will be nearer to a Crematorium if this application is approved at Turner's Hill. This is a significant saving of both mileage and CO2. There is an appeal precedent where the planning inspector at Northrop agreed that serving 80,000 residents was sufficient to support a proposal for a new crematorium, this was based on the mileage saved, associated CO2 and also added it would be beneficial to well-being. Your officer's report is quite wrong to conclude the need

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has not been demonstrated if you use this appeal decision and others as an acceptable benchmark.

4. Much is made in the report of the landscape objection, but what is not reported is the agreed statement of common ground with the landscape and case officer. We worked hard with officers to confirm that the proposal is visible from 4 viewpoints. Three of which are from the public footpath on site, and one is at the access. This is the same as the previously approved schemes. Why has this not been explained in a fair and reasonable way? The landscape harm is completely overstated, the impact is highly localised.

These are all issues that I have not had satisfactory answers to. If officers cannot defend these points to the Inspector at appeal, this would be tantamount to unreasonable behaviour, the whole appeal would be unnecessary, and this exposes the Council to a cost claim at appeal.