

Planning Inspectorate Ref: 6002030

Mid Sussex District Council Ref: DM/23/2866

Land East of Ansty, Cuckfield Bypass

Landscape Statement of Common Ground

5th May 2026

R001c_2510 Landscape Statement of Common Ground 050526

Contents

Section 1: Matters Agreed.....	3
Submitted LVIA.....	3
Published Landscape Character Assessments	3
Visual Context.....	4
Section 2: Areas of Disagreement	5

Section 1: Matters Agreed

- 1.1 The landscape evidence will address the first two bullet points in the reason for refusal.
- 1.2 The evidence may comment on the policies cited in the reason for refusal, but matters of weight, materiality and planning balance will be addressed by the planning witnesses.

Submitted LVIA

- 1.3 It is agreed that that the Appellant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ((LVIA) contained in Volume 3 of the ES prepared by Fabrik follows the guidance contained in the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*', 2013 published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA. There are no methodological issues between the parties and only matters of judgement are disputed.
- 1.4 The Council did not instruct, or undertake to prepare its own LVIA, the application was determined by reference to the Appellant's submitted assessment, cognisant of the views expressed by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee, Louise Hooper on behalf of the Parish Council and Place Services as the appointed advisor to the Council.

Published Landscape Analysis

- 1.5 The following documents describe and classify areas of distinctive character. In respect of the Appeal Site the following are noted and are relevant to understanding the context:
 - i. National Character Area (NCA) NCA 122: High Weald; and
 - ii. County Character Assessment: HW4: High Weald Fringes¹.
 - iii. Mid Sussex characterisation LCA 10: High Weald Fringes;
 - iv. Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (Bannister, August 2010); and
 - v. The Capacity of Mid Sussex to accommodate Development, (June 2014, LUC)
 - vi. Cuckfield Landscape Character Assessment, (HDA, April 2012)

Landscape Value

- 1.6 The Appeal Site is not within a National Landscape or NPPF, para 187 a) Valued Landscape.
- 1.7 Mid Sussex District is subject of a number of environmental and planning designations, which constrain development opportunities, including, but not limited to:
 - National Landscape
 - SSSIs
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Local Wildlife Sites

¹ West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment

- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Historic Parks and Gardens

1.8 The Appeal Site contains some Ancient Woodland.

1.9 The Appeal Site is located adjacent to the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) and forms part of its setting.

Landscape effects

1.10 The LVIA records significant residual landscape effects at year 15:

- District Landscape Capacity Assessment Character Area 77.
- Parish LCA 22 due to the geographic extent of the proposals within the LCA.
- Contextual Townscape Elements due to the geographic extent of the proposals.

1.11 Notwithstanding the conclusion that the scheme would result in significant and irreversible adverse landscape and visual effects by reference to the higher level of effects identified by Place Services, the Case Officer recommended grant of planning permission.

It is your Planning Officer's view that having regard to para 11d of the NPPF, that the adverse impacts of granting consent (many of which will in any event be mitigated for as far as is possible) would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of this development, as highlighted within this report. It is therefore considered that whilst the proposal is not in accordance with the Development Plan when read as a whole, there are material planning considerations of sufficient weight that would justify the approval of this scheme. (Para 13.38)

1.12 In respect of the setting of the HWNL the officer provided clarification in the Committee Update:

While the site is located within the setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (also known as National Landscapes) it is not located within it. Given this and having consideration of the assessment of the impact the proposed development would have on the setting of the HWAONB (set out in the subsequent paras 12.85 – 12.105 of the report and clarified as moderate by your Planning Officer), it is not considered that there is a strong reason for refusal.

1.13 The Committee Report and Update Sheet are material considerations. The members of the Planning Committee disagreed with its professional officers. The parties are agreed that at the reserved matters stage there is the potential to further mitigate residual landscape and visual effects through (a) the detailed design of the scheme and (b) the development of a landscape, planting and mitigation strategy. This could be secured by condition.

Visual Context


1.14 The parties will provide an agreed walking/driving route for the inspector prior to the opening of the Inquiry.

Section 2: Areas of Disagreement


- 2.1 The scale and geographic extent of landscape effects to be weighed in the planning balance is not agreed.
- 2.2 The parties do not agree as to the extent to which effects on viewpoints are at issue.
- 2.3 The Council does not agree that the viewpoints in the LVIA are representative of the visual receptors.
- 2.4 The Council is of the opinion that the LVIA is not appropriate or proportional to the project. The Appellant is of the view that the LVIA is appropriate and proportional.
- 2.5 The impact on dark skies is not agreed.
- 2.6 The degree of harm the development will have on general landscape character of the area and in particular its impact on the setting of the High Weald National Landscape.
- 2.7 The degree of impact the development has on the perceived coalescence between Ansty and Cuckfield.

Signed by:

Clare Brockhurst FLI on behalf of the appellant:

Date:  **5th May 2026**

Josh Peacock CMLI on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council:


Date: **26/05/05**