

Subject:	'Save our Deans' - Petition to abandon in its entirety the Development Proposals of Lightwood. Petition Triggering Full Debate		
Date of Meeting:	8 May 2014		
Report of:	Monitoring Officer		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Wall	Tel: 29-1006
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 A combined paper and e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 1, 544 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Planning Case Officer to be included with any other information that forms part of the consultation responses to a planning application that is submitted by Lightwood Developments in respect of The Vale Meadows for consideration by the Planning Committee.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**3.1 The Petition**

"We the undersigned, having seen the proposal by Lightwood Property for development of the fields known locally as The Vale Meadows, petition that the proposed development should be abandoned in its entirety.

We find many valid reasons why this petition should be implemented, including, but not limited to, the following:

Traffic

The area's roads already contain some severe bottlenecks and dangers. The proposal would add a significant number of car movements throughout the area, making these bad situations worse. The consequences are both economic and social disruption as well as increased risks of traffic accidents for the local population. Rottingdean's unique geographical location, between the

sea and downland, makes it already one of the most serious traffic bottlenecks in the South of England. Daily rush-hour traffic jams on the A259 cause economic and social disruption for communities in Brighton, Saltdean, Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford.

The B2123 is the last road connecting the A27 and the A259 coast road before Newhaven in the east. As such it is heavily used. The proposal sites the new housing directly adjacent to this road. There is severe traffic congestion at peak times on the B2123 Falmer Road, particularly at Woodingdean. At peak times the Warren Road Falmer Road junction caused traffic tailbacks of several miles reaching back to the A27 Lewes Road at Sussex University and to the top of Racecourse Hill. The tailbacks onto the Brighton by-pass are a safety hazard where standing traffic queues form on a high-speed dual-carriageway. Increased through traffic in Ovingdean will run on narrow residential roads and across the conservation area of Ovingdean village. Increased traffic in Rottingdean village will back up the traffic into Falmer Road even more than it does at present and further disrupt village life. Woodingdean residential area will suffer increased traffic because of vehicles trying to get around the Warren/Falmer Road traffic light bottleneck.

The Environment

The Vale Meadows are a pristine natural environment of exquisite beauty which is appreciated by people from outside the area as well as those who live there. The proposal will reduce the attractiveness of the area to the tourist trade. Horse-keeping, a traditional leisure pursuit and business in the area will be forced out.

The proposal causes Ovingdean and Rottingdean to merge since Rottingdean civil parish extends to Ovingdean Road and to The Vale. If Vale Meadows are developed Rottingdean would be separated from Ovingdean by no more than Ovingdean Road to the north and an unpaved road to the west. Such infill development as put forward in the proposal would destroy the separate character of the villages.

We understand that it is cheaper to develop Greenfield land, but we can indicate far better alternatives in the Brighton area where land already partially developed could be adapted for housing use.

Services

Services which are currently at capacity will be totally inadequate for the additional people:

- Doctors
- Dentists
- Primary Schools

The area is susceptible to flash floods. Additional built-up area will speed up run-off and increase the risk of damage from flooding in the whole valley from The Vale Meadows to the sea, including the village of Rottingdean.””

Lead Petitioner – Jim Wright

3.2 The options open to the council are:

- To note the petition and take no action for reasons put forward in the debate;
or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting with recommendations.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the prayer of the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response;
- (iii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors and call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to move an amendment or additional recommendation(s) to the recommendation listed in paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- (iv) Any councillor may move an amendment or recommendation, having regard to the recommendation in 2.1 above and any such proposal will need to be formally seconded;
- (v) After a period of 15 minutes, the Mayor will then call an end to the debate and ask the relevant Cabinet Member to reply to the points raised;
- (vi) The Mayor will then formally put:
 - (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
 - (b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).