

# Essex County Standard

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80p

# COUNTRYSIDE IN CONFLICT

## Battle lines drawn as serious questions raised over park bid

**Wendy Brading**

A NEW furious row has erupted over controversial plans to build a countryside attraction in Constable Country.

For more than 12 years, the Buntings family has been attempting to build a major regional

visitor centre on 117 acres of land near Great Horkesley which could attract more than 300,000 visitors a year.

This week, Colchester Council released three reports it had commissioned about the scheme.

All three raise major concerns over the venture's viability and its effect on the countryside.

However, council officers have

announced they are still supporting the scheme in principle.

Protesters have reacted with fury, saying the reports confirm concerns over the viability and sustainability of the project.

The Buntings have slammed the reports, accusing them of being "fundamentally flawed".

The council has said it will reveal the reasons for its

recommendation next month, but says: "Clearly the acid test remains, as it always has done, and that is, can the proposal be implemented without causing unacceptable planning harm with appropriate mitigation?"

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