

From: [Simon Taylor \(GfB\)](#)
To: [Theresa Higgins](#)

Sent: Saturday, February 16, 2013 12:01 AM

Subject: Planning Service and 120965

Dear Theresa

Until now I have refrained from contacting you directly, in your capacity as Chair of the Planning Committee, as I can only imagine how much of a looming menace application 120965 must be for you. However, I need to raise a serious concern with you over the Planning Service's handling of the application, including the latest published report.

Today, 15 February 2013, a new Supplementary Review carried out by Britton McGrath Associates has been made publicly available, slipped into the online planning file but not highlighted on the main Horkesley Park web page. This is dated 12 February 2013, one day after the deadline for public representations, which had been extended following publication of earlier consultants' reports "[to provide a further opportunity for the public to comment on this material](#)". How can we make representations on this new material?

This new report aims to address "[the potential for Horkseley Park \[sic\] to achieve on-going viability](#)" and concludes that "[we have demonstrated, in collaboration with Bunting and Sons, that it is possible to create a viable and sustainable business at this level \[150,000 visitors pa\]](#)", with provisions including investment in the Chinese Garden (requiring new structures within the AONB, but not included in the application) and original Constable paintings. It is impossible to judge the basis for this conclusion because all the figures have been redacted, but it appears to depend significantly on unsubstantiated promises and assurances made by the applicant.

The previous reports formed the "[Independent Project Review](#)" and the "[consultants were instructed solely by the Council and directed by brief produced by the Council's Planning & Strategy Policy Services](#)", so it is alarming to read that this latest report, clearly intended to find evidence for economic sustainability, has been compiled "[in collaboration](#)" with the applicant.

It is now clear that the consultants are being briefed retrospectively to compile reports to support a recommendation of approval, which conflict with the independent conclusions of their previous analysis. Surely this undermines any suggestion of impartiality and perception of integrity in the Planning Service's handling of the application.

(As you will have gathered, I am an objector to this application - the claimed benefits cannot possibly outweigh the inevitable harm sufficiently to over-ride the numerous non-compliances with planning policies - but I know that you cannot express any opinion until you have heard all representation.)

Best wishes, and good luck,

Simon

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