

# Park would 'lose £2m'

THE Stour Valley Action Group – chief opponent of plans to create a Stour Valley Visitor Centre at Horkesley Park – has claimed the park would make a loss of more than £2million in its first year.

In a response to Colchester Borough Council, the group's main objection is that Bunting and Sons' project would compromise the peace and tranquillity of the Dedham Vale.

The response includes a report which says the application conflicts with local, regional and national planning policies, particularly those designed to protect areas of outstanding natural beauty.

The group also claims there is no need for Horkesley Park when there are already many other established attractions in the region, offering nearly all the proposed features. The only two unique to the park would be a Chinese garden and the life and times of Bunting and Sons.

No business plan was submitted by Buntings and the group claims analysis shows the project would probably make a loss before tax of close to £2.5million in its first year.

It also questions projected visitor numbers of 316,250, saying independent experts conclude the likely figure would be closer to 150,000.

The borough council has received 684 letters of objection and 344 backing the plan.

Objectors include the parish councils of Nayland, Leavenheath, Stoke-by-Nayland and Little Horkesley.