

Planning Department
Havant Borough Council

Clovelly
Closewood Road
Denmead
Waterlooville
PO7 6JD

Phone: 023 9225 7310

11-Aug-2018

Ref: Erection of 46no. dwellings with associated parking, access from Westwood Close, diversion of Havant Footpath 73, landscaping and surface water drainage. Felling and works to trees within Area A1, subject to TPO 2071. | Land off Westwood Close, Emsworth

Planning Ref: **APP/18/00672**

Consultee Comment: **On behalf of the Ramblers Association. SEHants Group**

I object to this development for many of the reasons stated by the numerous other objectors but specifically because of the effect it will have on Footpath Havant 73.

This footpath is a popular and well used path. It is an important path being part of the long distance route named the 'Sussex Border Path'. Although it is in a suburban location it has open countryside to the east and, while adjacent to the back gardens of houses on the west, it is not significantly overlooked. The diversion suggested in the development plans would make only a minor change to the route of the path but would completely change the path's context. The path would become completely overlooked by both the houses in the new development and by the service road.

If the development is allowed I suggest the following changes be made to limit the impact on the footpath and its environment.

I can see no reason why the south east limit of the site boundary has been drawn where it has been (see documents 19Jul2018 - D2577 FAB XX GL DR L 0100 - COLOUR LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN and 5Jul2018 - 17017A-PL-2-08 REV B - FOOTPATH DIVERSION PLAN). This boundary neither follows the edge of the field nor the Hampshire/Sussex county boundary. The only reason I can see for its position is that it follows the proposed new position for the footpath. We should consider the whole field as part of the application, or at the least that part of the field that is within Hampshire.

The footpath diversion suggested in the application would leave the footpath running alongside the estate access road. The planned hedge and row of trees would provide little screening, as is shown by the CGI view of the development (see document 19Jul2018 - CGI ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW). I believe it would be far better to relocate the footpath much further to the east as it passes the new houses. It should follow alongside the county boundary until it reaches the most northerly of the three access gates from the new estate. It is after all the 'Sussex Border Path'. I believe this would be a more pleasant location for the path and would allow further screening from the new housing.

I realise moving the path further east would place the path further into the flood zone but the floods are infrequent. Even when flooding does occur the path would be unusable on the present alignment because the southern end of the path, outside the site boundary, is already in flood zone three. My impression from inspecting the site is that although the existing route of the path is very wet and muddy, the ground gets dryer the further east one goes, providing of course that a flood is not in progress. As part of the diversion of the footpath I would expect consideration to be given to any needed surface preparation to reduce mud and limit the effects of flood.

I would also like clarification on the intended use of that part of the field that is not to be built upon. There are access points from the new development into the remaining open space labelled variously on different plans as '*Gated access from new development*' and '*connection points to open space*'. I presume this means that this remaining part of the field is intended to be public open space in some sense. A suitable legal framework and management plan should be provided such that residents of the new development and other members of the public have access to this land. Such access would enable them to enjoy the open space. It would also allow them to join or leave the footpath where it passes the new estate. At the moment there is no official way for the residents of Westwood Close and beyond to gain direct access to the footpath. Such access would also allow people using the path to avoid any flooding by diverting onto the estate road.

Finally, the application shows a hedge and tree line alongside the estate road. This provides little screening for the footpath. I suggest that the addition of groups of small trees and shrubs scattered within the field between those alongside the road and my more easterly location of the path would be a more effective screen. It would make the path feel more part of the countryside rather than part of a housing estate. This would also better screen the new development from view for those looking west towards it from the countryside of West Sussex.

For and on behalf of Ramblers Association

Peter Westron
Footpath Secretary – SE Hants Group
Ramblers Association.