

## FeCRA – The Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations



To Chair, Cambridge City Council Planning Committee via email, 1 Sept 2020 (copied to Committee)

Councillor Martin Smart,  
Chair, Planning Committee

Dear Martin,

### **Worts Causeway Land at Newbury Farm –19/1168/OUT**

I am writing on behalf of the Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations (FeCRA) to comment on the above proposal.

The officers report on the proposal[1] states 'There will be an estimated 10% biodiversity net gain through biodiversity enhancement on and off-site. The scheme will contribute to projects at Beechwoods Local Nature Reserve, the Wandlebury Country Park, and the Magog Downs, to improve their capacity for recreational use'.

The report states (at 6.25) that the Nature Conservation Officer 'Welcomes the revised biodiversity net outcome calculations and agrees with the finding for a 15% net loss in biodiversity, which would be contrary to policies and recommends the application be refused in case no off-site mitigations are proposed'.

It is claimed that the loss of biodiversity on this Green Belt site and that of GB1 is being offset by the Gogs Recreation Scheme: the expansion of car park facilities at Wandlebury and Magog Trust supported by cash payment to the Wildlife Trust, CPPF and the Magog Trust for their sites 'to support greater visitor numbers'.

This project is referred to on page 139 of Natural Cambridgeshire's Report 'Scoping Nature for Investment' which also states 'beware that relying upon section 106 net gain funding you are effectively supporting continued growth and development'.[2]

Simon Hawkins, Environment Agency East Anglia Area Director, wrote to the Executive Councillor for Planning that a reservoir for this area is unlikely for at least ten years and that there is no easy fix to address environmental degradation and the over-abstraction issues of the chalk streams.

The business plan for the Gogs Recreation Scheme depends on achieving funding from net gain directly related to development in the Cambridge chalk aquifer area. Yet the Environment Agency has stated recently that "current levels of abstraction are already causing environmental damage. We recommend any proposed development considers

water resources as a key issue and the council recognises the damage of long term increases in abstraction due to growth”[3].

How can the Council’s local plan policies for biodiversity be achieved unless water infrastructure is already in place to address environmental degradation and over-abstraction?

Can we also ask who is funding the pilot project ?

We therefore ask that you refuse this application.

Best wishes,

Wendy

Wendy Blythe

Chair, FeCRA

For the Committee

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[1] <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s51112/191168OUT%20-%20Report.pdf>

[2] <https://www.fecra.org.uk/docs/Extracts%20from%20Natural%20Cambs%20Scoping%20Nature%20for%20Investment.pdf> – see pp 139 and 141

[3] [ENDS Report 17 August 2020 Controversial new town could damage chalk streams warns EA](#)  
[Env Agency response to Northstowe Phase 3A planning application 7th August 2020](#)