Heybeck Housing Development proposals 2025

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Summary

There remain significant and serious issues still not effectively addressed in the development and planning proposals. These include:

1. Deficiency in addressing direct and indirect impacts and long-term effects on the ancient woodlands.
2. Unnecessary and damaging 'over-management' of trees in part relating to changed health and safety considerations.
3. Consequent isolation and hydrological impacts on the woods with resulting long-term desiccation. There are also issues of impacts on downstream flood-risk which are still to be addressed.
4. Much increased human recreational use consequent on the development and altered local demographics – human trampling and use of off-road bicycles and semi-motorised bikes and scooters.
5. There is an absence of a funded plan and mechanism for these issues to be managed on-site in the future – and the local authority has no ability (countryside management service) to deliver this.
6. Consequent much-increased impacts of domestic pets – dogs and cats – both from dog-walking and animals ranging freely. This will have major impacts on ground-nesting birds and also on mammals from smaller species subject to predation, and larger species like deer, that respond to disturbance.

In terms of the woodlands, there has been no effective assessment of woodland heritage and archaeology which are highly vulnerable to trampling and erosion linked to recreational over-use. This requires to be addressed and a funded remediation plan put in place.

There is also an issue in terms of proposals for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Firstly, irreplaceable features such as ancient woodlands and historic hedgerows, cannot be

compensated for or traded. Moreover, ancient woodland cannot be used for BNG compensation – which must be targeted at lands of minimal existing biodiversity value. Either on-site or off-site, BNG cannot be produced through the use of areas of existing high value. Furthermore, it should be noted that BNG does not address landscape and heritage issues but only those purely of biodiversity. From a sustainability perspective, these other factors must also be addressed.