

Planning application: **AWDM/0737/26** | Commercial use of regenerated land.

I would like to add my objection to the application to the list of those already submitted.

The area in question, the Goring Gap was established as a Local Green space in 2014. The application would not “Protect and enhance the already valued green spaces, stretches of undeveloped coastline, gaps between settlements and the quality of the natural environment creating net gains to biodiversity.” (Worthing Local Plan). Within the Plan it notes that the designation and protection of ‘Local Green Gaps’ helps to avoid coalescence and preserve the separate characters and identities of different settlements by providing physical and visual breaks. The application provides no details of biodiversity net gain, in fact, already by what has been done the works have created a biodiversity loss, having destroyed well established habitats. This land also forms part of the Council’s new Vision for Nature strategy as the “Goring Gap” making it attractive as a landfall site for migrating birds, and which also offers them a green corridor onwards towards the South Downs. The works already carried out have destroyed that. Goring Gap has also been designated an Area of Particular Importance for Bio diversity (APIB) identified in the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS highlights moving away from habitat fragmentation, instead promoting a “bigger, better, more joined up” approach. This application appears to defeat those aspirations. The Worthing Local Plan (2023) gives due weight to Local Wildlife Sites, and, together with the fact that the area is recognised as a Local Green Gap, and contains policies which restrict development there – Policies SS4 (Countryside and Undeveloped Coast) and DM19 (Green Infrastructure).

It is clear that the applicant is using this as a means to create a change of use, with the ultimate aim of using the land for residential use, which would open up the whole Goring Gap, both north and south to be vulnerable. The rejection of the planning application for the northern gap by the planning inspector noted the impact on the South Downs National Park and this should be reflected for the southern gap, maintain a break between the developments of Goring and Ferring.

A. Young