

It is essential that the Inspectorate walk through the areas affected by this development. Photographs and photomontages are not enough to understand the true scale or impact of what is being proposed. Sight is only one part of how people experience these fields. Nearly three square miles of green space would be destroyed. Once the land is excavated and built over, it will never return to what it is now. Allowing grass to grow between concrete blocks or planting new shrubs and trees does not restore an ecosystem; it only attempts to lessen the harm after the damage has been done. It is mitigation, not preservation. We should be preserving green spaces because they absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Established green spaces absorb and stores more carbon than newly planted ones.

I recognise that part of the Inspectorate has already carried out an unaccompanied visit to some viewpoints and routes, but this covered only a fraction of the landscape. To understand what is truly at stake, the full panel needs to walk these fields themselves.

The smell of the earth and grass, the birdsong, the wind in the leaves, breeze against your face, and the uneven ground beneath your feet — these are all part of the landscape's character. The natural landscape is a living place with an atmosphere and a sense of calm that cannot be captured in images or drive by the soul, and that lived, sensory reality should be taken into account when assessing the impact of this proposal.

I drafted this with the help of Microsoft Copilot, which helped me organise my thoughts and express them more clearly, but the views and concerns are entirely my own.