



Protect Our Rural Landscape

Saving Our AONB from Lorry Park Development

PROPOSED TRUCKSTOP WOULD SET DANGEROUS PRECEDENT WARNS ACTION GROUP

A proposal by GSE to build a new 600-space lorry park within the Kent Downs National Landscape (AONB) would set a dangerous precedent that would threaten 33 other protected sites in England, warns the Protect our Rural Landscape (PoRL) action group.

The 70 acre truckstop proposed at Court Wood near Dover would tarmac over farmland and woodland that sit within the Kent Downs National Landscape. It would also be visible from Dover's Heritage Coast and iconic White Cliffs. If approved by Dover District Council (DDC), the proposal would be the first of its kind to be given consent within an AONB, setting a precedent for future planning developments.

UK law affords National Landscapes the highest possible protection to conserve and protect the natural beauty of the sites. When considering planning applications impacting these areas, local authorities like Dover District Council must ensure that their planning decisions 'seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.'

The Protect our Rural Landscape group argues that any decision to approve the proposed truckstop in the Kent Downs would make a mockery of DDC's Local Plan, which specifically excludes the AONB area at Hougham from residential development plans. Further, they claim that the proposal would set a national precedent that would open the floodgates for similar commercial developments in all of England's 34 National Landscapes, which include the Cotswolds AONB, the Cornwall Coast and Moors, the Wye Valley and the North Pennines.

The group's vice-chair Steve Green said: "If local government allows a truckstop to be built and operated in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty we will be losing land of significant national environmental importance and outstanding natural character forever. We're in no doubt that this is a decision of crucial national importance, given that it would effectively deem our National Landscapes of so little value that they can be subject to commercial developments that involve tarmac over huge swathes of countryside. This has implications for communities across England who live in nationally important landscapes, including some of the most recognisable coastland and countryside in our green and pleasant land."

“The developer, GSE claims that concreting over and removing natural habitat from 70 acres of farmland and woodland will bring substantial environment and economic benefits. Replacing outstanding existing natural landscaping with man made ‘bunding and woodland’ is an act of environmental vandalism that cannot be allowed either in the Kent Downs National Landscape AONB or in any other National Landscape AONB. Especially when the proposed lorry park would be a purely commercial operation, making money for private companies, whilst failing to solve traffic issues around Dover and its neighbouring towns.”

The proposed truckstop is currently subject to a local consultation exercise. A full planning application is expected to be submitted by GSE as soon as late January or early February 2026. Work on the proposal has been ongoing since the spring of 2024. Local residents only discovered the plans when they were announced in a Kent newspaper in November.

Steve Green said: “There is more at issue here than the impact on residents of our twin villages. This is about preventing development on our national landscapes and conserving our exceptional environment, habitats and wildlife. If we truly value our environment and if Kent really is the garden of England, we should all stand against the proposal to build a lorry park in the middle of our precious AONB. This land is scarce and a valuable legacy for future generations. We’re calling on everyone in surrounding towns and villages, and those across the UK who care about our natural environment to join us in fighting this proposed monstrosity.”

For more information about the campaign or to contact the Protect our Rural Landscapes Action Group visit <https://www.truckoff.org/>.