

£25m centre plans fail to sway council

NAYLAND Parish Council is to reiterate its previous objections to the proposed Horkesley Park heritage and conservation centre.

After two years of further investigation and alterations, the final plan for the £25million project on 117 acres at Great Horkesley is to be considered by Colchester Borough Council's planning committee on May 26.

Plans submitted by Bunting and Sons for its redundant greenhouse site include a Constable art gallery, Suffolk Punch horse breeding centre, show gardens, nurseries, a "food experience" and a 101-acre country park.

The firm predicts the centre – a "celebration of the English countryside" – would attract about 485,000 visitors a year.

Senior partner Stephen

by **Pat Bray**

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Bunting had asked the council to reconsider its objections in the light of work done to address certain issues but members agreed at their April meeting that nothing in the latest plan would persuade them to alter their original response.

They felt the highways authorities had only looked at the effect of the development on main roads and had not addressed the traffic impact on Nayland and minor roads surrounding the centre.

Tibby Mimpriss said it was hard for some local people to understand the scale of traffic generated by 500,000 visitors.

She added: "There is no link with Constable at all.

"It is just a retail park with

some frills."

Chairman Gerry Battye said no issues on the Suffolk side had been addressed and there were no answers to Nayland's concerns in the latest application.

Earlier, councillors had heard from Hector Bunting that 72 per cent of Nayland's population of 1,011 had either passed no comment on the plans or showed support for Horkesley Park. He said the centre would be something to be proud of and people had to embrace change.

Councillors were not swayed and it was agreed to write to Colchester Borough Council restressing their objections, saying nothing in the altered plans had changed their view.

Tricia Fuller and Rosemary Knox will represent the parish council at the planning meeting.