

**Land adjacent to 54 Long Copse Lane.
Objection on behalf of the Save Long Copse Lane Action Group
To Planning Application APP/21/01376**

1. The Group objects to the principle of development on this greenfield site occupying a sensitive location in the undeveloped gap between Emsworth and Westbourne. As the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application the site is outside the defined urban boundary for Emsworth and as such the proposals are contrary to Policy AL2 of the adopted Havant Local Plan (Allocations) 2014. As paragraph 2.09 of the Plan states: *"Planning applications to develop land within an undeveloped gap will need to demonstrate clearly that the proposal will not undermine the separate identities of mainland settlements or result in their coalescence."* Whilst not resulting in coalescence the proposals further undermine the separate identities of the two settlements. The proposals satisfy none of the criteria set out in the policy.
2. The proposals require the removal of the natural hedge along the boundary to Long Copse Lane. In addition, the site is surrounded by mature trees 15 of which are category B classification. As the Arboricultural Impact Assessment ("AIA") acknowledges 7 of these trees are affected by the proposed development. Although the AIA recommends protection measures and whilst the Council's Arboricultural Officer acquiesces in this it is by no means certain that the trees will evocably be damaged in the long term. In addition, these large trees will be in close proximity to the proposed development. It is probable that the Council will come under sustained and insurmountable pressure to have trees felled. The boundary hedge and trees are a fundamental component of the character and appearance of what is currently a rural landscape. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy DM8 of the adopted Core Strategy.
3. The site is a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). It contains a number of protected reptile species. Criterion 7 of Core Strategy Policy CS11 states that any development should protect wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors to protect the fragmentation of existing habitats. The proposals fail to achieve this. Whilst it is proposed to translocate the reptile colonies to adjacent public open space owned by the Council where no doubt such species already exist this does nothing to protect existing habitats or not result in further fragmentation and erosion of an increasingly rare natural environment.
4. Turning to the nitrate issue the Assessment carried out in support of the application states that the development would result in a net nitrate increase which will be directed to the Thornham Wastewater Treatment works. Whilst this increase can be bought off by a financial contribution in accordance with Havant's Position Statement this in itself does nothing to actually address what is currently a very serious risk of further pollution to the harbour SSSI. The Position Statement is based on the advice of Natural England. The lawfulness of that advice is now awaiting the decision of the Court of Appeal. This is yet another example of meeting the government's flawed algorithm housing numbers at the expense of the environment.