

As the case officer for the planning application APP/21/00647, I am writing to you to register my total opposition to the possibility of building houses on Southmere field in Langstone.

I oppose this application due to the following issues:-

- a) **Southmere** The site of this planning application **is not listed as a development site** in the Local Plan Housing Statement. There is no current need to change an earlier decision and HBC should stand by that decision.
- b) **Access to the A3023:** Everything that goes to and from Hayling Island passes through our village. Existing policy states that **additional access points, or an intensification of use of existing accesses, will not be permitted**, unless they form part of a proposal to deliver a development site allocated in the Plan. The development is not in the Plan and it seems Persimmon intends to avoid this policy by planning access to their development via an existing access road, The Mallards, a road which empties into the A3023 only a few meters further on.
- c) **Important animal food chain:** The planning application states that the site is used for animal grazing. This is inaccurate, instead **it is mown to provide valuable animal feed**. This food is transported to a neighbouring dairy farm at Warblington to replace grazing lost by the farm as a result of an earlier development. The consequence of losing access to animal food for a second time should not be dismissed.
- d) **Valuable habitat:** Southmere is known to be **an important habitat for a number of rare and threatened species** including curlews (British Trust for Ornithology - red listed); water voles (known to inhabit the stream which runs along the western border of the site); and barn owls (a pair has been breeding on the site and has regularly been seen hunting on the site). This site also creates a valuable habitat for bees and other wildlife. It also provides an important wildlife corridor, linking Southmere to the stream and the wider conservation areas.
- e) **Carbon capture:** Wildlife meadows are important contributors to carbon capture. Because of its high proportion of leguminous plants and its soil ecosystem, **Southmere is capable of absorbing carbon and should be considered a carbon sink**. By putting houses on it we lose the advantage of the field - leading to more searches for mitigation. There is no proof offered that the advantages of building on Southmere are greater than the multiple values of keeping nature as it is.
- f) **Utilising the site:** Whilst the area of the land is stated as 2.9 hectares, the developed plan seems to concentrate houses on the northern half of the site. Is this to make further development applications easier and to provide a short-term solution to meeting Conservation Area requirements? This needs clarification.
- g) **Flooding:** Government legislation to prevent planning permission where there is a risk of flooding doesn't seem to have been adequately considered. It is inaccurate for Persimmon to suggest the field doesn't flood. **It floods when the field cannot absorb more rainfall. This happens at least two or three times a year**. Statements on flooding need re-examining.
- h) **Legal Covenant:** **There is a legal covenant covering the site**, signed by HBC in March 1980. The covenant states that *"no house or dwelling unit shall be built on the land and the land shall not be developed to provide any residential accommodation of any sort."* Some are trying to conclude the covenant is old and

has no residual power, and that similar covenants have been successfully overturned. Legal advice from two sources suggests this is inaccurate in our case and the covenant remains legally binding.