

09 AUG 2021

Adrian Ellis
Case Officer
Planning Services
Public Services Plaza
Havant
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Dear Mr Ellis

APPLICATION No APP/21/00647 Outline application for 65 dwellings on Southmere Field lying south of The Mallards and west of Langstone Road,

I strongly oppose the application to build new homes on the land south of the Mallards, known as Southmere Field for the following reasons:-

Southmere is an important component of the setting of Langstone. The field so dominates the village that any development will completely change the rural character of Langstone and instead make it part of an urban sprawl with no account of its Ramsar status or the unacceptable affect on the Mill Lane Conservation Area and the neighbouring area of outstanding national beauty within Chichester Harbour. In short the field must not be considered in isolation, but instead be seen as part of the mosaic which makes Langstone so attractive for people and wildlife.

The Mill Lane Conservation Area, The Character Appraisal & Management Plan, report of 2017, clearly indicates that the local planning authority has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The same report comments "other than buildings, boundary walls and hedging create a rural character and there is little in the way of street furniture. Street lighting exists in low numbers and consists of black, cast iron poles topped with glass lanterns specifically selected in recognition of the Conservation Area". Compare this with the proposed modern estate and the jarring differences couldn't be more obvious. The earlier decision not to develop Southmere was correct and nothing has changed to warrant review. The Council must maintain its moral and ethical position and not allow Southmere to be built on.

Green Corridor: Southmere is central to a green corridor linking Langstone and Chichester Harbours. The field 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). This site also creates a valuable habitat for bees and other wildlife and it is simply misleading to suggest the presence of wildlife is not significant as those who see the field daily can testify.

Access to the A3023: 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. This development is not in the Plan and it seems Persimmon intends to avoid the policy by planning access to their development via an existing access road to the Mallards, a road that a few meters further on empties into the A3023.

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. The field is a haven for 58 species of vascular plants making the feed of extremely high quality. This food is transported to a neighbouring dairy farm at Warblington to replace grazing lost by earlier development.

Wild Meadows & Carbon capture: Approximately 97% of our wild meadows have been lost since World War Two. Central Government policy is to reverse this trend by promoting new areas of natural meadow lands, a policy supported by the Prince of Wales and several of his sponsored organisations. How can this be squared with considering the destruction of our meadow which has never been ploughed and has been part of Langstone for hundreds of years. Furthermore, our Planners must not forget wildlife meadows are important contributors to carbon capture. Because of its high proportion of leguminous plants and its soil ecosystem, Southmere is a carbon sink and by putting houses on it we lose the advantage of the field probably leading to more searches for mitigation.

Flooding: Government legislation to prevent planning permission where there is a risk of flooding hasn't been adequately considered. Historically the field floods along the western boundary and the southeast corner. However this has changed following the twice daily flooding of Southmoor field next to Southmere. Southmoor flooding is new and is caused by the breaching of seawall defences. This has affected the ability of Langbrook stream and Southmere to drain water. Add to this the realisation of rising sea levels and flooding assumptions for Southmere become questionable

Archaeology: It is interesting to note the many points of disagreement made by Hampshire County Council to the applicants' submission. While they may not be sufficient reason to prevent development, it would be prudent to consider them as part of the many other reasons this application must be opposed.

Legal Covenant: Development on Southmere is governed by a covenant which 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."* Signed by the then landowner and HBC in March 1980, some are trying to conclude the covenant is old and has no residual power. Legal advice states differently and suggests that though the covenant was made under section 52 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, superseded by section 106 of the Town and Country Act 1990, it is still valid and remains legally binding. Residents would be outraged if HBC, who is supposed to support and improve their wellbeing, tried to overturn a document designed to protect them

No one disputes the need for more affordable housing but given land values in Langstone, it is unlikely to be achievable. It would be morally outrageous to those needing help, and to existing residents if planning permission was given only to find reality forced the construction of houses which do not help those in need but instead destroyed wildlife habitat and a valuable environment, all for no balanced gain!

Yours sincerely


