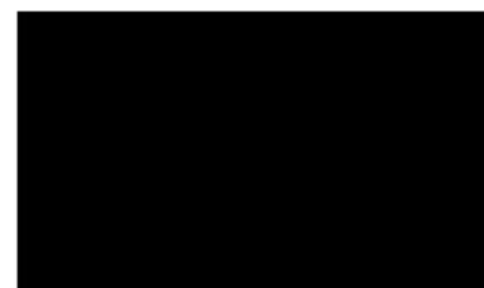


Mrs D Haywood
Planning Service
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
HAVANT
PO9 2AX



21st August, 2018

Dear Mrs Haywood,

APP/18/00672: Land off Westwood Close, Emsworth

Proposed erection of 46no. dwellings with associated parking, access from Westwood Close, diversion of Havant Footpath 73, landscaping and surface water drainage. Felling and works to trees within Area A1, subject to TPO 2071.

Letter of Objection

I would like to object to Application Number APP/18/00672 because I strongly oppose the development proposals for the following reasons:

Conservation

The site of the planning application is part of a beautiful meadow, close to the River Ems and a few yards from our home in Westwood Close. We currently enjoy a tranquil and predominantly rural outlook and fear that this would be totally ruined by this proposed urban extension.

The field in question is currently a rich habitat for insects, owls, birds of prey, woodpeckers both lesser spotted and green and provides nest sites for many woodland birds, ducks and wildlife. The River Ems supports many water creatures such as voles and other mammals which inhabit this peaceful and diverse environment. The river flows downstream to the Brook Meadow area, a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and also a Local Nature Reserve. This proposed development is most likely to affect not only the water quality but also destroy the habitats of many creatures in the Brook Meadow area. Waterfowl also use this area as a natural corridor following the river to the sea.

Bats use this area as a habitat throughout the year, using the field as a hunting ground to forage and breed, also travelling between roosts and feeding grounds. They are extremely vulnerable to the activities of humans and would be directly threatened by the proposed development especially if their habitat is destroyed through tree felling. If bats are disturbed during hibernation, or when baby bats are being born or raised, it can have a hugely detrimental impact on the local bat population. **All bats and their**

roosts are protected by law – yet another reason why this is an ill thought out scheme.

Any proposal to build on this land would disrupt the balance and destroy the character of this open green space, an amenity that is enjoyed by the residents of both Westbourne and Emsworth. Local schools use the River Ems for river studies. Dog walkers and ramblers can be seen daily on the footpath which is part of the Sussex Border Path and this should not be changed.

This is our last chance to preserve the gap between the two villages of Westbourne and Emsworth, which is in a strategic position to be enjoyed by all.

Highway Safety and Traffic

Westwood Close is a quiet cul-de-sac at the moment and quadrupling the number of houses proposed would mean the increased traffic flow accessing this relatively minor road would impact on the residents with noise and disruption on a daily basis. Pollution, both through noise and exhaust fumes would be the result.

Parking within the Close can already be quite difficult with vans, cars and delivery lorries arriving. The Close has a very narrow bend and any increase in traffic would cause delays and put existing vehicles parked on the road at risk. Headlights turning into and exiting the Close would create a nuisance and would spoil the nature of this quiet cul-de-sac.

Increased traffic flow through the Close would cause loss of both privacy and tranquillity. It would also prevent children from playing outside as they are able to do safely at the moment. The quiet environment of the Close that we have enjoyed until now would be lost forever if this proposal goes ahead.

Loss of open spaces, countryside and other natural habitats.

The impact that this proposed development would have on the residents of Westwood Close would be immense. In many ways this is a poorly thought out scheme, building on waterlogged land – with poor drainage and in an area which is clearly an area of open green space which should be preserved as a natural amenity.

This is our last chance to save the habitats, border path and meadow between the villages of Emsworth and Westbourne. This area provides natural corridors for the wildlife and residents to move around and adds to the local amenity of both communities.

The lovely wooded area and open green space prevents the villages merging and this is an excellent opportunity to safeguard our countryside from further urban encroachment. The tranquillity and richness of habitats would be destroyed.

Flood Risk

The site chosen for this development is on land very close to Flood Zones 2 and 3. Despite its lower flood risk status this Flood Zone 1 land is waterlogged, boggy and muddy during the wetter months. Cows normally graze here and the water table is very high whenever there is sustained rainy weather. Any drainage surveys done in the Autumn, Winter and Spring would confirm this fact.

Use of SuDS would I am sure be costly and the proposed houses would in all probability have problems with saturated gardens and standing water. We know this from our experience here, where our gardens habitually become waterlogged and virtually unusable from the late Autumn through to the Spring.

The definition of a flood plain is "...an area of low lying land adjacent to a river and is subject to flooding". This land is not suitable for housing and we should be leaving it as a flood management area it is there for a reason.

Poor judgement then to choose a site which is so close to Zones 2 and 3 and has such diverse wildlife living there already.

Whatever measures are proposed would not change the fact this is a flood zone and not suitable for residential development. Would it not be far better to use brownfield land and accommodate all possible development on previously-developed sites? The greenfield land which this planning application proposes to develop is a precious local amenity which is so necessary for the well-being of humans and animals.

Effect on outlook and privacy

The proposed development would be both harmful and unacceptable and would cause the sad loss of a distinctive loss of natural amenity. It is hard to believe that anyone would wish to build on such a diverse rural amenity, with all its varied wildlife. To build on land which would include the felling of precious trees which are a habitat for bats, an endangered species, is quite intolerable.

Conclusion

I sincerely hope that Havant Borough Council will refuse this planning application as it is an ill-thought out scheme.

We do not want or need this BLOT ON THE LANDSCAPE that this development would create, especially when there are other sites much better suited for housing in urban areas.

A small site in the bigger scheme of things it may be but, if developed for housing, one which would have a permanent and devastating effect on the environment and quality of life of residents of Westwood Close.

Do we really want this on our conscience and not challenge this scheme, allowing a beautiful meadow to be lost forever?

Yours sincerely,

