

Southmere Field : Objections to Planning Application APP/21/00647

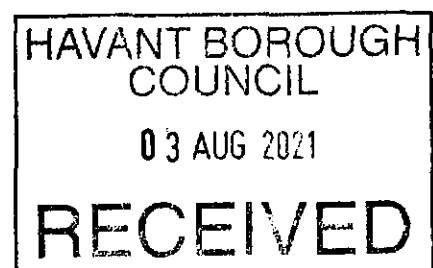
I wish to lodge the following objections concerning Planning Application APP/21/00647.

There are many reasons to raise objections to this speculative development, and local residents have already started to file their own reasons for opposing this application. Objections include :

- exclusion of this land from the draft local plan
- the existence of a covenant, agreed by Havant Borough Council (HBC), preventing development of this land
- HBC's stated policy of refusing developments accessing the A3023 (the current access proposal is a cynical attempt to by-pass this policy)
- the council's stated policy of protecting wildlife on this site
- the availability of other sites within the borough where building has not proceeded
- adverse impact on traffic levels

I sincerely hope that those HBC officers responsible for considering the objections received will consider seriously the impact this development will have on the local area. This is not a 'nimby' objection ('not in my backyard') – there are many other locations within the borough with planning approval but which have not been progressed for a variety of difficulties. But just because they are difficult does not mean they should not be pursued, and to select a soft target such as Southmere Field would demonstrate a weakness in the structure and execution of the local plan. Indeed, the most worrying comment comes from HBC's own Housing Department, who support the application, despite being part of an organisation, HBC, whose stated policies should lead to its outright rejection.

Following is my detailed input :



1. **Communication** : the Local Authority does not appear to have met its duty to ensure adequate publicity and awareness of the planning application. No notices have been posted adjacent to Southmere Field alerting local residents. Awareness has spread largely through word of mouth, which is an inappropriate communication method for such an important local development.
2. **Transport impact** :
 - a. **Access to development** : the proposal to use The Mallards as the first entry point for the development, with an opening within 100 metres of the junction between The Mallards and the A3023, is a blatant tactic to avoid Havant Borough Council's decision to ban any new accesses directly onto the A3023. For the purposes of reviewing the planning application, the entry point to the proposed development should be considered to be directly onto the A3023, and consequently the application should be rejected.
 - b. **Impact on A3023** : traffic travelling south along the A3023 will need to turn right to access The Mallards. There is a 'right turn lane' for this purpose, but the planned increase in traffic likely to arise from this development will cause queues and tailbacks on the southbound carriageway as that 'right turn lane' will be insufficient to cater for all traffic turning right, and traffic will consequently queue in the southbound lane until it is able to move forward. Traffic frequently backs up to the roundabout linking the A3023 with the A27, and this development will only exacerbate that issue.
 - c. **Accidents** : although the application minimises the impact that road traffic accidents may have on the development, there is a difference between traffic activity associated with around 40 homes (in the existing Mallards) and

traffic activity associated with over 100 homes. A cycle path crosses the access to The Mallards and the proposed increase in traffic will inevitably cause issues at this point.

3. Ecological :

- a. One of the justifications for the loss of the Bosmere School field (now the Premier inn and Langbrook Family Restaurant) was that the Southmere Field would accommodate any wildlife displaced by that earlier development. The planning process for the Bosmere field must have accepted that argument, and consequently that justification should be sustained by rejecting this application.
- b. Furthermore, the Southmere Field , not having been ploughed for over 100 years, is a necessary haven for wildlife, including protected bird species.
- c. Southmere Field is subject to a covenant which has existed for over 40 years, preventing any residential development on the site. Havant Borough Council has previously agreed the binding nature of this covenant, which contributed to the exclusion of this field from the Local Plan (draft).
- d. Persimmon's own ecological survey states that development of the site will impact support areas and habitats used by solent waders, brent geese, over-wintering birds, roosting bats and dormice. It would also increase nitrate discharge and, furthermore, impact recreational resources. This report then highlights that the National Planning Policy Framework states that "the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitat's site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)" unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or

project would not adversely affect the integrity of the habitat's site." That report goes to highlight that the proposed development is inconsistent with a number of Havant Borough Council's own policies in relation to protection of wildlife. It would seem, based on this evidence, that the application should be dismissed.

4. Proposed site layout :

- a. The sketchy outline plan for the site shows that a strip of land adjacent to Mill Lane will be unused in the current application. It needs to be clarified if there would be further applications to use the remaining land, in order that the full impact of proposed development on the field can be assessed.
- b. There are no detailed drawings showing the proposed layout of the site. Although there are descriptions of the housing mix, there is no visualisation of the development, to aid assessment of the development's impact. The proposed houses are described as 2 or 2.5 storey dwellings, with no indication on the height. An application for the development of 65 dwellings should include some visual representation of the 'finished product' in order for the impact such a development would have to be visible to all.
- c. Persimmon's 'Design Approach' document states that the development 'must reflect the character and appearance of the local area'. Cramming 65 dwellings into part of a field is not consistent with the existing local housing.
- d. Parking : there is no indication of the parking provision for the proposed 65 dwellings. Failure to provide adequate parking provision will have a knock-on effect in The Mallards and surrounding roads which will be used to accommodate excess vehicles.

5. Persimmon Homes : searches indicate that more than 50% of owners providing an assessment of Persimmon Homes rated the company as *bad or poor, frequently regretting the decision to purchase from this company*. In the unlikely event that the concept of using Southmere Field for development should be taken forward, given the sensitivity and care needed in any potential development, then it appears that the developer themselves, like their application, is not fit for purpose.
6. Consultee comments : although the Persimmon Design Approach statement concludes that the input from groups consulted contain 'no technical or environmental objections which preclude development', that conclusion is not consistent with the comments on file. The individual consultee comments include *negative assessments of the planning application*. With so many issues raised by the experts involved, the application should be dismissed out of hand.
 - a. Community Infrastructure Officer : under S106, among other specific requirements, highlights the need for 'Site Specific Transport Improvements.' None are identifiable in the application, which (as noted above) seeks to by-pass HBC policy on access to the A3023
 - b. Portsmouth Water : no objections are raised but the input is focussed on protection of groundwater sources. There is no input from Southern Water, who were recently fined for illegally discharging effluent into the sea. Southern Water repeatedly demonstrate that as an organisation they are woefully inadequate at coping with the existing waste requirements for the area. Adding the output of 65 dwellings (and even a smaller number should this original plan be revised) is beyond their capabilities.
 - c. Traffic Team : in light of the council's policy of not adding further accesses to the A3023, the lack of comment is disappointing.

- d. NHS : input highlights the additional pressure that would be placed on local resources, and notes the need for additional workforce and capacity to cope with the increased demand on NHS services, services which local residents know are already stressed.
- e. Education : no impact, additional demand can be absorbed
- f. Fire Service : the input includes comment that “Where the operation of a high reach vehicle is envisaged, a road or hard standing is required 6m wide. In addition, the road or hard standing needs to be positioned so that its nearer edge is not less than 3m from the face of the building.” The planning application refers to ‘2,5 storey’ houses. Therefore the Fire Service advice on layout needs to be incorporated.
- g. Housing : the input from the Housing Department appears to be at odds with the exclusion of Southmere Field from the Local Plan. The department’s input welcomes the development, despite Southmere Field not being included in the Local Plan.
- h. Minerals and Waste : the application is stated to be contrary to Policy 15 of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, concerning the safeguarding of mineral resources.
- i. Arboricultural : Although in agreement, the assessment requires roads to be outside the root protection areas of existing trees. However, the ‘Structure Diagram’ shows at least two roads within the development in close proximity to the existing tree line on the western boundary.
- j. Building Control : unable to comment, which says it all.

In conclusion therefore, there are multiple reasons to reject this speculative application.

