

Planning Development
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant
Hampshire
PO9 2AX

Your Ref: APP/21/01434

OBJECTION

Sirs,

It is with great sadness and frustration that I write to you once again to register my objection to the planned developments at Rook Farm. This is not the first time I have objected to developments at this location, having written to you in 2007, 2017 and 2022. Unfortunately, I find myself driven to write to you yet again, to object in the strongest possible terms against this development. This letter represents an update to the objection lodged in 2022.

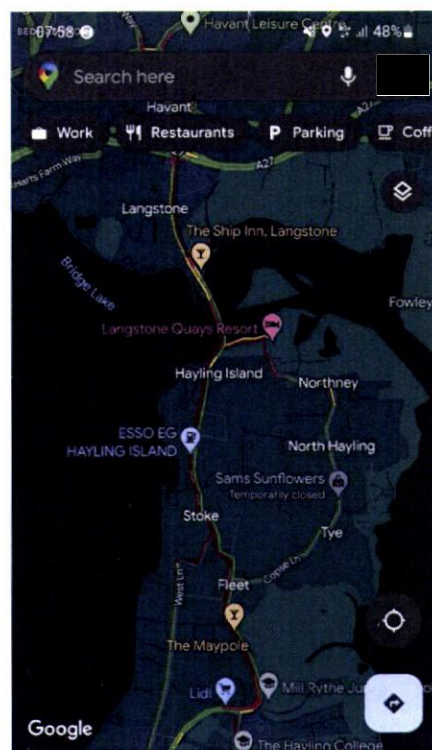
This development fails the tests laid out by the Council on a number of points, specifically sustainability and loss of open space and natural habitats. However, it is the fundamental lack of infrastructure to support this scale of development and the ongoing risks due to erosion and flooding that is at the core of this objection. Hayling Island simply does not have the infrastructure to cope, and there are no plans to improve it on the scale required such that it might.

The development of up to 300 houses means potentially another up to 600 cars driving on and off the island every day. The recent increase in the number of people working from home cannot be taken into account, as we have now exited the Covid-19 pandemic the number of people working from home has only reduced. Nor are there sufficient jobs available on the island to provide for on-island work. In fact there are *no* positions on the island available that could support a mortgage for the types of properties under consideration for construction. All employers offering jobs of the type that would sustain a property of the order proposed in this application are off the Island. The result would be an increase in traffic that the local area and singular road on and off the island cannot support.

There have been multiple instances recently where the island has been isolated or gridlocked due to traffic incidents and the single connection to the mainland. These incidents have been varied and include breakdowns on the bridge, burst water mains, accidents, and bridge closures due to storms and high tides. It only takes a single broken down vehicle to bring the island to a standstill. The

alternative routes off the island – through Northney or along West Lane – are narrow, unsuitable for large or long vehicles, and have regularly become blocked themselves following an incident on the main road, compounding the problem even further. The resulting traffic jams often block traffic into Havant, in both directions on the A27, and as far as the A3 at Horndean. The burst water main on Havant Road resulted in deliveries being suspended by one major supermarket to the entire Island for five days. Another 600 cars will only make these issues worse and more regular, and there are no plans to mitigate this.

The review by National Highways has considered the impact to traffic but has been primarily concerned with the trunk road infrastructure, i.e. the A27. The problems are not here, but on the local Hayling Island infrastructure with its singular access to and from the mainland for which there is no alternative route. This screenshot is typical of the gridlock the island regularly experiences following an incident on Hayling Bridge, causing hours of delays:



Source: Google Maps

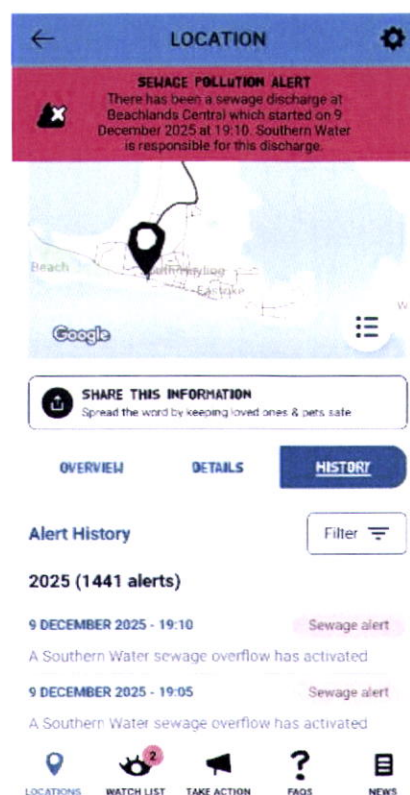
The Hayling bridge was built in 1956 and no expansion of the connection to the mainland has taken place since then. It has remained the same for *over 65 years* without any investment to increase its capacity. Note that Hayling Island's population was c. 6,000 in 1956. It is now c. 20,000.

Additionally, the development proposes to link to the island's main road at the existing junction between Church Road, Tournerbury Land and St. Mary's Road. This is already a busy and complex junction and the scene of a number of accidents. Egress of a vastly increased number of vehicles from the development at this junction represents a significant risk to vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This junction is the only access in and out of the proposed development to the road network. There are four schools/nurseries within 250m of this junction.

The infrastructure issues of the island are dominated by the single road on and off the island as described. However, there are further infrastructure issues that a large development would compound. Schools would have to accommodate up to 720 additional pupil places (300 x 2.4 children) – this number represents more than the entire number of students at Hayling College. No expansion of the school system on the island is proposed. The doctor's and dentist's surgeries would have to find spaces for up to 1,320 additional people (300 x 4.4 people per house). No additional doctor or dentist facilities or expansions are proposed in this application.

In 2017, in objecting to the previous proposed development at Rook Farm, I wrote to the council to ask that the maximum residential capacity of Hayling Island, given its uniquely limited infrastructure, be defined. Given the unique geographical nature of Hayling Island, its limited transport bandwidth to the mainland, and limited services infrastructure, there must be a limit on the number of houses that can be built and be sustainable in terms of that infrastructure, and there must be a commitment to not exceed this. Despite noting the lack of response in my letter of 2022, I have to this day never received a figure. I note that the Rook Farm development proposal of 2017, reference APP/17/00007, was declined, and despite trying again, this application, APP/21/01434, declined again in 2022.

The island's sewerage system already cannot cope, with sewage seen from the air to be spilling via the overflow into the sea. The fines for this are paid by Southern Water, but this is ultimately pointless since these costs are simply passed down to residents through higher rates. The limitations of local infrastructure is specifically highlighted by the quantity of sewage discharges around the island. In the year 2025 to date, there have been over 1400 discharges of sewage as disclosed by Southern Water:

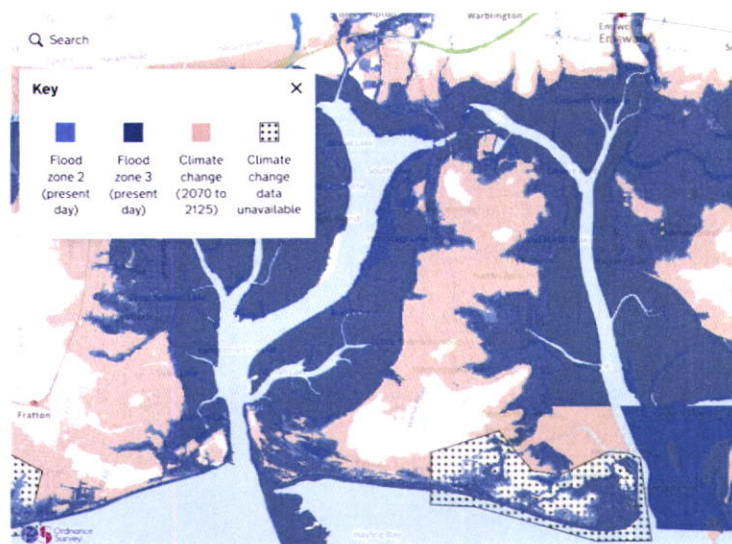


Source: Safer Seas and Rivers Service

Instead of addressing the infrastructure shortcomings, various services have been withdrawn from the Island. Waste glass collections no longer take place at the Island's only Waste and Recycling Collection point. The glass collections at various places on the island are regularly overflowing. The dedicated Police station has been closed for a number of years. The designated Green Space for the Fathoms Reach complex was left to ruin and eventually handed back to Taylor Wimpey. Despite the fact that this now overgrown patch of land has become a haven for wildlife, the land has already been earmarked for even more houses. It goes without saying it would be a further catastrophe if this development were to progress.

The Rook Farm development would constitute the further loss of acres of not only green field space, but in fact prime, productive, agricultural land. This green space is also the wintering ground for hundreds of Brent Geese, who return every year. The area is also home to deer, foxes, skylarks, and a myriad of other wild animals and flora. These would all be lost forever.

Hayling also suffers from serious erosion and flooding concerns. Substantial housing development such as the one being considered in this application requires the development to be sound for 100 years. This is patently not the case on Hayling.



Source: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/map?seg=fz,fzcl&cz=475705.5,101989.6,13.611111>

As can be seen, a substantial amount of Hayling is at risk of being under water before 2125. Moreover, the access on and off Hayling, which has already been detailed as a serious issue, will be largely under water based on current predictions. The development does not satisfy the National Planning Policy Framework requirements for being safe and sustainable for 100 years – not necessarily because they will be under water themselves, but because access to them will be considerably impaired.

The island of Portsea has a £180 million sea defence scheme to protect the City of Portsmouth (source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-66925666>), due to complete in 2029. Hayling Island has no such defence, nor is any such defence planned. The result is that Hayling is at the mercy of rising sea water, relentless storm damage, and erosion. A dramatic demonstration of this is the loss of part of the sea front at West Beach in 2019-2020 (Storm Eleanora) including the loss of West Beach car park as clearly shown in the following photograph:



Source: S. Whitby Aerial Photography

Additionally, a 140m timber revetment near the golf club, deemed beyond repair, was removed in 2020 - accelerating erosion rates. It was not replaced. Erosion is clearly and publicly evident at many other places on the Island, for example at its western coastline where erosion continues to threaten the Billy Trail. Clearly, Hayling Island is unprotected from future erosion, rising sea levels and flood events. If the council cannot, or will not, protect the island from these events – perhaps on the basis of cost – then the only reasonable decision that can be made is to not build any more houses.

The Exception Test Commentary states “tidal flood risk to the single access onto Hayling Island is significant. This would make voluntary movement of people on or off the Island as well as emergency access by road at the time of a flood event impossible”. This risk cannot be considered to be satisfactorily addressed by this development, nor is it outweighed by notable sustainability benefits to the community. This reason in itself should be sufficient to not proceed with this application. It is condemning another 300 households to be marooned.

The previous Local Plan of 2022 was rejected as unsound. The 2025 Local Plan subsequently did not recommend any permanent new housing on the island. These applications only persist because they are officially classified as “allocated”. This does not mean they are safe. It does not automatically protect them from flooding. It absolutely should not afford them any automatic right to progress.

The Council must address the limitations of the Island’s infrastructure when considering this application. These issues were at the core of the refusal to grant permission for a similar development in 2017. If permission were to be granted, then the Council must explain what has improved since then to make this development acceptable. In fact, nothing has improved. A multitude of small developments, such as flats on brown field sites, and the completion of the large sites at Tournerbury and Pebble Walk, has only made things worse.

I propose to the Council that not only should this development application be declined, but also that *all* developments of this nature on Hayling Island are stopped – in line with the requirements of the NPPF – and permanently, whether they were proposed before the current 2025 Local Plan or not.

They should at least be withheld until such time that Hayling's chronic infrastructure issues and long term flooding risks are addressed. These developments are not sustainable and are an affront to the Council's commitments to its residents. Additionally, an absolute definition of the maximum number of residences that the Council is willing to remain at risk should be declared, with properly thought through and supported investigation into what the Island can reasonably and sustainably support. The Hayling Island population may already be in excess of this figure.

At the time I write this, there are an astonishing 2122 objection comments to this application plus many more as files. There are only 10 comments in support – of which 5 appear to have been misclassified and actually read as objections. The level of public opposition to this application is abundantly clear and the Council should take note of this when coming to a decision on this application.

I hereby register my objection to the development at Rook Farm with all my strength.

Yours,

