

Dear Councillor,

I am writing to express my serious concerns regarding planning application APP/26/00324 for the proposed Southleigh Strategic Development and to ask for your support in ensuring that the application is subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny before any decision is made.

I recognise that Havant Borough needs new housing, but I am deeply concerned that this proposal is being brought forward without adequate evidence that the necessary transport and wastewater infrastructure can be delivered in a timely and sustainable manner. The scale of the development is such that any failure to provide infrastructure first will have long-term consequences for existing residents, public services and the environment.

1. Transport infrastructure remains inadequate

The proposed development of approximately 1,800 homes, together with a primary school, local centre and associated facilities, will generate a substantial increase in traffic movements.

However, the Southleigh site is effectively isolated from the Strategic Road Network.

The site is separated from the A27 by two busy main railway lines, and access can currently only be achieved via:

- two single carriageway road bridges;
- the Warblington level crossing;
- the restricted height railway underpass at Emsworth.

These routes already experience significant congestion and delay during normal weekday conditions and were never designed to accommodate traffic associated with a development of this magnitude.

I therefore believe the application places excessive reliance upon infrastructure that is already operating close to, or beyond, practical capacity.

2. Construction traffic has been underestimated

I am particularly concerned that the application does not adequately address the impact of several years of construction traffic.

Without the A27 Link Road being constructed before development commences, every construction vehicle, heavy goods vehicle, contractor and delivery vehicle will be forced to use the existing constrained local road network.

This will inevitably result in:

- severe congestion;
- increased road safety risks;
- deterioration of local roads;
- additional noise and air pollution;
- significant disruption to existing residents and businesses.

Construction traffic should not be routed through established residential communities because the strategic infrastructure has not yet been delivered.

The A27 Link Road should therefore be a precondition of development, not infrastructure delivered later in the build programme.

3. Emergency vehicle access and public safety

One of my most serious concerns relates to emergency access.

Emergency vehicles responding to incidents north of the railway crossing on Southleigh Road are already delayed by congestion and by the operation of the level crossing barriers.

This situation is well known locally.

A development of this scale will substantially increase traffic through these constrained access points, with the potential to further delay: ambulances; fire appliances and police vehicles.

This is not merely a matter of inconvenience; it is a matter of public safety.

The application should demonstrate, using robust evidence, that emergency response times will not be adversely affected.

Until that can be clearly demonstrated, I do not believe the proposal can reasonably be regarded as sustainable development.

4. Regional transport impacts have not been fully addressed

The proposal should also be considered alongside the cumulative impact of development occurring outside Havant Borough.

Significant housing growth has already taken place, and further development is proposed, within Southbourne, Hambrook and Nutbourne under Chichester District Council.

There are currently no junctions on the A27 between Warblington and Chichester, which represents a substantial gap in the Strategic Road Network.

Without a new A27 connection, increasing volumes of traffic from both existing and proposed developments will continue to be funnelled onto unsuitable local roads.

The Southleigh Link Road would provide an opportunity to improve strategic connectivity and network resilience across the wider area.

The cumulative impacts of development across local authority boundaries require considerably greater assessment than appears to have been undertaken.

5. Wastewater infrastructure has not been adequately demonstrated

Perhaps my greatest concern relates to Southern Water's Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works.

The application does not appear to provide clear evidence that Budds Farm has sufficient treatment capacity to accommodate the additional wastewater generated by approximately 1,800 new homes.

Before any approval is considered, the Council should require clear evidence regarding:

- which wastewater treatment works will receive the additional foul flows;
- whether sufficient treatment capacity currently exists;
- whether future capacity has been fully funded;
- whether any upgrades are required before occupation of the development.

As the receiving treatment works is expected to be Budds Farm, these questions are of fundamental importance.

6. Existing problems at Budds Farm

Budds Farm is already widely recognised as experiencing significant operational pressures.

Storm overflow discharges into Langstone Harbour have occurred on numerous occasions, contributing to widespread public concern regarding wastewater management and environmental performance.

Before permitting a development of this scale, Southern Water should be required to demonstrate:

- existing treatment capacity;
- hydraulic capacity;
- compliance with environmental permit requirements;
- whether sufficient land exists for future expansion;

- whether necessary infrastructure improvements have been fully funded;
- the timetable for delivery of those improvements.

Without this information, it is impossible to conclude that adequate wastewater infrastructure exists.

7. Harm to Langstone Harbour

Langstone Harbour is one of the most environmentally important coastal habitats in the country and benefits from multiple national and international environmental designations.

Additional untreated or partially treated wastewater entering the harbour has the potential to contribute towards:

- nutrient enrichment;
- deterioration of water quality;
- algal blooms;
- reduced dissolved oxygen levels;
- damage to sensitive marine habitats;
- impacts on internationally important bird populations;
- impacts on shellfish waters;
- reduced recreational water quality;
- adverse effects on sailing, paddle sports, tourism and the local coastal economy.

These are not abstract environmental concerns. They affect biodiversity, public health, recreation and the long-term condition of one of Havant's most valuable natural assets.

The Council has legal responsibilities under the Habitats Regulations, and it is essential that the implications for Langstone Harbour are fully assessed before any decision is made.

8. A precautionary approach is essential

My overriding concern is that the application seeks approval for a major development before the necessary infrastructure has been secured.

In particular:

- the A27 Link Road has not been delivered;
- emergency access concerns remain unresolved;

- cumulative traffic impacts require further assessment;
- construction traffic would place unacceptable pressure on local roads;
- the capacity of Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works has not been demonstrated;
- the potential environmental consequences for Langstone Harbour have not been satisfactorily addressed.

I therefore urge you to seek assurances that no approval will be granted unless these fundamental infrastructure issues are fully resolved and secured through legally enforceable commitments.

This development will have consequences for Havant Borough for generations to come. Our elected Councillors must ensure Infrastructure is delivered first, rather than allowing the burden to fall on existing communities, already overstretched public assets and one of the Solent's most important protected environments.

I have made comments on the application via the planning portal, and would be grateful if you could raise these concerns with fellow councillors and officers and let me know your views on the application.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted contact information]