**MAJOR HOUSE BUILDING IN LANGSTONE- SOUTHMERE**

As you may already have heard, Persimmon Homes South Coast (PHSC) has submitted an application for Outline Planning permission to build 65 new homes on the land adjacent to Langstone Road (A3023) south of The Mallards. The Application may be viewed on the Havant Borough Council site <https://planningpublicaccess.havant.gov.uk/online-application>

The application No is APP/21/00647, to be entered into the search bar.

This land is not designated for housing and is not included in the Draft Local Plan. A Transport Assessment was required for Hayling Island as part of the preparation of the Local Plan, elements of which remain unresolved. However, to avoid further stressing of the A3023 before the Adoption of the new Local Plan the Borough Council resolved to refuse permission for any new accesses to be formed onto that road. PHSC propose to defeat that restriction by forming an access to their development from the existing Mallards access road. This would create an unacceptable overload on the junction with the A3023 and compromise the use of other access within The Mallards development.

The field, known as Southmere, is a vital part of a green corridor of undeveloped land linking Chichester and Langstone Harbours and separating the original Langstone settlement from urban Havant. It is an ecological haven for many different plant species and protected birds, having not been ploughed for more than a hundred years. When Bosmere Field was lost to the building of the Langbrook Farm Family Restaurant and a Premier Inns Hotel, the developers excused the loss of that field by arguing the habitat for the displaced wildlife would be replaced at Southmere. Conveniently, they have forgotten that “promise” in their pursuit of profit.

More than 40 years ago, when the development of The Mallards started, the then landowner covenanted with Havant Borough Council to the effect “that no house or other dwelling unit shall be built on the land and the land shall not be developed to provide residential accommodation of any sort.” The Borough Council has previously acknowledged the binding nature of this covenant and maintained and honoured its effect on the site. The present Administration must be reminded of its obligations and reject the application submitted by the voracious developer.

The Havant Borough Local Plan is currently at the Examination in Public stage. The appointed Inspectors will examine the Plan’s soundness and legal compliance and have the power to raise matters, issues or questions they feel need to be taken into account to achieve a good Local Plan. Persimmon Homes South Coast has taken this opportunity to submit a 6 page statement to the Inspectors raising questions about the soundness of the Plan citing a number of areas where it argues the Borough has not complied with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. It contends the Borough has exercised its Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring Housing Authorities, with consultations, but has not gone far enough to assist with providing some of those Authorities help to meet their unmet housing needs. The Report acknowledges the Local Plan sets an appropriate level of additional housing to meet the future need in Havant, but highlights the problems it sees as preventing those targets being met. That allows the authors to argue for the release of “softer” more easily developed sites such as Southmere. It will be sometime before the Inspectors deliver their Report on the Plan, so PHSC have pre-empted the outcome with this speculative application.

The Planning Statement made in support of the application continues the argument referring to the sites in the Borough that have gained planning permission but have not been built. They are the Civic Centre Campus – 225 dwellings and Market Parade -130 dwellings. They highlight the perceived problems with these locations but instead of taking on those challenges they want to develop the easier virgin piece of land we know as Southmere.

The Langstone Residents’ Association, with the strong support of the Langstone Village Association, urge you to submit an OBJECTION to this proposal. Make reference to the unresolved traffic problems of the A3023, the damage any building would inflict on this important ecological jewel and the severing of the green corridor so important to so many birds. The landowner and developer have chosen to ignore the covenant – dated 20 March 1980, which clearly prohibits housing development. Refer also to the loss of valuable soft landscape to be replaced with hard impermeable surfaces which could result in potentially more flooding and increase nitrate pollution in the harbours and so the Solent. Southern Water have recently been fined, heavily, for failing to deal adequately with sewerage and a further 65 houses would simply make matters worse and negate any suggestions of a nitrate neutral development.

This application is a cynical attempt to pick off the easiest site in the area and make the maximum possible profit.

**Please act, submit an objection, before 13 August, 2021 .**

And, remember the ‘relevant considerations’ for objections. ***Development plan policy – Government Policy – Highway safety and traffic*** *– design appearance and layout – effect on daylight, privacy and outlook – conservation of buildings, trees and hedgerows –* ***loss of open space, countryside and other natural habitats – noise, smells and fumes.***

Clearly, not all of these are relevant in this case, just the first 3 and the last 3.

David Pattenden - DGTP 07/2021