



## **Parish Council Objection to EIA Screening Request – Land off Alton Way, Four Marks**

**To:** Head of Planning, East Hampshire District Council

**From:** Four Marks Parish Council

**Subject:** Objection to EIA Screening Opinion Request – Land off Alton Way, Four Marks

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### **Summary Position**

Four Marks Parish Council strongly recommends that East Hampshire District Council issue a **positive EIA Screening Opinion**. The scale, location, and cumulative context of this proposal mean that **significant environmental effects are likely** and cannot be robustly assessed without a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **1. Scale, Density and Urbanising Impact**

- A development of **230 dwellings** on currently open pastureland represents a **major urban extension** in a rural valley landscape.
- The proposal would introduce a **dense estate** entirely out of keeping with the surrounding settlement pattern.
- The Planning Practice Guidance states EIA is more likely where development would have **“significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area.”** This threshold is clearly met.

### **2. Loss of Pastureland and Natural Drainage Function**

- The site is actively farmed and currently contributes to **natural surface-water management**, biodiversity support and landscape character.
- Replacing permeable pasture with hard surfacing will **increase runoff**, reduce infiltration, and heighten downstream flood risk.
- The valley topography amplifies this risk and requires **EIA-level hydrological modelling**.

### **3. Environmental Sensitivity and Protected Habitats**

The applicant’s own Screening Report confirms:

- The site lies within the **Impact Risk Zone of Selborne Common SSSI**.
- The **South Downs National Park** is 630m east.
- A **SINC** lies directly adjacent to the southeast boundary.
- Habitats suitable for **roosting bats, dormice, reptiles, and breeding birds** are present.



Additional local sensitivities:

- **Protected verges** along Alton Lane support the **rare Violet Helleborine Orchid**.
- The lane is a valued rural walking route connecting to **St Swithun's Way**.

These factors indicate a **highly sensitive ecological context** where indirect impacts (light, noise, hydrology, recreation pressure) require full EIA assessment.

#### **4. Landscape and Visual Impact**

- The site rises from **175m to 190m AOD**, forming part of the rural approach to the South Downs National Park.
- It is visible from Alton Lane, Blackberry Lane, nearby footpaths, and residential properties.
- A development of this scale would **permanently alter the rural character**, erode tranquillity, and diminish the amenity value of the surrounding landscape.

#### **5. Traffic, Highway Safety and Rural Lane Constraints**

- The site fronts a **straight 60mph rural lane with no footpaths**, mature trees close to the carriageway, and **existing flooding along much of its length**.
- Additional traffic from 230 dwellings would increase:
  - Accident risk
  - Pressure on an already compromised road surface
  - Pedestrian safety concerns
- The A31 is already congested at peak times, and cumulative growth will worsen this.

These impacts are **significant environmental effects** under Schedule 3 and cannot be screened out.

#### **6. Construction and Operational Emissions**

- A development of this magnitude will generate **noise, dust, waste, lighting, and vehicle emissions** during construction and operation.
- These will materially affect the amenity of nearby residents and the wider rural area.
- Mitigation cannot be relied upon at screening stage to dismiss significant effects.

#### **7. Cumulative Impact – A Critical Material Consideration**

Within a 3km radius, over **1,600 dwellings** are approved, pending, or screened. This includes the **Cresland development (100 homes)** in close proximity.

Cumulative impacts on:



- Highways
- School and healthcare capacity
- Biodiversity
- Landscape character
- Flood risk

...are already being felt. Assessing this proposal **in isolation** would be contrary to Schedule 3 requirements.

### **Conclusion**

The proposal is likely to give rise to **significant environmental effects** due to:

- Its scale and density
- Its proximity to sensitive ecological assets
- The presence of protected species
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Highway and infrastructure constraints
- Flood risk and hydrological complexity
- The substantial cumulative development context

A **full Environmental Impact Assessment** is necessary to ensure these issues are properly understood and mitigated.

Yours sincerely

*Debbie Batley*

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Locum Clerk for Four Marks Parish Council