

Afternoon Steven,

I write to formally object to the proposed development of 260 dwellings in the centre of Copthorne, opposite my home.

My objection is based on clear and substantial planning grounds including:

- Impact on protected wildlife and biodiversity
- Environmental harm and loss of green space
- Severe traffic and highway safety concerns
- Noise and air pollution
- Strain on infrastructure and local services
- Harm to village character and visual amenity
- Impact on neighbouring residential amenity



1. Impact on Protected Wildlife & Biodiversity

The field and mature trees opposite my property are not empty land — they are an established wildlife habitat.

Bats

Long-eared bats (likely Brown Long-Eared Bats), which are a European Protected Species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, roost in the trees opposite. All bat species in the UK are legally protected. The destruction of roosting habitat is a criminal offence unless properly licensed.

Lighting from a 260-home development would significantly disrupt bat foraging routes and commuting corridors.

Hazel Dormouse

Sussex is a known stronghold for the Hazel Dormouse, which is fully protected and a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species. Dormice rely on hedgerows, mature trees, and interconnected habitats. Removing trees and hedgerows fragments habitat and threatens survival.

Deer

Deer are frequently present in this field, including a stag. This land functions as a wildlife corridor. Development will displace deer onto surrounding roads, increasing collision risk.

Protected & Red-Listed Birds in Sussex Likely Present

The trees and open field habitat are suitable for protected and red-listed bird species

commonly found in Sussex, including:

- Eurasian skylark (Red List UK)
- Yellowhammer (Red List UK)
- Song thrush (Red List UK)
- Bullfinch
- Tawny owl

Ground nesting birds such as skylarks are particularly vulnerable to development of open fields.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), developments must provide measurable biodiversity net gain. It is highly questionable whether this proposal can genuinely deliver that in the centre of an established village.

Loss of this green space will:

- Reduce biodiversity
- Remove wildlife corridors
- Increase flood risk (loss of permeable land)
- Increase urban heat effect
- Reduce air quality



2. Severe Traffic & Highway Safety Concerns

Traffic congestion is already severe.

In the mornings, it is often impossible to exit Lashmere directly onto Copthorne Common due to traffic volume. Residents are already forced to divert through the village centre, which is congested.

Adding 260 homes realistically equates to:

- 500–600+ additional vehicles (conservatively 2+ cars per household)
- Increased peak-hour congestion
- Increased rat-running through residential roads
- Increased danger to pedestrians and school children

The proposed two entry/exit points are entirely inadequate for a development of this scale in the heart of a village.

Key concerns:

- Junction capacity already exceeded at peak times
- Increased collision risk
- No clear infrastructure upgrades proposed
- Pressure on public transport (which is already limited)
- Increased emergency vehicle delays

This scale of development in a central location will gridlock Copthorne.



3. Air Pollution & Noise Impact

We already experience regular aircraft noise due to proximity to London Gatwick Airport. With Gatwick pursuing runway expansion, pollution and noise levels are projected to increase significantly.

This proposal compounds that by:

- Adding hundreds of additional vehicles
- Removing mature trees that currently help absorb pollution
- Introducing prolonged construction noise
- Creating ongoing residential noise directly opposite my home

The cumulative impact of aircraft noise + construction + permanent traffic increase is unacceptable.

This will directly impact:

- Sleep
- Mental wellbeing
- Quality of life
- Property enjoyment



4. Infrastructure Is Already Failing

Copthorne has already absorbed a substantial new housing estate in recent years. Promised infrastructure improvements — including a new doctor's surgery — never materialised.

Residents already face:

- Approximately 3-week waits for GP appointments
- Overstretched NHS services
- Limited school capacity
- Increased traffic congestion

You cannot continue to add population without proportionate infrastructure investment.

How can residents realistically access healthcare when appointments are already unavailable?

The village is being incrementally urbanised without the services required to sustain growth.



5. Harm to Character and Appearance of the Village

Copthorne is a village — not a town.

This proposal places 260 houses in the centre of the village, fundamentally altering its scale and character. The previous estate was at least on the outskirts. This proposal urbanises the heart of the community.

Impacts include:

- Loss of open green space
- Urban sprawl appearance
- Visual dominance
- Loss of village identity
- Overdevelopment

This is contrary to policies that seek to preserve settlement character and distinctiveness.



6. Impact on Neighbouring Residential Amenity

As a resident directly opposite the proposed site, I will experience:

- Significant noise during construction (potentially years)
- Permanent traffic noise increase
- Light pollution
- Loss of outlook
- Loss of privacy
- Devaluation of residential amenity

The scale of this proposal is excessive for its location.



7. Cumulative Impact

This development must not be assessed in isolation.

Copthorne is:

- Under aircraft flight paths
- Experiencing airport expansion pressures
- Already expanded via recent estate development
- Experiencing increased commercial pressures

The cumulative environmental, social, and infrastructure strain is overwhelming.



Conclusion

This proposal represents:

- Overdevelopment of a central village site
- Significant environmental harm

- Loss of protected wildlife habitat
- Severe traffic and safety risks
- Unacceptable noise and pollution increase
- Infrastructure strain without mitigation
- Harm to character and neighbouring amenity

Copthorne residents have already absorbed substantial growth. The village infrastructure has not kept pace.

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly urge the Council to refuse this application.

Much appreciated,

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]