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Cherwell District Council  
(Planning and Building Control)  
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5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Your Ref: Planning Application – 26/00086/F  
Buildings Dovecote Farm Heyford Road Somerton

**Comment Type: Objection**

Dear Nicola

Thank you for consulting us on the above proposal

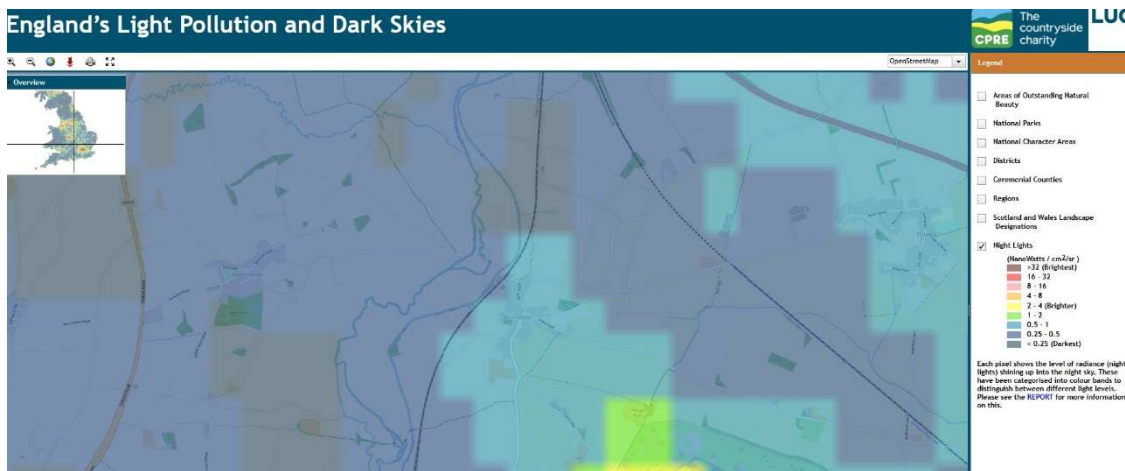
The application seeks permission for 10 houses in a location that is not allocated for housing in the currently adopted Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2015-2031, nor the emerging Local Plan Review 2042, and would furthermore extend the village of Somerton beyond its current built up limit.

Policy PSD1 requires presumption in favour of sustainable development, and we are not clear that this application represents sustainable development when scrutinised against all three overarching objectives as laid out in the NPPF: economic, social and environmental. The location does not lend itself to minimising vehicular trips and amenities are not within comfortable and safe walking or cycling distance.

The consequences of the proposed development are likely to be significant when considering the visual impact on the landscape character in this area of open countryside and how this will be affected by the proposed development.

This proposal would cause irreparable harm to Somerton's unique built, natural and cultural context, of which Policy ESD15 requires consideration for. A significant amount of Somerton's built area is designated a conservation area. A key characteristic described in the conservation area appraisal describes how agriculture was of primary importance to Somerton. The agricultural barns currently present on site add to the rural, agricultural feel of the area and the proposal, in our opinion, will have an overly urbanising impact.

To the south west of the site lays predominantly earthwork remains of Somerton Manor House, designated a scheduled monument. There is a view of the the conservation area from this site, a view Somerton conservation area appraisal considers to be a key view and which would be altered significant by the building of houses as proposed.



The CPRE’s Light Pollution and Dark Skies mapping shows the application site to fall within one of the darker categories at 0.5-1 NanoWatts cm2/sr and the proposed development would increase the brightness of the area. Policy ESD15 requires proposals to limit the impact of light pollution on such intrinsically dark landscapes. Dark skies are relied on by wildlife that navigate by the moon and stars, bright lights confuse them. Nocturnal animals rely on the darkness for foraging and breeding, disruption to their natural cycles can impact their very survival.

It is unclear that there is adequate information for protected species, with limited detailed surveys for specific species. Without an accurate baseline it is not possible to ensure adequate mitigation. We note that the site appears to fall in a red and amber zone on Naturespace Partnership impact risk zone map. The mapping indicates the predicted presence of GCN through the habitat suitability. We are keen to ensure that the opinion of NatureSpace is sought on this proposal.

The site falls within a pastoral landscape setting that provides diverse habitat to a wide range of species, it is important to fully understand the environment impacts of the proposal on this valuable area. Policy ESD10 of the currently adopted Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2015-2031 requires adequate mitigation measures and it must be accepted that if approved, this proposal would cause irrevocable harm to these species using the site.

Water and wastewater infrastructure is of particular concern and the development, if permitted, must adhere to Policy CSD 9 Water resources and wastewater infrastructure in the emerging Cherwell Local plan, with development denied if suitable provision cannot be demonstrated.

Ultimately it is the opinion of CPRE that new homes should be provided through the plan-led system. This is the best means we have of ensuring that development decisions are based on democratic and transparent policies, and that environmental, social and economic needs are met.

Yours faithfully

CPRE Cherwell District committee