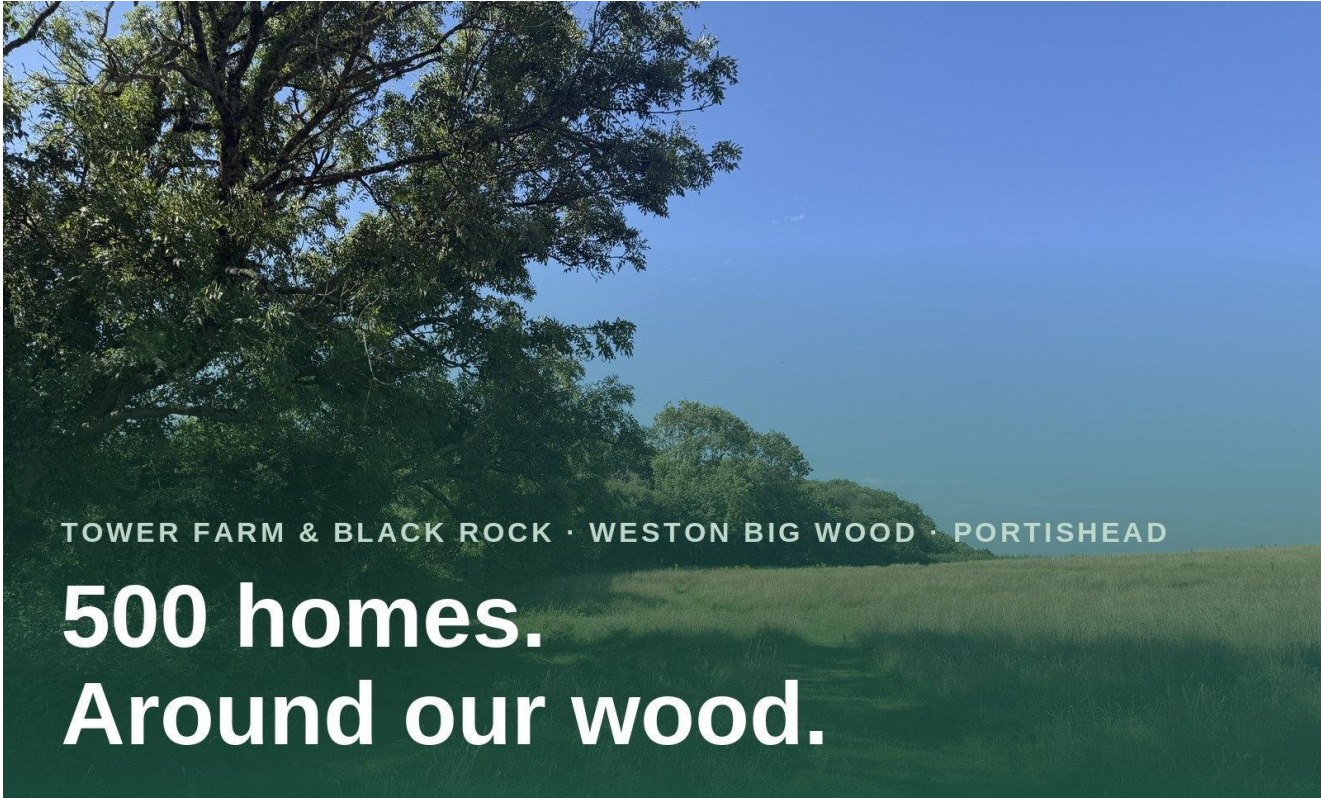




TOWER FARM & BLACK ROCK · WESTON BIG WOOD · PORTISHEAD

500 homes. Around our wood.

Did you know a Government policy meant for scrubland and old car parks is being used to threaten an irreplaceable ancient woodland?

Five facts — then three actions, with everything you need to do them in this document.

- 1. What is being proposed.** Up to 400 homes at Tower Farm, on long-established Green Belt pasture right beside Weston Big Wood — and around 100 more at Black Rock, on the wood's other side. Roughly 500 homes closing in on the wood from both sides at once. Proposed by Parker Strategic Land.
- 2. An irreplaceable wood, already in decline.** Weston Big Wood is ancient woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest — one of the most protected natural sites in the country. Natural England's own records show every part of the wood is getting worse, partly through pressure from visitors. Ancient woodland, once lost, can never be replaced.
- 3. Closed in from both sides.** The two developments — Tower Farm on one side of the wood, Black Rock on the other — would surround Weston Big Wood. No one has looked at what they would do to the wood together. Natural England has warned of possible 'significant adverse effects' on seven protected wildlife sites nearby.
- 4. Water, bats and a wildlife corridor.** Five springs were found on the site — one inside Weston Big Wood, in a zone that protects our drinking water. North Somerset Council's own surveys confirm bats across the Tower Farm site — an area with special legal protection for them — plus badgers, dormice and seven threatened bird species. Building here would cut the wildlife route that links the wood to the Gordano Valley.
- 5. North Somerset Council was warned — but decided not to do the full check.** Natural England, the Council's own flood experts, the drainage board, our own Portishead Town Council — which objects to Tower Farm — and even the developer's own ecologist all said serious harm to the environment cannot be ruled out. Even so, on 24 July 2026 North Somerset Council decided the development does not need a full Environmental Impact Assessment — the formal, public study of the damage it could do.

Three actions. Twenty minutes. Today.

The decision is being made now — not later. Independent Planning Inspectors are deciding whether Tower Farm and Black Rock stay in the North Somerset Local Plan — a public process called the examination. Don't wait for a planning application: once the sites are settled in the plan, they are far harder to challenge.

ACTION 1 — Email your MP (10 minutes)

Step 1 Open a new email to sadik.alhassan.mp@parliament.uk

Step 2 Subject line — copy this exactly: **Tower Farm, Portishead — grey belt policy and the threat to Weston Big Wood SSSI**

Step 3 Copy the whole letter on **pages 3–4** of this document (between the orange dashed lines) and paste it into your email.

Step 4 Fill in the three bracketed gaps — your name, your full address and postcode (an MP normally only acts for his own constituents, so the postcode matters), and your email or phone number.

Step 5 Add one sentence of your own at the marked place — what the wood means to you, or what you see at school drop-off. One honest sentence beats any template.

Step 6 Press send. Done.

Live outside the North Somerset constituency? Go to writetothem.com, type your postcode, and send the same letter to your own MP — the grey belt problem is national and any MP can raise it.

ACTION 2 — Complain about the missing environmental check (10 minutes)

Step 1 Open a new email to Jason.Mak@n-somerset.gov.uk and copy in (Cc) matt.lenny@n-somerset.gov.uk

Step 2 Subject line — copy this exactly: **Objection to the EIA screening decision — Tower Farm, Portishead (reference 26/P/0300/EA1)**

Step 3 Copy the whole letter on **page 5** of this document (between the orange dashed lines) and paste it into your email.

Step 4 Fill in the bracketed gaps — your name, address and email — and add a line of your own at the marked place about why the wood matters to you.

Step 5 Add this one sentence at the end of your email, before your name: **“Please treat this letter as a formal complaint under the Council’s corporate complaints procedure and place it on the public case file for 26/P/0300/EA1.”**

Step 6 Press send. Done.

Every resident is entitled to complain — you do not need to have taken part in any earlier consultation. The more residents on the public case file, the harder the decision is to leave undisturbed.

ACTION 3 — Sign the community petition (2 minutes)

Step 1 Open c.org/jtSDcnf5nT in your web browser — or scan the code with your phone camera.

Step 2 Sign, and when the form asks, **enter your postcode** — that’s how we prove the objection is local, and how the petition carries weight with Ministers and the Inspectors. A signature without a postcode does not show as local.

Step 3 Send the link to three neighbours.



c.org/jtSDcnf5nT

Done all three? Pass this document on to a neighbour.

READY-MADE LETTER 1 — to Sadik Al-Hassan MP (for Action 1)

Copy everything between the orange dashed lines into your email. Fill the [bracketed] gaps. Do not attach this whole document — the letter goes in the body of the email.

✂ COPY FROM HERE

Dear Mr Al-Hassan,

Tower Farm, Portishead — misapplication of Government grey belt policy and the threat to Weston Big Wood SSSI

I am writing as your constituent and as a resident of Portishead directly affected by the proposal to develop up to 400 homes at Tower Farm, on land immediately adjacent to Weston Big Wood — a Site of Special Scientific Interest and one of the most ecologically significant ancient woodlands in the South West.

I understand you have already met local campaigners on this issue, and I am grateful for your engagement. I write not simply to repeat concerns you will have heard, but to set out why I believe this specific case represents a clear misapplication of Government grey belt policy — and why I hope you will feel able to raise that concern with the relevant Minister.

The Government's own words on grey belt

When the grey belt policy was announced, it was described explicitly as targeting poor-quality and ugly areas of the Green Belt: *"disused car parks, dreary wasteland — not a green belt, a grey belt."* Angela Rayner described the grey belt as *"poor-quality scrub land, mothballed on the outskirts of towns,"* and the Government explicitly ruled out building on *"genuine nature spots."*

Tower Farm is long-established pasture adjoining a nationally designated SSSI and ancient woodland. It is not a car park. It is not a disused petrol station. It is not wasteland of any description. Whatever one's view of housing policy in the abstract, it is difficult to see how its classification as grey belt is consistent with the policy's founding purpose.

The site and its ecological significance

Weston Big Wood is not simply a pleasant amenity. It is a nature reserve and biological SSSI of exceptional antiquity: evidence suggests woodland has existed here since trees recolonised after the last Ice Age, some 10,000 years ago. It hosts rare species found almost nowhere else in the country and forms a critical part of the wildlife corridor connecting the Gordano Valley ecosystem — linking Nightingale Valley SSSI, Gordano Valley NNR, Walton Common and Court Hill. The Avon Wildlife Trust, which owns and manages the reserve, has formally objected to allocations that threaten this habitat network.

The December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework, under which the North Somerset Local Plan was submitted to examination in May 2026, contains an explicit protection for exactly this situation: land adjoining a Site of Special Scientific Interest, where the SSSI provides a strong reason for refusing or restricting development, is excluded from the grey belt definition. Granting grey belt status to Tower Farm therefore appears to be in tension not only with the spirit of the policy as announced, but potentially with the letter of the NPPF as it stands.

The Local Plan examination

The North Somerset Local Plan is currently at examination before independent Planning Inspectors. The inclusion of Tower Farm has been formally challenged on soundness grounds — including that it is not justified, not consistent with national policy, and not effective due to unresolved deliverability constraints. Those objections remain live and unresolved; the Inspectors have not found the plan sound. An outline planning application is expected while that examination is ongoing.

It is also worth noting that a commercial developer — Persimmon Homes — has formally stated that the Tower Farm site is unsuitable on transport grounds. The sole vehicular access for 400 homes passes through a cul-de-sac beside two primary schools already documented as dangerously congested at drop-off and pick-up times.

My ask

I am not asking you to oppose the Government's housing programme. North Somerset has a genuine housing need, and I understand the imperative to build more homes. What I am asking is this: would you be willing to raise with the relevant Housing or Planning Minister whether the grey belt classification of Tower Farm is consistent with the policy's stated intent? Specifically:

- 1. Whether land directly adjoining a nationally designated ancient woodland SSSI is the type of site the Government had in mind when it announced the grey belt policy;
- 2. Whether the Government is monitoring how local authorities are applying the grey belt definition, and whether sites like Tower Farm — productive pasture, ecologically sensitive, adjacent to a declining SSSI — are being correctly classified; and
- 3. Whether the Government’s commitment to ruling out development on “genuine nature spots” is being honoured in practice, given CPRE’s research finding that the overwhelming majority of homes permitted on grey belt sites nationally are on previously undeveloped countryside.

[Add one or two sentences of your own here — what the wood means to you and your family, or what you see on the school run. Then delete this instruction.]

I would welcome the opportunity to hear your view, and to meet at one of your constituency surgeries if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your full address and postcode]

[Your email / telephone]

----- ✂ COPY TO HERE -----

READY-MADE LETTER 2 — to North Somerset Council (for Action 2)

Copy everything between the orange dashed lines into your email. Fill the [bracketed] gaps. Remember Step 5 of Action 2: add the formal-complaint sentence at the end of your email.

✂ COPY FROM HERE

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Your email]

[Today's date]

Mr Jason Mak
Planning Case Officer
North Somerset Council
By email: Jason.Mak@n-somerset.gov.uk

Dear Mr Mak,

Objection to the EIA screening decision — Tower Farm, Portishead (reference 26/P/0300/EA1)

I am writing to object to North Somerset Council's decision of 24 July 2026 that no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the proposed development of up to 400 homes at Tower Farm, Portishead.

An EIA is a legal process that requires the developer to identify, assess, and make public the likely significant environmental effects of a development before a planning decision is taken. Where an EIA is screened out — as here — those effects receive no independent scrutiny and the public has no right to see or comment on a formal assessment. Given the location of this site immediately adjacent to Weston Big Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and ancient woodland already recorded by Natural England as being in unfavourable condition, I believe the decision to screen out an EIA is wrong for the following reasons.

1. The Council's own advisers said an EIA was needed.

The Council's Lead Local Flood Authority formally recommended that an EIA be required — and repeated that recommendation when it was first set aside. The Internal Drainage Board agreed. Portishead Town Council agreed. All three of the Council's own consultees were overruled.

2. The developer's own ecologist could not rule out significant environmental effects.

The applicant's ecological report states that significant environmental effects on the SSSI "cannot be ruled out." That is the legal test for whether an EIA is required. If the developer's own expert cannot satisfy it, it is difficult to understand how the Council can reach the opposite conclusion.

3. The developer initially said there were no springs on the site. Five were subsequently found.

One of those springs lies just 80 metres inside Weston Big Wood, within a designated drinking-water source protection zone. Despite this, the Council accepted the developer's case. It did so even though the groundwater survey work that the developer's own documents identify as necessary has not yet been carried out.

4. The decision took nearly five months and then described the effects as merely "localised".

The legal timeframe for a screening decision is three weeks. This decision took close to five months. The Council's conclusion — that effects would be "localised" — is not credible for a site that the application documents themselves say requires a full year of groundwater monitoring, a Habitat Regulations Assessment, and nine separate technical studies.

I ask North Somerset Council to reconsider its screening decision and to require a full Environmental Impact Assessment before any planning application for this site is determined.

[Add a line or two here, in your own words, about why Weston Big Wood and this land matter to you — a personal reason carries more weight than a standard letter. Then delete this instruction.]

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]

✂ COPY TO HERE