

Environment & Missing Data

Plain-English guide for residents objecting to the 550-home Frolesworth Road proposal

Quick summary

- Key environmental issues have not been fully answered before the principle of development is being considered.
- Water quality evidence for Broughton Astley Brook and the River Soar catchment is incomplete.
- Narborough Bog SSSI is downstream, so pollution and phosphate pressure cannot be dismissed.
- Ecology and landscape matters were treated too lightly at scoping stage for a site of this scale.
- Sewage discharges and treatment works capacity concerns increase environmental risk.

Why this matters: planning decisions should be based on complete, up-to-date evidence. Where environmental evidence is missing or uncertain, residents can reasonably ask the Council to pause, refuse or require independent assessment before approval.

1. Missing water quality data

- There is no clear, current public baseline for the health of Broughton Astley Brook.
- Residents have asked for evidence on sewage impacts, phosphate pressure and ecological condition.
- Without this baseline, no one can properly prove 550 homes would not worsen pollution.

Evidence: EA / Natural England correspondence and EIR follow-ups; EA Catchment Data Explorer / Water Quality Data Archive gaps; saved project evidence on missing post-2022 monitoring data.

2. River Soar catchment and Narborough Bog SSSI

- Broughton Astley Brook links into the wider River Soar catchment.
- Pollution, sediment and runoff move downstream beyond the development boundary.
- Narborough Bog SSSI needs proper consideration because it sits downstream in the wider catchment.

Evidence: River Soar Catchment Plan 2023-2028; saved EA ecological status interpretation for Broughton Astley Brook; project evidence on Narborough Bog SSSI downstream risk.

Key environmental evidence gaps

3. Sewage discharge evidence shows environmental stress

- STW evidence confirms limited headroom at Broughton Astley Sewage Treatment Works.
- Only limited works are identified, including optimisation and a 200 m3 auxiliary storm tank.
- FloodMapper / EDM evidence shows repeated discharge events to Broughton Astley Brook.
- Permit breach correspondence is a serious environmental red flag before adding more homes.

Evidence: STW EIR Internal Review on DWF headroom, AMP7 activity gap and 200 m3 tank; STW EIR permit breach correspondence; FloodMapper UK EDM project evidence.

4. Ecology was scoped too lightly

- The scheme is a 43-hectare site for up to 550 homes, not a small infill proposal.
- Land-use change can affect habitats, hedgerows, ponds, protected species, noise, light and runoff.
- Great crested newt, ponds, eDNA/survey evidence and habitat connectivity should be fully addressed.
- Environmental issues should not be scoped out before complete evidence is available.

Evidence: Frolesworth Road EIA scoping material (26/00223/SCP); project analysis on ecology, GCN/eDNA, ponds and habitat connectivity; UKCEH 2026 biodiversity study saved to project.

5. Ground conditions and runoff

- Clay-heavy ground limits natural infiltration and makes soakaways unreliable.
- If water cannot soak away it must be stored, slowed or discharged into drains and watercourses.
- SuDS only work if they are properly designed, funded and maintained for the lifetime of the estate.
- Poorly maintained SuDS lose storage/treatment capacity and can worsen flood and pollution risk.

Evidence: Nearby MEC ground investigation evidence on soakaway limitations; local SuDS maintenance concerns; Frolesworth Road drainage/topography evidence.

6. Cumulative impact is missing

- Frolesworth Road must be assessed alongside Crowfoot Way, Dunton Road and other growth.
- All add pressure to the same sewer network, treatment works, brook, roads and local services.
- The Local Plan consultation evidence records public concern about infrastructure, wastewater, pollution and cumulative impacts.

Evidence: Harborough Local Plan Regulation 18 Statement of Consultation (Aug 2024); STW / Broughton Astley infrastructure evidence base; project evidence on multiple local schemes.

What residents should ask for

Missing information that should be provided before approval

- Current phosphate, ammonia, dissolved oxygen and ecological monitoring for Broughton Astley Brook.
- Post-2022 water quality and ecology trends for the brook and downstream River Soar catchment.
- Assessment of Broughton Astley STW discharge impacts on Broughton Astley Brook.
- A clear Natural England position on any hydrological/ecological pathway to Narborough Bog SSSI.
- Full drainage route and receiving watercourse evidence for the Frolesworth Road site.
- Proof that SuDS maintenance will be funded, enforceable and effective for the lifetime of the development.
- A cumulative assessment of 550 homes plus other committed and proposed local developments.

Why this conflicts with good planning

- Decisions should be based on adequate and up-to-date environmental evidence.
- Development should not worsen pollution, flood risk or pressure on sensitive habitats.
- Where impacts are uncertain, proper assessment should happen before permission, not after.
- Infrastructure and environmental mitigation must be deliverable, funded and maintained.

Evidence: National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Local Plan consultation material; Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan environmental policies.

Example objection text

I object to planning application 26/00480/OUT because the environmental evidence is incomplete. The proposal would add up to 550 homes on a large 43-hectare site, yet key questions remain unanswered about water quality, ecology, sewage discharge impacts, drainage routes and downstream risk. There are unresolved gaps in evidence for Broughton Astley Brook and the River Soar catchment, including phosphate pressure and ecological condition. Narborough Bog SSSI sits downstream in the wider catchment, so this cannot be treated as a minor local issue.

Severn Trent Water EIR material confirms limited headroom at Broughton Astley Sewage Treatment Works and only limited works such as optimisation and a 200 m³ auxiliary storm tank. FloodMapper / EDM evidence also shows repeated sewage discharge activity to Broughton Astley Brook. It is not reasonable to approve hundreds of additional homes without full cumulative wastewater and environmental assessment.

Copy-and-paste objection wording

Longer version:

The application also relies on drainage and SuDS assumptions, but local ground conditions are clay-heavy and nearby evidence shows conventional soakaways are unlikely to be suitable. If SuDS are not properly funded and maintained for the lifetime of the development, they can lose capacity and increase flood and pollution risk. Existing local experience shows that drainage assets can become poorly maintained and disputed. I ask the Council to refuse or pause this application until full, independent and up-to-date evidence is provided on water quality, ecology, wastewater capacity, drainage routes, SuDS maintenance, cumulative impact and downstream environmental risk.

Short version for the portal:

I object because key environmental evidence is missing. The Council should not approve 550 homes until water quality, ecology, sewage discharge impact, drainage routes, SuDS maintenance and cumulative effects on Broughton Astley Brook, the River Soar catchment and Narborough Bog SSSI have been fully assessed.

Evidence references to mention:

References

- STW EIR Internal Review - treatment works capacity, DWF headroom, AMP7 gap and 200 m3 storm tank.
- STW EIR permit breach correspondence - permit compliance concerns.
- FloodMapper UK / EDM monitoring - repeated discharge events from Broughton Astley STW.
- EA / Natural England correspondence and EIR follow-ups - missing water quality and SSSI impact data.
- River Soar Catchment Plan 2023-2028 - catchment stress and need for better water management.
- Harborough Local Plan Regulation 18 Statement of Consultation - infrastructure, wastewater and river pollution concerns.
- Nearby ground investigation evidence - soakaway limitations in local clay ground.
- Frolesworth Road EIA scoping material - concerns about scoping out environmental matters too early.