
Sent: 23 September 2025 11:52
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application DC/25/1312 – Land West of Ifield (Homes England)
Categories: Comments Received

1 Hills Place Cottages
Horsham Road
Rusper
West Sussex RH12 4PR

To Whom it May Concern,

I write to object to the above application on the basis of **significant and demonstrable harm**, supported by statutory breaches, policy conflicts, and inadequate mitigation across multiple disciplines.

1. Policy Basis Collapsed

- The application relies on the **withdrawn Horsham Local Plan (Policy HA2)**, which the Inspector found unsound in April 2024.
- Current statutory policy remains the **Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)**. Reliance on a withdrawn allocation carries **no material planning weight** (NPPF §33).

2. Water Neutrality – Habitats Regulations

- The site is within the **Sussex North Water Supply Zone**, where **Natural England's 2021 position statement** requires water-neutral development.
- The applicant relies on **unlicensed boreholes** and **finite SNOWS offset credits**, neither secured.
- Under the **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Reg.63)**, mitigation cannot be deferred or speculative (*People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta, C-323/17*).
- Planning permission cannot lawfully be granted until neutrality is proven with certainty.

3. Flood Risk & Drainage

- Large parts of the site lie in **Flood Zones 2 & 3**; EA mapping confirms **surface water pathways** across the site.
- Proposed flood compensation areas do not deliver **level-for-level storage**, contrary to EA guidance.
- SuDS basins are sited in floodplain; school drainage unproven; no climate change allowance applied.
- Fails **NPPF §§170–181** (sequential/exception tests, safe development for lifetime).

4. Biodiversity & Ecology

- **Veteran tree T368** will be removed – an irreplaceable habitat. **NPPF Ch.15 (biodiversity section, preceding §194)** requires refusal unless “wholly exceptional.”
- **BNG shortfall:** Only +6.2% gain in Phase 1; hedgerows (−8.1%) and watercourses (−2.25%) show net losses. Mandatory **10% BNG** under the **Environment Act 2021** is not met.
- **Local Wildlife Sites (Ifield Brook Meadows & Hyde Hill LWS)** directly affected, contrary to NPPF §180(a).
- European Protected Species (bats incl. Barbastelle, GCN, dormouse, reptiles, otters) recorded, but mitigation deferred.
- Baseline surveys undertaken during **2022 drought** undermine credibility.

5. Heritage & Landscape

- ES admits **significant adverse effects** on:
 - Ifield Conservation Area.
 - St Margaret’s Church (Grade I).
 - Ifield Court Scheduled Monument.
- NPPF §§199–202 requires great weight to heritage conservation.
- Landscape capacity assessments show **low-moderate capacity** in parts, yet dense development is proposed.
- Coalescence of Crawley and Horsham conflicts with **HDPF Policy 26** and NPPF §174(b).

6. Air Quality

- ES confirms “**high dust risk**” during construction; sensitive receptors within 20m.
- Crawley AQMA already exceeded historic NO₂ limits.
- Critical nitrogen loads are already exceeded in nearby ancient woodland and LNRs; any additional deposition engages NPPF §180(c).
- Reliance on **future EV uptake** is speculative.
- Mitigation deferred to future CEMP, contrary to **EIA Regs 2017** duty of certainty.

7. Climate Change

- Scheme emits **~950,000 tCO₂e** over 60 years – exceeding Horsham's **Tyndall Centre carbon budget**.
- Relies on **grid decarbonisation and offsets**, not embedded net-zero measures.
- No overheating modelling; drought resilience under-assessed.
- Fails **Climate Change Act 2008**, **NPPF §152**, and **HDPF Policies 35–37**.

8. Transport & Highways

- **Residual severe impacts** arise if CWMMC or bus service upgrades are delayed (NPPF §116).
- Active Travel audit found unsafe routes (narrow pavements, poor lighting, missing kerbs), yet applicant self-rated "exemplar."
- TA assumes **10% cycling / 8% walking** mode share, unrealistic given baseline conditions.
- Mitigation obligations vague, risking failure of **CIL Reg.122** and **NPPF §58** tests.
- Construction HGV traffic unquantified, despite TRICS evidence of thousands of trips.

9. Socio-Economic Case

- Employment forecasts conflicting; jobs case speculative.
- **40.2 ha farmland** lost permanently – ES admits "significant adverse effect."
- Public benefits overstated, cannot outweigh environmental harms.

10. Community Safety & Fire

- Sussex Police: Application fails to evidence compliance with **Crime & Disorder Act 1998 s.17**.
- Police infrastructure strain unassessed.
- WSCC Fire & Rescue: Hydrants and fire access not secured.
- Fails **NPPF §96(b)** (safe communities) and **Building Regs ADB B5**.

11. Procedural & Legal Deficiencies

- Hybrid format defers critical details to Reserved Matters (housing mix, drainage, GI).
- Mitigation vague, contrary to *No Adastral New Town v Suffolk Coastal DC [2015]* (mitigation must be certain at consent).

- Cumulative impacts under-assessed: **Gatwick Northern Runway** excluded from ES scope, contrary to **EIA Regs 2017**.

Conclusion

This application demonstrably fails to comply with the **NPPF (Dec 2024)**, the **Environment Act 2021**, the **Habitats Regulations 2017**, the **Climate Change Act 2008**, the **Waste Regs 2011**, the **Crime & Disorder Act 1998**, and the **Horsham District Planning Framework**.

Given the scale of harm, statutory non-compliance, and absence of certainty, the Council must **refuse planning permission**.

Annex – Summary of Objection Grounds

Policy basis	Reliance on withdrawn HA2 allocation; Inspector found unsound.	NPPF §33; HDPF 2015.
Water neutrality	Reliance on unlicensed boreholes & finite credits; no certainty.	Habitats Regs 2017 (Reg.63); <i>People Over Wind</i> (C-323/17).
Flood risk	Development footprint in Zones 2 & 3; FCAs not level-for-level; SuDS in floodplain; no CC allowance.	NPPF §§170–181; EA standing advice.
Biodiversity	Veteran tree loss; 6.2% BNG vs 10% required; EPS impacted; LWS harmed; surveys unreliable.	Environment Act 2021; NPPF §180(a–c); HDPF 31/34.
Heritage	Harm to CA, Scheduled Monument, Grade I church; thin buffers.	NPPF §§199–202; HDPF 26.
Air quality	High dust risk; AQMA exceedances; nitrogen loads exceeded; reliance on EV uptake.	NPPF §186; Environment Act 1995; EIA Regs 2017.
Climate change	950,000 tCO ₂ e; exceeds Tyndall budget; offset reliance; no overheating test.	Climate Change Act 2008; NPPF §152; HDPF 35–37.
Transport	Severe residual impacts; unsafe active travel; unrealistic modal share; vague mitigation.	NPPF §116; NPPF §58; CIL Reg.122; DfT Circular 01/2022.
Socio-economic	Jobs case speculative; 40.2 ha farmland loss.	NPPF §§81–82; HDPF 9.
Community safety	Crime prevention deferred; no police infra; hydrants not secured.	Crime & Disorder Act 1998 s.17; NPPF §96(b); Building Regs ADB B5.
Procedural	Hybrid vagueness; mitigation deferred; cumulative impacts under-assessed.	NPPF §58; EIA Regs 2017.

Kind regards,



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