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Sent: 25 November 2025 12:48
To: Planning
Subject: Objection to HDC Planning Application DC/25/1312 - Land West of Ifield

Importance: High

Categories: Comments Received

[redacted]
12 Bennett Close
Maidenbower
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 7HW

25 November 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Objection to HDC Planning Application DC/25/1312 (Land West of Ifield)

I strongly object to planning application DC/25/1312 West of Ifield for the following planning reasons:

1. Water Supply
Homes England (HE) have presented various ways in which they believe they can achieve water neutrality, but there are too many uncertainties with all of them. Once again, without this development, the whole of the South East currently has a full hosepipe ban to protect scarce water supplies. Such a big issue should have been resolved before application. They believe they can meet the water neutrality requirements by harvesting rainwater and extracting groundwater through boreholes, but the Environment Agency has yet to report on whether this is feasible and sustainable, and whether they will grant a licence for the groundwater extraction. This should have been sorted pre-application.

2. Sewage
The application ignores the fact that Crawley sewage treatment works are almost at capacity, and that Crawley Council and Thames Water have raised this as a concern. HE's various documents contradict each other about whether Thames Water have been consulted. This poses a huge risk of more sewage overspills polluting the River Mole.

3. Traffic
I remain concerned that the negative impact on local traffic hotspots will be severe even with the suggested mitigations of traffic lights, chicanes and speed bumps. I also believe that the impacts on nearby villages such as Rusper, Faygate and Charlwood have been underestimated. HE's aspiration is to move to more sustainable travel, but I'm concerned that the models may be overly optimistic about the extent to which residents will shift away from car use towards walking, cycling and using public transport. The models assume that this shift will also apply to existing Crawley residents. The Rusper Road closure, will mean much longer journeys for existing Ifield residents to reach Rusper, and for existing Rusper residents to reach Ifield station. HE has specifically mentioned Ifield Wood and Ifield Green as suitable routes for the diverted, and hence additional, traffic.

4. Golf

Homes England still maintain that despite the loss of another 18 holes at Horsham Golf and Fitness there is sufficient other local provision to meet the needs of Crawley's golfers. And that their plans for minor improvements to Tilgate Golf Course, Rookwood and Goffs Park pitch and putt are sufficient mitigation, and that a like-for-like facility is not needed. I profoundly disagree. As a well-established members' club with a carefully maintained 18-hole course, Ifield is distinct from municipal, short course, or mixed-use venues. It has a thriving junior section, and offers affordable memberships and coaching. Ifield provides both high-quality golf experiences for all, as well as playing an important community role. The claim that displaced members could be absorbed by other local clubs is unfounded. Clubs like Copthorne and Mannings Heath are already at capacity or have high costs and joining fees that many golfers cannot afford. Ifield Golf Club also has record current levels of visitor green fees proving the value of the golf course to the community.

5. Biodiversity

Homes England's own ecological surveys show that the site is of high biodiversity value. Many rare, threatened and priority species for conservation that are legally protected from harm have been recorded. But the habitats that support these species will be damaged by the development and it is inevitable that some of these important species will be lost from the area, particularly during the construction phases. Mature trees and established hedgerows that provide wildlife habitats and corridors will be removed. The new road will isolate the important wildlife habitat of Ifield Brook Meadows from the wider countryside. HE say that any loss can be mitigated with new planting and habitats but how can this work in an area with such rich and diverse habitats supporting so much existing biodiversity, all of which has been established and evolving for hundreds of years? It seems highly unlikely that the required Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% can be achieved.

6. Heritage

The rural setting of Ifield Village Conservation Area will be lost, along with the historical link between the village, Ifield Court Farm, Ifield Wood and the rest of the ancient parish of Ifield. Ifield Green, a village street within the conservation area, is designated in the plans as a route for the additional and diverted traffic.

7. Housing tenure

It's claimed that the houses are needed for Crawley residents. But there's no mention of any of the social housing (40% cheaper than market price or rent) that Crawley Council needs. The so-called "affordable" housing will not help.

8. Secondary school

One of the main justifications for the site is that it delivers a secondary school, but is this really needed? The numbers of primary school pupils is now falling, which will obviously affect future secondary numbers.

9. Undemocratic

The site is not allocated in HDC's adopted Local Plan which means the application is "speculative". Homes England had made clear they wouldn't seek to avoid the full and proper scrutiny of the Local Plan process in this way, but they have. This feels undemocratic and not what a government agency should be doing.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge Horsham District Council to refuse this hybrid planning application.

Kind regards,

[redacted]