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Sent: 12 October 2025 19:40
To: Planning
Subject: DC/25/1312 West of Ifield - Objection

Categories: Comments Received

Dear Horsham District Council Planning Team,

West of Ifield site

I would confirm that I, am a resident and Council Tax payer to HDC, object to planning application and I respectfully urge Horsham District Council to refuse this hybrid planning application DC/25/1312 for West of Ifield for the following planning reasons, Below

It clearly states on a sign not 100 metres from my house in Rusper Road, Welcome to Rusper which we are keeping Rural. And now Homes England are planning to urbanise it.

Rusper Road between the Hyde Drive Roundabout and Ifield Golf Course is extremely narrow and not wide enough for two large vehicles to pass without one of them mounting the pavement. There is also no scope to widen the road as the footpath are already too narrow. For two people to pass each other on the footpath, one has to jump into the road. The footpath are heavily pedestrianised by children everyday as they walk to and from school. HGV vehicles and even buses will cause a unnecessary danger to these children.

IFIELD GOLF COURSE Reference NPPF - September 5, 2023 104.

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

We can see no evidence that HE satisfies any of these criteria.

"The draft masterplan has been designed to respond "*sensitively*" to the existing landscape"

However, most of the golf course trees outlined red will have to go to make way for the schools; the shops and the blocks of flats.
Many of these trees date back to 1927 as seen on the course opening photograph

Homes England have claimed that Every one of the 100 year trees that HE cuts down releases carbon into the atmosphere. SHAME ON THEM!

It would be an act of mindless vandalism to replace mature trees with Homes England's surplus to requirement schools and blocks of flats!!

Photos taken from Homes England's "Commonplace"– Ifield Golf Course site "Neighbourhood Centre". It would be an act of mindless vandalism to replace a thriving golf course and environmentally valuable trees with Homes England's totally out of character "Neighbourhood Centre".

Their proposals clearly show no respect for the enormous social and historical value and design quality of Ifield Golf Course. Ifield is not a farmland course to be casually abandoned in exchange for developer's profit.

It was designed and built nearly 100 years ago by golf club architects Fred Hawtree and John Henry Taylor, architects for the re-modelling of Royal Birkdale Golf Club. Taylor was five times Open Champion. He was made an honorary member of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in 1949 and was made president of Royal Birkdale! He went on to design more than 100 fabulous courses, including Aldeburgh Championship course and Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club. It is a privilege to have the work of such a golfing giant in our midst and how bizarre would it be if Horsham District Council was the first Authority in the UK to permit the destruction of such a precious piece of golfing history!!

As a Horsham ratepayer I do not want my council to commit such an atrocity on my behalf!!

Homes England have not managed to demonstrate, in accordance with NPPF 104 clause a), that Ifield Golf course is clearly surplus to requirements. Indeed, it is clearly required by the more than 500 members of the only membership club in Crawley and by the 1485 society players and 3940 green fee golfers who played last year.

Just a glance at the crowded club car park every morning gives the lie to it's not being required.

Ifield Golf Club car park - Typical day

It is clearly needed as a quality golf course which is confirmed by the number of visitors shown above. It is required as the most accessible golf course in the area because you can get there by car, bike, foot, bus and train. All of this is available to non-golfing social members. By comparison, Tilgate Forest Golf Centre has sat alongside Ifield GC for 50 years and despite having a driving range and until recently a lovely 9 hole par golf course, its membership last year was only c120.

Ifield Golf Course has prospered because of the accessibility quality and desirability of the course. In a desperate attempt to satisfy NPPF 104 clause c)

HE puts forward alternative uses that benefits outweighing the loss of Ifield Golf Course. They promote some sports and recreation provision in their West of Ifield proposals. Their first offering is a new sports hub comprising 3G and grass pitches.

However, the Crawley Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy says that there is currently 32% spare capacity for 3G pitches in Crawley.

HE also offers a field athletics facility but this is already splendidly provided by Crawley Athletics Club at K2 Leisure Centre. Finally, they propose 4 new tennis courts / multisport facilities. But Crawley BC PPS Stage 'C' says that there is currently 53% spare capacity for tennis courts in Crawley.

HE are, therefore, seeking to satisfy Clause 104 c) by offering a redundant running track and redundant sports pitches in place of a thriving, historical golf course which has taken nearly 100 years to develop! The proposals are therefore not deliverable.

Horsham District Council's own Golf Supply and Demand Assessment, December 2022 states in its summary:-- "Supply is currently deemed to be sufficient to meet demand, however, it is also clear that each facility is meeting a need due to current membership and usage levels Potential future demand provides further evidence that each existing facility is required. It is unlikely that any loss of provision could be supported without appropriate mitigation being secured due to capacity pressures that would be created,…".

HE are clearly unable to provide evidence that IGC is surplus to requirements or demonstrate that their proposed alternative leisure/recreation facilities could compensate for the loss of the course.

In summary, Homes England simply suggest that all of Ifield Golf Course's players would need to relocate if IGC is lost. Let's look at Homes England's generous offering!!

a. Copthorne which only has 50 vacancies.
b. Cottesmore is almost full and only offering country club membership.
c. Goff Park Pitch and Putt and "Foot Golf" - say no more!!. Which has not been functioning for 3 of the last 5 years due to contractual issues with CBC. It is not a golf course in the true sense but a leisure facility for amateur golfers.
d. Tilgate golf course, with c120 members, has not satisfied the needs of Crawley residents to date and has made no inroads into Ifield's membership after 50 years and despite IGC being under Homes England's threat recently. Can Tilgate be expected to take on an additional 500 member golfers and approximately 5500 additional golf rounds!!!

Furthermore, availability of facilities is exacerbated by on-going golf course closures in our area at West Chiltington, Rusper, Redhill and Reigate, Effingham Park and the approved closure of Horsham Golf and Fitness. Additionally there is ongoing reduction of holes at Mannings Heath and Cottesmore and Gatton Manor has applied for change of use so yet another closure is imminent. In total this represents the closure of 117 holes of golf in an area already under provided.

WHERE ON EARTH ARE IFIELD'S C500 MEMBERS AND C5400 CASUAL PLAYERS SUPPOSED TO GO TO?

In Summary I respectfully urge Horsham District Council to refuse this hybrid planning application.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]
Ruspers
Rusper Road

Ifield
Crawley
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