

[REDACTED]

Sent: 20 September 2025 20:02
To: Planning
Subject: Re: Planning Application DC/25/1312 – Land West of Ifield (FAO Jason Hawkes)

Importance: High

Categories: Comments Received

Dear Mr Hawkes,

I wish to object to the above planning application for up to 3,000 homes and associated infrastructure at West of Ifield. Having reviewed the Environmental Statement, Site documents, and consultee responses published on the council's planning portal, I have serious concerns about the environmental, social, and infrastructural impacts of this proposal. My objections are set out below.

Environment & Agricultural Land

- The development would permanently remove productive farmland (over 90 hectares of agricultural land, Subgrade 3b), undermining local food security.
- The loss of **Ifield Golf Course** removes a valued recreational and green space resource, contrary to planning policies protecting community leisure assets.

Biodiversity & Wildlife

- The Environmental Statement acknowledges the presence of **protected species** including bats (Bechstein's, barbastelle), **great crested newts**, reptiles, and barn owls.
- The site adjoins **ancient woodland** and the **Ifield Brook Meadows Local Wildlife Site**. The Forestry Commission's consultation response (15/09/2025) highlights the need for robust buffers and protection.
- The claimed "10% biodiversity net gain" is theoretical and cannot replace the loss of mature habitats, veteran trees, and ecological corridors.

Heritage & Archaeology

- The Environmental Statement concedes "**significant adverse effects**" on the Ifield Village Conservation Area and the Grade I listed St Margaret's Church.
- Archaeology consultation (18/09/2025) confirms the presence of remains of regional importance. These would be irreversibly lost without preservation in situ.

Transport, Roads & Traffic

- The ES predicts **significant residual adverse effects** on local roads including Rusper Road, Ifield Avenue, and the B6 Link Road.
- With a realistic average of **1.4 cars per household**, this scheme could add over **4,000 vehicles** to already congested roads.
- Ifield Station lacks the capacity to absorb the additional commuters envisaged.
- Surrey County Council's response (17/09/2025) raises cross-boundary transport and rights-of-way concerns.

Pressure on Local Services

- GP surgeries, dentists, hospitals, and schools in Crawley and Horsham are already overstretched.
- The proposed health centre is only indicative and not guaranteed.
- Schools are oversubscribed; while new schools are promised, delivery will lag behind occupancy.

Policing & Community Safety

- A development of this scale will require additional policing and community safety resources. No provision has been made for this in the application.

Water, Sewage & Flooding

- Southern Water's consultation response (17/09/2025) highlights limited spare capacity at Crawley Sewage Treatment Works. No occupation should occur until upgrades are complete.

- The site includes areas of **Flood Zones 2 and 3**. With clay soils and poor drainage, surface water flooding is already a problem and will be worsened by development.
- The application includes **water abstraction boreholes**, raising concerns about ecological impacts on the River Mole and Ifield Brook.

Loss of Golf Club & Recreation

- The permanent loss of Ifield Golf Club removes a long-standing community facility. Sport England guidance requires like-for-like replacement, which has not been secured.

Jobs & Economy

- The scheme provides insufficient employment space relative to 3,000 dwellings.
- Many residents will commute to London or Gatwick, increasing congestion and carbon emissions.

Noise & Air Quality

- The ES admits that parts of the site will experience **significant adverse effects from aircraft noise** that cannot be mitigated.
- Gypsy & Traveller pitches are proposed in areas where noise levels are unacceptable.
- Increased traffic will worsen local air quality, with cumulative impacts alongside Gatwick expansion.

Housing Tenure

- Although it is argued that these homes are intended for Crawley residents, there is no provision for the social housing that Crawley Council urgently requires—typically priced around 40% below market levels. The so-called “affordable” housing being proposed will not address this need.


Undemocratic

- The site does not appear in HDC’s adopted Local Plan, making this application speculative. Homes England had previously stated they would not bypass the full and proper scrutiny of the Local Plan process, yet this move does exactly that. Such an approach feels undemocratic and is not the kind of conduct expected from a government agency.

Conclusion

This proposal represents an unsustainable urban extension into valuable countryside, with **significant adverse impacts** on heritage, biodiversity, local services, and infrastructure. The harms demonstrably outweigh the claimed benefits. I therefore urge Horsham District Council to **refuse planning application DC/25/1312**.

Yours sincerely


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