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To: Jason Hawkes, Horsham District Council, Planning Department Horsham
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Date: 14th October 2025

Subject: Objection to Planning Application DC/25/1312 – Proposed Development of 3,000 Dwellings West of Ifield

1. Introduction

I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to the above planning application (Ref: DC/25/1312), which seeks permission for the construction of 3,000 new dwellings on land West of Ifield. This large-scale development would fundamentally and permanently alter the rural character of the area, overwhelm existing infrastructure, and contradict both local and national planning policy objectives promoting sustainable, well-served, and environmentally responsible development.

2. Unsustainable Location and Lack of Transport Infrastructure

The proposed site lies on the rural western edge of Crawley, within Horsham District, and is currently poorly served by public transport. Existing bus services are infrequent. The nearest major roads, including the A264, already experience congestion during peak hours. This lack of transport infrastructure will result in car-dependent development, generating thousands of additional daily vehicle movements.

The resulting pressure on local rural roads, particularly around Ifield, Rusper Road, and the A264 junctions will cause congestion, noise, air pollution, and safety concerns for local residents in addition I believe there will be a considerable impact on nearby villages such as Rusper, Faygate and Charlwood .

The Rusper Road closure will mean much longer journeys for Ifield residents to reach Rusper and for existing Rusper residents to reach Ifield Train Station. This directly conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 110 and 111 which require developments to promote sustainable travel and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

3. Inadequate Sewerage and Utilities Provision

The existing sewerage network and drainage systems in Ifield and surrounding rural areas are already under strain, with known issues of surface water flooding and limited wastewater capacity. The developer has not demonstrated how the system will accommodate the substantial additional load from 3,000 new dwellings without causing overflow or environmental harm. Without significant infrastructure upgrades, which are not secured in this proposal, there is a serious risk of sewage discharge and pollution to nearby watercourses, contrary to NPPF paragraph 182.

4. Excessive Traffic Generation and Highway Safety

A development of this magnitude is likely to generate between 5,000 and 6,000 additional vehicles, dramatically increasing traffic on already constrained local routes. The rural road network west of Crawley is narrow and not designed to accommodate this level of use. The increased vehicle movements will worsen congestion along Rusper Road, Ifield Avenue, and the A264, and compromise road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. No adequate or funded mitigation measures have been proposed.

5. Loss of Ifield Golf Course and Community Amenity

The proposal would lead to the complete loss of Ifield Golf Course, a valued recreational and social facility serving both Crawley and Horsham residents. This loss of community open space and green infrastructure is unacceptable and conflicts with NPPF, which protects sports and recreation facilities unless they are proven surplus to requirements or replaced with equivalent or better provision. No such replacement is proposed. The golf course also acts as an important green buffer between Ifield and the open countryside its removal will destroy that separation and erode the landscape's rural identity.

Since submission of the planning application Horsham District Council have lost the appeal to build four hundred homes on the Horsham Golf and Fitness site that reduces even further the availability of local access to users of golf courses.

6. Impact on Rural Character and Landscape

The West of Ifield site is currently a rural, agricultural, and semi-natural landscape forming part of the setting of the historic village of Ifield and its Conservation Area. The introduction of 3,000 dwellings. effectively a new town would irreversibly urbanise the countryside and destroy the local character, tranquility, and biodiversity of the area. This proposal directly conflicts with NPPF Paragraphs 130 and 174, requiring developments to protect and enhance local character and the intrinsic beauty of the countryside, as well as Horsham Local Plan Policy 13 (The Natural Environment and Landscape Character).

7. Failure to Align with Strategic Planning Objectives

This proposal represents unplanned urban sprawl, extending Crawley's built-up area into Horsham District without adequate supporting infrastructure or transport connectivity. It undermines the Horsham Local Plan's spatial strategy, which prioritises sustainable growth in existing settlements and the protection of rural areas. Proceeding with this scheme would set a damaging precedent for large-scale, piecemeal expansion into the countryside without proper strategic oversight.

8. Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the proposed West of Ifield development (DC/25/1312) should be refused on the grounds that it:

- Is in an unsustainable rural location with poor transport access.
- Would generate excessive traffic and worsen congestion.
- Lacks adequate sewerage and infrastructure capacity.

- Results in the loss of valued community open space (Ifield Golf Course).
- Causes significant harm to rural character and landscape quality; and
- Conflicts with multiple policies in the NPPF.

Finally I believe the hybrid planning application is undemocratic as the site is not allocated in Horsham District Councils adopted Local Plan and the application has to be considered as speculative. Previously I understand that Homes England had made clear they wouldn't seek to avoid a full and proper scrutiny of the Local Plan process in this way, but they have and I would argue that a Government Agency should not be acting in this way.

I therefore urge Horsham District Council to reject this application in the interests of protecting the rural environment, community well-being, and the long-term sustainability of the district.

Yours faithfully,

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