

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 October 2025 20:25:02 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/25/1312
Categories: Comments Received

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 22/10/2025 9:25 PM.

Application Summary

Address: Land West of Ifield Charlwood Road Ifield West Sussex

Proposal: Hybrid planning application (part outline and part full planning application) for a phased, mixed use development comprising: A full element covering enabling infrastructure including the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Corridor (Phase 1, including access from Charlwood Road and crossing points) and access infrastructure to enable servicing and delivery of secondary school site and future development, including access to Rusper Road, supported by associated infrastructure, utilities and works, alongside: An outline element (with all matters reserved) including up to 3,000 residential homes (Class C2 and C3), commercial, business and service (Class E), general industrial (Class B2), storage or distribution (Class B8), hotel (Class C1), community and education facilities (Use Classes F1 and F2), gypsy and traveller pitches (sui generis), public open space with sports pitches, recreation, play and ancillary facilities, landscaping, water abstraction boreholes and associated infrastructure, utilities and works, including pedestrian and cycle routes and enabling demolition. This hybrid planning application is for a phased development intended to be capable of coming forward in distinct and separable phases and/or plots in a severable way.[cr]

Case Officer: Jason Hawkes

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: 19 Ifield Green Ifield Crawley

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: I wish to give the following reasons why I object to the Homes England application to build 3,000 homes on land West of Ifield.

I have lived in Ifield for over 35 years, firstly in Ifield Green, then Rusper Road, then back to Ifield Green again. This is in no small part due to the unique, historical and ecological nature of the area.

The proposal to build in excess of 3,000 houses, schools, commercial centre, travellers site, hotel and multi carriage way road, with potential for further, future development encompassing 10,000 homes would totally desecrate this unique and ecologically invaluable, rural area.

I object on the following grounds:

IFIELD GOLF COURSE

Para 104 of NPPF December 2024 states:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, 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.

Ifield Golf Club has provided high quality golfing opportunities to many people for almost 100 years.

There is no provision for this to be replaced by Homes England in their plans. The nearest additional golf clubs are not of a comparable standard or quality and do not have the capacity to absorb Ifield's current members. This means current and future golfers will likely travel further afield to play golf, increasing pollution and reducing air quality, and increasing carbon emissions and congestion as they make these journeys. It is a community asset, the loss of which would be detrimental to many people in terms of their physical and mental wellbeing and to much of the wildlife that inhabits the course and its surroundings.

Clearly, b) and c) are unmet in the plan and there is no evidence that it is surplus to requirements.

Replacing this facility with the proposed sporting facilities is not replacing like for like and will not meet the needs of the same demographic of participants.

WATER AND FLOODING

Horsham District Council has a responsibility to manage and reduce the risk of flooding.

The NPPF December 2024 refers to

14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Planning and flood risk

170. Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk

171. Strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards.

172 b) safeguarding land from development that is required, or likely to be required, for current or future flood management;

The area proposed for development surrounds the flood alert zone of Ifield Brook and the River Mole at Ifield. The River Mole's tributaries in this area regularly rise rapidly in heavy rain. The fields which the plan proposes to build on essentially act as flood plains to absorb excess water. Building over them is not safeguarding them!

Recent winters have proven that as we experience more extreme rainfall due to climate change, concreting over these fields that hold so much water, will only exacerbate the already unacceptable flooding of the roads in Ifield and the wider area. West Sussex County Council currently struggle to provide good quality roads in the area as it is, with numerous potholes and excess water causing dangerous driving and cycling conditions. There are several homes in areas of Ifield that are currently at risk of flooding (and have previously flooded) and this development could increase this number and likelihood as well as threatening additional homes further downstream. Therefore the plan is not sound.

Horsham District Council has a responsibility to achieve

sustainable water resource management and promote the quality of the District's waters. This is already a zone of high water stress. As we are all aware, we are experiencing higher temperatures in the summer and for prolonged periods, regularly putting pressure on water resources. The plan does not adequately detail how it can supply the increased demand for water above the existing rates of water abstraction.

In addition, the increased demand for sewage treatment can not currently be catered for. The water companies have already recently been found guilty of dumping sewage for thousands of hours in the nearby River Mole. Where will they dump the sewage of another 3,000 (or 10,000?) homes? Where are the resources to be found to upgrade Crawley's wastewater treatment works given that this development is within Horsham District? The plan does not address this issue adequately.

Given the publicity Thames Water has received recently in terms of it's financial crisis and failing to deliver it's responsibilities, is it really in a position to service another 3-10,000 homes?

TRANSPORT AND POLLUTION

Horsham District Council has a responsibility to: reduce congestion and the need to travel by private vehicle in the District, limit air pollution in the District and ensure lasting improvements in air quality and minimise the District's contribution to climate change and adapt to unavoidable climate change. NPPF December 2024 Section 15 Para 187 e) States that development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality. The plan cannot possibly improve these qualities.

The proposed development provides for a new road from Rusper Road to Ifield Avenue. Rusper Road will become a no-through road at some point near Ifield Golf Course. The A264 dual carriageway from Crawley to Horsham regularly floods to the point of it having to be closed by police as it is impassable. The alternative route via Rusper will not be available under this plan.

Residents of Rusper will have to circumnavigate the closure of the Rusper Road if coming to or through Crawley for shopping, work or leisure activities, adding to pollution levels due to longer journeys.

This pollution will be in addition to that created by the extra 4200 cars or so that will be on the roads as a result of the new housing. It would be great if suitable public transport and decent cycle lanes were available to mitigate this but experience shows this is usually promised but not delivered. We all saw what a disaster the

"pop up" cycle lanes provided during lock down was. The current state of some roads are not even suitable for cars, let alone cyclists!

Any new provision will link into existing roads putting extra pressure on them when they are already struggling to cope with capacity and are of poor quality.

My personal favourite leisure cycle route of Ifield Avenue, Ifield Wood, Rusper Road will no longer be available and the roads that are available will be even more dangerous to cycle on due to increased traffic and potholes! So the likely impact of the development will be fewer cyclists, not more!

Ifield Station is not a feasible walking distance from the new development, it is mostly unmanned so any cycles parked there are at high risk of being stolen and the trains can get very busy at peak times as they are few and far between and a short platform will mean further overcrowding on the trains. There is nowhere to park near the station other than in residential streets where parking is already in demand.

The building of new schools will inevitably bring more traffic and pollution to the area as they will take children from beyond the locality as the spaces are likely to be filled by pupils from further afield in Horsham and the other side of Crawley. I work in a school and I know how congested the traffic is at drop off and pick up times. Despite all the encouragement given to avoid car journeys for the school run, as most parents are going to or from work, and reliable, affordable, public transport is lacking, the car is the only feasible option.

Homes England 15 Minute Neighbourhood model is flawed due to the fact that it is impractical, undeliverable and all these additional car journeys will inevitably lead to increased pollution and associated health issues and climate change.

Much of this traffic will enter local AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS, already identified as having levels of nitrogen dioxide in excess of permitted levels and exacerbate the dangers.

BIODIVERSITY

Section 15 of NPPF December 24 refers to:

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Homes England's proposal is unsound because it cannot possibly contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by destroying it and building on it!

Paragraph 180 a),b), d) and e) are not adhered to in the plan. In 2020 Sussex Wildlife Trust told HDC that the plan should not be taken forward. Clearly it is not Homes England's intention to protect and enhance this valued landscape and site of valuable

biodiversity.

Homes England has not recognised the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland or they would not be proposing to concrete it over.

d) The plan does not minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, nor does it establish coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

The West of Ifield is rich Low Weald Habitat, with copses of mature Oak, Ash and Hornbeam and thick ancient hedgerows. With over 30 ha of "ancient woodland" - designated by DEFRA - on the site or immediately adjacent to it, as well as another 30ha of "priority woodland" 75% of the site is identified as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Ifield Brook Meadows, which is a designated Local Wildlife Site will be sandwiched between urban sprawl. This proposal cannot in anyway be seen to enhance biodiversity.

Habitats and biodiversity

Para 192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity,

Ecologists have recently discovered colonies of rare and highly protected Bechstein's bats on and around the sites which are linked with colonies in Surrey and should be protected. Legislation provides that the area should be considered for designation as a Special Area of Conservation. It is simply not enough for Homes England to pay lip service to safeguarding the local wild life rich habitats and wider ecological networks.

Much of the Upper Mole Valley is in Rusper parish, and the river, hedgerows and woodland are clearly wildlife corridors which need to be protected.

HDC/ Homes England need to respect areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation, including Sussex Wildlife Trust and Gatwick Green Space Partnership.

The plan does not:

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Moreover as in Paragraph 193 a) as significant harm to biodiversity resulting from this development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for,

Planning permission should be refused.

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

West of Ifield is intrinsically a part of the old parish of Ifield with Ifield Village at the centre and designated as a conservation area. Ifield is mentioned in the doomsday book of 1086 and St Margaret's Church has been a place of worship since the 10th /11th century.

The village and the green spaces surrounding are part and parcel of each other. Although there is a proposed small buffer zone around this area, surrounding it with urban development will destroy its unique and special charm.

Ifield Court Farm has been farmed, alongside others in the locality since at least the 14th century. A network of ancient footpaths linking the farms and fields enables circular walks from Ifield which are enjoyed by many and crucial to our health and well-being. The hedgerows are ancient and biodiversity rich and invaluable. This development would destroy one of the last truly rural fringes of Crawley.

NPPF December 2024 advises

11. Making effective use of land

125. Planning policies and decisions should:

b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

Land West of Ifield fulfils all of the above purposes and more and therefore should be preserved.

Achieving appropriate densities

129 Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting

12. Achieving well-designed places

132. Design policies should be developed with local communities

so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics

135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

These ideals are clearly unmet in the Homes England plan. Local communities do not want this development.

HEALTH

It is common knowledge that access to health care is becoming increasingly difficult in this area and across the country. GP surgeries and hospitals are currently seriously overstretched and understaffed. Proposing to build 3,000 homes, with potential to expand to 10,000 without any additional services provided is irresponsible and immoral. It is simply not enough to provide a building without assurances that the NHS will provide appropriate services.

Increased traffic, leading to pollution and associated health difficulties, desecration of the countryside leading to a decline in physical fitness and mental well being, lack of planned infrastructure to provide for additional healthcare facilities and loss of a high quality, well used popular golf club, all serve to diminish the health of the local population not enhance it.

I urge you to vote against the destruction of this special rural haven in order to fulfil Horsham District Council's house building quota. It is not wanted by Crawley Borough Council as it does not provide suitable social housing needed by Crawley residents, but would put increased pressure on the town's already stretched services and infrastructure. It is not wanted by local residents for all the reasons outlined above.

The planning inspector has already deemed the proposal unsound.

Kind regards

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