

14 OCT 2025

Name:

Ref:

DC/25/1312

04/10/2025

Subject: Objection to Planning Application DC/25/1312— West of Ifield Hybrid Application

Dear Mr Hawkes,

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

3,000 or 10,000 houses?

Although this planning application is for 3,000 houses, Homes England were clear (in April 2025) that the full 10,000 house proposal joining Horsham and Crawley is a "future opportunity" that is being kept under review, ie if the 3,000 houses are approved then the planning will start for the next 7,000. So in effect the 3,000 is the first phase of a much larger "masterplan". Horsham Council should be considering the impacts and the infrastructure needs of the full 10,000, not just the first phase in isolation.

Water supply

Homes England have presented various ways in which they believe they can achieve water neutrality, but there are too many uncertainties with all of them. 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.

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 overflows polluting the River Mole.

Traffic

[see our short films on congestion on Ifield roads and Ifield station : <https://www.savewestofield.co.uk/media>] We 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. We'll see: more congestion and delays on Ifield Avenue; ratrunning through Langley Green, Ifield Green and Ifield Wood, with associated safety issues; congestion and cyclist and pedestrian safety concerns at the Tangmere Road, Overdene Drive, Ifield Drive, Ifield Station junction, especially as this will be the route for construction traffic. We also believe that the impacts on nearby villages such as Rusper, Faygate and Charlwood have been underestimated. We welcome HE's aspiration to move to more sustainable travel, but we're 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.

Golf

[see our short film on Ifield Golf Club: <https://www.savewestofield.co.uk/media>] 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. We profoundly disagree. As a well-established members' club with a carefully maintained 18-hole course, Ifield is distinct from municipal, shortcourse, 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.

Planning Received

14/02/23

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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. Flooding Despite the considerable uncertainties around climate change, Homes England seem confident in their plans for expensive-looking landscaping and drainage systems to manage surface water runoff.

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.

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. 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. 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.

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