

Sent: [REDACTED] 19 September 2025 11:27
To: [REDACTED] Planning
Subject: [REDACTED] Objection to Planning Application DC/25/1312— West of Ifield Hybrid Application

Categories: [REDACTED] Comments Received

Dear Mr Hawkes,

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

TRANSPORT CONCERNS

The West of Ifield is undeliverable without first building additional infrastructure and that the policy requirements in chapter 2 and 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) September 2023 are not met.

The only new road from the new development will be from Rusper Road to Ifield Avenue. No other new road infrastructure is planned. The end of this road would be currently at a T junction as it exists now. This is likely to then become a busy crossroads which would be where a right turn leads to Crawley a left turn to the village of Charlwood and the road across (Bonnets Lane) is a narrow country lane to the perimeter of Gatwick airport.

As 3000 houses will likely mean 4200 extra cars on these roads, this will mean a significant number of trips including school runs, getting to work, shopping, leisure, etc. The roads the new road will lead into simply cannot support it. For example:

The right turn direction to Crawley is already vastly oversubscribed with traffic at peak times. Large tailbacks already exist at the roundabout and traffic lights where Ifield Avenue joins the A264. Putting additional cars and buses on this road will cause intolerable gridlocks lasting far longer than just the rush hour periods currently.

The left turn at the new proposed junction would be used by drivers attempting to avoid the right turn option to main roads via Crawley and to use this route through to Charlwood village and Horley thereby accessing the M23/M25. This a country road and narrows significantly as the approach to the housing at Charlwood village is met. Again, unacceptable congestion would occur certainly at peak times and put simply, this road and the village itself literally could not cope with excessive volumes of extra traffic. The condition of the country roads to Charlwood from Crawley to the northwest Sussex border and further into Surrey is very poor indeed. There is evidence of pothole repairs deteriorating, new potholes forming and very uneven road surfaces making driving a further additional hazard.

If Bonnets Lane was then used as an option to pick up the M23/ M25 excessive traffic volumes would again cause absolute gridlock at peak times if not at other times. Bonnets lane is a narrow country lane with some residential housing which as stated ends at a T junction at the road's end which is the perimeter road for the boundary of Gatwick Airport. This road is already used extensively for airport workers commuting and tailbacks do occur at peak times. Extra Traffic on this road would mean that Bonnets Lane would be gridlocked, especially at peak times when demand is highest.

The drivers from the new areas would therefore look for alternative routes either access Crawley or to the motorways or A23. Residential roads in Ifield, Langley Green and even Rusper will become 'rat runs'. Indeed, A popular cut through from the current Ifield West estate is to drive through Ifield Green which is part of the Conservation Area of the village. Already, from 6am to around 9.30am and in the evenings from

5pm the road is congested to unacceptable levels due to the volumes of traffic. It is a residential area with car parking on the roadside and not wide enough to accommodate traffic driving both ways. Sadly, this is definitely a 'rat run' now and this again would result in complete gridlock if even a small number of the estimated 4200 extra cars elected to take this route. Other roads in Crawley residential areas, especially Ifield would suffer in the same way.

HERITAGE

Heritage Assets are historical features that are valued. West of Ifield is an intrinsic part of the old parish of Ifield, of which Ifield Village is the centre. In character the village and the site are an organic whole. The building of a school, modern housing estate and a multimodal road across this greenfield site does not take account of "the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring." (NPPF 190b). Neither does it take account of the role that this plays in people's wellbeing (NPPF92).

Ifield Court Farm (part of West of Ifield) is a heritage asset of local historic interest, the fields of this will be lost. Dates back to the 14th century. The network of paths linking the farms and neighbouring settlements is a heritage asset much valued and used currently. The network allows circular walks from Ifield Village to neighbouring farms and avoiding road walks.

Ifield village for many centuries has lain at the centre of a rural parish and is a conservation area. It retains evidence of its rural routes by adjoining Ifield Court Farm. To replace the farm with a modern housing estate and a multimodal road through it is to remove that part of history. Archaeological assets are likely to be abundant as the land has been occupied since Anglo Saxon times, has an entry in the Doomsday Book and its origins are likely to be even earlier. Geophysical data suggests that "the remains of a probable large settlement spanning from late Bronze Age to the later Roman period as well as a number of other possible prehistoric/Roman enclosures". Its also likely than an archaeological survey would reveal artifacts from the flourishing iron industry of the 15th/16th century or even English Civil War skirmishes in 1643.

St Margarets church, dating back to the 13th century and probably much older than that date would be under threat as there are already fears that the proposed house building work to be carried out adjacent to the site of the church would seriously undermine its foundations.

For a town within the country, Ifield remains the one location in Crawley where the New Town concept of a town within the country is a reality. This is a heritage asset to be retained.

Ifield golf course is just short of 100 years old. It is particularly well designed course which take into account natural features. Many more trees were planted at the millennium. It has social, cultural and health benefits for many people and should be retained.

The pattern of small fields thick hedgerows, shaws and patches of ancient woodland are typical of the historical landscape fashioned for centuries by agricultural practice in the Low Weald. Field shapes of Ifield Court coincide with few exceptions with those of the tithe maps of 1841 and are probably much older: The hedgerows are ancient and rich in biodiversity. Many, if not all, will be lost.

WATER AND FLOODING

Water supply is currently fragile (Southern Water). Water neutrality requires water demand in new builds to be offset against reduction of water use elsewhere and by repair of leaks. Timetable and finances to deliver this are uncertain.

Sewage. Considerable improvements needed to Crawley wastewater treatment works (WwTW). It cannot take further sewage. Thames Water's timetable and finances for improvements or extensions are uncertain.

River Quality-The River Mole will suffer. Already classified as of poor or moderate quality. Climate change and more intense rainfall and frequency of storm water and sewage will overflow into its water.

Flooding. Crawley Horley and Gatwick are subject to regular flooding and more Tarmac in the Ifield area in place of green field (which are currently very heavily waterlogged) will make the situation worse.

BIODIVERSITY

HDC's local plan looks unsound because its policies on biodiversity and nature recovery (HDC Poliv717) are weak, superficial and inconsistent given the scale of development on greenfield sites and in particular West of Field NPPF2023 paras 174.179 and 180 are contravened.

Sussex Wildlife Trust told HDC in 2020 that **the local plan should not be taken forward**

as the significant effects of biodiversity remain unquantified and poorly understood. The lack of sufficient up to date information on the district's ecological assets and particularly the wider networks exacerbate the issue. Capital letters HDC has done nothing to assess the damage that plan will cause to precious habitats and wildlife across the district.

The rest of our field 3000 house site is rich Low Weald habitat copses of mature Oak, Ash and Hornbeam, thick ancient hedgerows and the river Mole and Ifield Brook with over 30 Ha of ancient woodland designated by Defra on the site or immediately adjacent to it plus another 38 ha of priority woodland that's why 75% of the site is identified as is biodiversity opportunity area it's all extremely threatened.

Ifield Brook Meadows designated local wildlife site-will be sandwiched between the densest part of West of Ifield and the urban edge of Crawley. To cover it with cycleways and footpaths and maybe even convert it into a park and playground. This means catastrophic biodiversity loss from this LWS.

Ecologists have recently discovered colonies of rare and highly protected Bechstein's bats and around the site linked with colonies in Surrey. Legislation says that the area should be considered for designation as a special area of conservation. This is solid evidence that SWT is right-the districts habitat is under recorded, under designated and under protected. On the Bechstein's at West of Ifield are an excellent example. But HDC and Homes England downplaying the significance of these findings and the value of the area.

Similarly, HDC don't acknowledge much of the Upper Mole Valley is in Ruislip Parish and that the river, hedgerows, and woodland are excellent wildlife corridors into Surrey. Wildlife does not respect human boundaries -but the plan does not mention any collaboration with Mole Valley District Council of the great work done by the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership.

The West of Ifield site is Crawley only remaining rural fringe and should be protected for Crawley residents just as Chesworth Farm is for Horsham residents. Its inconsistent, ruthless and altogether grossly unfair to take away from Crawley residents what Horsham is so carefully protecting for its own.

IFIELD GOLF COURSE

Paragraph 99 of NPPF 2023 requires that a sports facility should not be built on unless it is shown to be surplus to requirements, or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of the quantity and quality in a suitable location. These requirements are not met for policy HA2 West of Ifield.

From reports received to date, Homes England are unable to prove that Ifield Golf Course is surplus to requirements and they say nothing at all about alternative leisure/recreation facilities to compensate for the loss of Ifield Golf course in Paragraph 99.

Ifield Golf is a very high quality course and members cannot relocate due to lack of availability at other high quality courses. Its quality can be evidenced by the standard and number of competitions it hosts. The club is used by 500 members as well as 3900 green fee players and 1485 society players who visited last year. All these players would have to relocate. Copthorne has only 50 vacancies, Cottesmore is almost full and only offering Country Club membership, and if plans for housing goes ahead at Cottesmore then Ifield would be needed for displaced golfers there!

Tilgate golf doesn't satisfy the needs of Crawley residents and has made no inroads in to Ifield's membership after 50 years despite Ifield being under threat recently.

JOBS LOCALLY

One of HDC's justifications for placing 3000 houses at the edge of Crawley is the availability of jobs at Gatwick and Crawley. However,

Gatwick is unlikely to provide these jobs as roles continue to be lost to automation and further expansion is uncertain.

Gatwick jobs tend to lower and many contract non-permanent and not a match for the price of housing that will be delivered. With higher rates for mortgages and lenders being tighter on affordability, it will not be easy for many wanting to buy new homes to be able to aspire to these.

Office space in Manor Royal has been lost to warehousing. Trends for online shopping feeds this change. Warehousing jobs tend to be low paid also and will also not be a match for the new housing and mortgage finance required to purchase these.

NOISE

The HDC local plan does not provide sufficient detail on the negative impact that Gatwick Airport expansion may have on West of Ifield and in particular Horsham District in general NPPF 2023 sections 174e) and page53 section 185a) and b) are not adhered to for West of Ifield

POLLUTION- AIR

Air quality management areas (AQMA) have been declared in Crawley along Crawley Avenue and around Hazelwick roundabout due to levels of nitrogen dioxide exceeding what is permitted. Increased traffic from West of Ifield will enter the AQMA if traveling to Manor Royal, Gatwick, the M23 etc., increasing traffic related air pollution in Crawley. Air Quality Management is required by the Environment Act 1995. Our belief is that the policies set out in NPPF 2023 chapters 2 and 8 are not met.

More traffic will lead to higher levels of traffic related air pollution (TRAP). This particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly and those with existing heart and lung conditions. TRAP will have a negative effect on the lungs, blood pressure and nervous system. Proposed new flights from Gatwick would increase air pollution in the West of Ifield area.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge Horsham District Council to refuse this hybrid planning application.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

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Ifield

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