

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 28 August 2026 13:02
To: Planning
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0337
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 28/08/2026 1:01 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land at Hillybarn Farm The Mount Ifield West Sussex
Proposal:	Demolition of barn and erection of 4no new dwellinghouses.
Case Officer:	Sophie Moore

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	Hilly Barn Farm Hilly Barn Road Ifield
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Other - Overdevelopment - Privacy Light and Noise - Trees and Landscaping
Comments:	[REDACTED] Hillybarn Farm Hilly Barn Road Ifield West Sussex RH11 0LF 27/08/26

FORMAL PLANNING OBJECTION

Application DC/26/0337

Land at Hillybarn Farm, The Mount, Ifield, West Sussex

Dear Planning Officer,

I write as the owner and occupier of Hillybarn Farm. The application site is directly opposite and close to my farmhouse, although I own none of the land inside the application red line.

I object to the proposed demolition of the barn and erection of four dwellings. The application should be refused because the principle of development has not been justified and the present submission is too uncertain and internally inconsistent to support a lawful, properly informed decision.

Decision requested

I ask the Council to refuse permission. If it is not presently minded to do so, it should defer determination, require corrected and complete plans and technical documents, obtain specialist ecological review, and reconsult neighbours before reaching any decision.

Grounds of objection

Principle of development in the countryside and the expired fallback

The site lies outside a defined built-up area boundary. Horsham District Council refused the earlier four-dwelling proposal DC/25/0447 on 9 June 2025 partly because it would be an unsustainable form of development in the countryside, contrary to Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. Although the Council did not ultimately defend that reason at appeal, that was because a Class Q conversion was then treated as a realistic fallback, not because the countryside policy conflict had disappeared.

That fallback is no longer extant. Prior approval DC/22/1918 required the conversion to five dwellings to be completed by 1 December 2025. In the appeal decision for DC/25/0447 (APP/Z3825/W/25/3371828), the Inspector recorded that the period was due to expire on 1 December 2025 and that there was no evidence that works had begun. The present application form likewise states that the development has not started, while the barn remains on site. The description in the current application documents of an 'extant permission' therefore appears materially out of date and should not be given fallback weight.

The proposal must consequently be assessed afresh under the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026, which is the Framework in force for decision-making. Four market dwellings are not shown to be essential to a countryside location or to fall within an applicable exception. Agricultural buildings are also excluded from the Framework definition of previously developed land. The proposal conflicts with the settlement strategy and the protection of rural character in HDPF Policies 1, 2, 3, 4 and 26 and with the corresponding countryside approach in the current Framework.

The application site and red-line boundary are not consistently defined.

The published documents describe materially different site areas. The application form gives 0.40 hectares; the block plan is titled 'Application Area: 6313m²' (0.6313 hectares); and the location plan, biodiversity assessment and habitat plan concern an area of approximately 2.47-2.5 hectares. The red lines on the block plan and location plan also do not appear to coincide.

This is not a minor drafting issue. The Council and the public need to know precisely which land forms the application site, which land is proposed for habitat enhancement, what is within the applicant's control, and which baseline and post-development habitats are included in the metric. A single, accurate red line and consistent site area should be provided across the form, plans, biodiversity documents, and ownership information. Any material correction should be published and reconsulted upon before determination.

The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan cannot presently be relied upon

The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) submitted under DC/26/0337 repeatedly identifies my daughter, [REDACTED] as the client and as the person or organisation responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan. It describes her as the landowner or land manager, the Development Biodiversity Champion, and the Post-Development Biodiversity Champion, with responsibilities extending throughout the 30-year management period.

[REDACTED] has confirmed directly that she does not own, lease, occupy or manage any land within the DC/26/0337 red line; that she did not commission or authorise this HMMP; and that she has not agreed to accept any responsibility for biodiversity delivery or monitoring on this site. She consents to her name being used in this representation to correct the published position. This HMMP has been directly copied and pasted from her own previous planning application managed by the same person/company.

The error is not confined to a name. The HMMP states gains of 10.13% for area habitats and 86.72% for watercourses, the same figures used in the biodiversity assessment for [REDACTED] separate application DC/25/1901. By contrast, the biodiversity assessment for DC/26/0337 calculates 10.01% for area habitats and 0.00% for watercourses. These incompatible figures show that information from a different site has been carried into the current document.

The current claimed area-habitat gain is only 0.01 percentage points above the statutory 10% minimum. Accuracy is therefore critical: even a small correction to the baseline, condition or proposed habitats could affect compliance. More fundamentally, a 30-year HMMP without an authorised and accountable landowner or manager does not demonstrate that the proposed gains can be delivered and maintained.

Before the biodiversity material is given any weight, the Council should require:

- withdrawal or clear supersession of the defective HMMP.
- a corrected, site-specific HMMP, Biodiversity Gain Plan and metric using one consistent red line and set of figures.
- identification of the actual landowner or manager and the persons accepting delivery, monitoring, and reporting duties for the full 30 years.
- evidence of an effective legal and practical mechanism securing those duties; and
- review by the Council's ecologist and fresh public consultation on the corrected package.

The ecological evidence is stale, internally inconsistent and incomplete.

The bat report is based on a survey undertaken on 11 June 2025 and states that a repeat survey is required if works are deferred by more than 12 months. This application was registered in August 2026, more than 14 months after the survey, yet no repeat assessment is published. The report's limitations and copyright wording also refers to the unrelated site of Five Oaks, Cathill Lane, Ockley, Dorking, Surrey RH5 5QP. These matters undermine confidence that the document is current and fully site-specific.

The report assesses the barn but does not provide a complete assessment of the trees, hedges, orchard, and wider habitat land now included within the larger red line. The application form answers 'No' to trees or hedges on or adjacent to the site and 'No' to protected or priority species, designated sites, important habitats, or other biodiversity features. The applicant's own biodiversity documents, however, identify a traditional orchard, a rural tree, lines of trees and hedgerows, as well as local bat records. Those answers are not reconcilable without correction and proper supporting evidence.

No tree survey or arboricultural impact assessment appears in the published document list,

despite the identified trees and hedgerows. Nor is there a site-wide preliminary ecological appraisal that clearly addresses the full current red line. This is particularly important because the appeal against DC/25/0447 was dismissed after the Inspector concluded that the ecological and biodiversity position could not be resolved fairly on the late and changing material then before the appeal. The same defect must not recur. Updated ecological survey work, tree constraints and impact assessment, and a bat-sensitive lighting scheme should be available and reviewed before determination, not left to speculation.

The contamination information does not match the form or the current site.

The application form answers 'No' to known contamination, suspected contamination, and a proposed use particularly vulnerable to contamination. Yet the submitted Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment records asbestos-containing material, rubble, bonfire residue, fuel or batteries and potential polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, petroleum hydrocarbons, and heavy metals. Residential gardens are a sensitive end use, so the blanket answers in the form require correction or explanation.

The Phase 1 report is dated January 2023 and was prepared for an earlier approximately 0.13-hectare scheme, not the current approximately 2.5-hectare red line. It cannot, without further justification, be assumed to characterise all land now relied upon for development and biodiversity enhancement. Consistently with HDPF Policy 24, the Council should require an updated Phase 1 assessment for the actual application site and any targeted intrusive investigation recommended by a competent specialist before deciding whether the land is suitable for the proposed residential use.

Rural character, car dependence and missing site-specific information.

The Design and Access Statement describes the site as having 'excellent' access to public transport and amenities, but the earlier planning evidence characterised this as a rural location without public transport and with material reliance on the private car. The proposal would introduce four additional market dwellings and associated domestic activity into the countryside. The expired Class Q fallback should not be used to dilute the assessment of the actual landscape and settlement effects of this scheme.

The published list reviewed for this representation also does not appear to include a site-specific arboricultural impact assessment, surface water drainage statement, external lighting assessment, energy statement, or complete site-wide habitat appraisal. The form simply proposes a soakaway, without published evidence that the enlarged scheme can be drained appropriately. The Council should check the application against its current local information requirements and should not determine it until every necessary assessment relates to the same red line and proposal.

Conclusion and requested action.

The application is not presently capable of reliable determination. The countryside principle has not been justified now that the earlier Class Q fallback has expired; the red-line site is inconsistent; the biodiversity delivery document names and assigns 30-year duties to an uninvolved person and imports figures from a different application; the ecological work is outside its own stated validity period; and the contamination material does not match either the form or the enlarged site.

I therefore ask Horsham District Council to:

- refuse DC/26/0337 for conflict with the development plan and because the submitted evidence does not demonstrate an acceptable, deliverable development; or, if the Council is not ready to refuse,
- defer determination and require a corrected red line, application form, and full set of site-specific ecological, biodiversity, arboricultural, contamination and drainage documents;
- obtain written reviews by the relevant specialist officers, including the Council's ecologist; and

- reconsult the public for a fair period on all material corrected or replacement documents before any decision is made.

Please record this representation as an objection and notify me of the application's determination and of any committee meeting at which it is to be considered.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Owner and occupier

Hillybarn Farm

Documents referred to

The objection is based on the following published documents and decisions:

- DC/26/0337: application form; Design and Access Statement; location plan; block plan; Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment; Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan; Bat Roost Potential Assessment; and Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment.
- DC/22/1918: Class Q prior-approval decision and completion deadline.
- DC/25/0447 and APP/Z3825/W/25/3371828: refusal decision and appeal decision relating to the earlier four-dwelling proposal.
- DC/25/1901: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, used only to verify the source of the 10.13% area-habitat and 86.72% watercourse figures appearing in the current HMMP.

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), including Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 24, 26, 31, 32, 33 and 40; and the National Planning Policy Framework published 17 August 20

Kind regards

Telephone:

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**Horsham
District
Council**



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