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Ashington
RH203JR
[REDACTED]

1 October 2026

Planning Department
Horsham District Council
Parkside, Chart Way
Horsham, West Sussex
RH12 1RL
By email: planning@horsham.gov.uk

OBJECTION to planning application (reference to be confirmed)

Site: Land at Rectory Lane, Ashington

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write to object to the above planning application. I am a resident of Ashington and the proposal directly affects the parish in which I live. I object on the planning grounds set out below.

Personal observations

I am concerned that the existing infrastructure in Ashington is not sufficient to support the proposed new housing development.

The development would place additional pressure on local services and facilities that already appear to have limited capacity. In particular, consideration should be given to:

Schools: Whether local primary and secondary schools have sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional children and young people who would be expected to live in the development.

Healthcare: Whether local GP surgeries, dentists and other healthcare services have adequate capacity to meet the needs of the increased population.

Shops and amenities: Whether existing shops, supermarkets, community facilities, leisure facilities and other essential amenities can adequately serve the additional residents.

Transport links: Whether existing bus services and other public transport connections are sufficient, particularly at peak times. The impact of additional traffic on the local road network should also be properly assessed.

Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure: Whether there are safe and practical walking and cycling routes connecting the development to schools, shops, healthcare services and other facilities.

Overall infrastructure capacity: The cumulative impact of this and other developments in the area should be considered, rather than assessing the proposal in isolation.

Planning grounds

1. Failure to follow the statutory development plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for Ashington comprises the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 (adopted) and the made Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (formally made by Horsham District Council on 23 June 2021). Both carry full statutory weight. The proposed development is in direct conflict with multiple policies in both documents (see grounds 2 to 11). The applicant has not identified material considerations of sufficient weight to displace the primacy of the development plan.

2. Outside the Built-Up Area Boundary contrary to ANP Policy ASH1(A)

Policy ASH1(A) of the made Ashington Neighbourhood Plan provides that new development in Ashington parish shall be focused within the built-up area boundary of Ashington village as identified on the Policies Map. The proposed site sits wholly outside that boundary, in open countryside. The conflict with ASH1(A) is unambiguous and is itself sufficient under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to weigh materially against approval.

3. Not one of the two allocated sites under ANP Policy ASH1(B)

Policy ASH1(B) provides for a minimum of 225 dwellings to be built in Ashington in the period 2019 to 2031 on two specifically allocated sites: Chanctonbury Nursery (approximately 75 dwellings) and Land West of Ashington School (approximately 150 dwellings). The proposed site is neither. The 225-dwelling figure represents the village's quantified local housing need to 2031 as established by the Housing Needs Assessment 2017, and is being met by the made allocations together with the related Mousdell Close approval. The application makes no contribution to identified local need beyond what is already provided for.

4. Outside the closed list of permitted countryside exceptions in ANP Policy ASH1(D)

Policy ASH1(D) provides that development proposals outside the built-up area boundary and the site allocations will not be permitted unless they are (i) appropriate countryside uses such as agriculture, forestry, equestrian, tourism, essential utilities infrastructure and energy generation, (ii) on previously developed land and accord with local and national policy for such development, or (iii) for the retention or appropriate provision of commercial businesses. Residential development of this scale falls within none of these three exceptions. The conflict with ASH1(D) is unambiguous.

5. Site assessed and rejected by the Plan's own Final Site Selection Report (Navigus Planning, June 2018)

The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan was preceded by an exhaustive site selection process recorded in the Final Site Selection Report (Navigus Planning, June 2018). The proposed site was considered as Site 10 - "North of Rectory Lane, up to 200 homes" - and was rejected. The recorded reason in plain words: "Too far from community cluster compared with other sites." Scenarios that included Site 10 were specifically examined and rejected because the development of Site 10 would, in the report's own words, "fail to deliver the objective of creating a community cluster in the heart of the village." The site is therefore not a site the village rejected by oversight; it is a site the village rejected on substantive planning grounds. The 82.57 per cent who voted in favour of the made Plan at referendum on 6 May 2021 voted for a Plan that rejected this site.

6. Same broader land area rejected by HDC's own Regulation 19 Site Assessment (December 2023)

Horsham District Council's own Regulation 19 Site Assessment Part IV (December 2023) considered the broader land area, promoted by Taylor Wimpey, Devine Homes and the Diocese of Chichester as the "Glebe Land Northern Cluster" for 452 homes. HDC rejected the cluster on the following recorded grounds: it was not allocated in the made Neighbourhood Plan; cumulative impact on the rapid expansion of the village was "unsustainable" with significant pressure on community cohesion, physical infrastructure and local services; scale was "not appropriate to a medium village in the settlement hierarchy"; water-neutrality concerns; and no GP service was provided with the proposal. The District Council's own published view on this exact area of land is therefore that it should not carry housing. Under NPPF paragraph 48 that position carries weight as the emerging Local Plan at examination.

7. Disregard for the democratic mandate of the made Plan (Localism Act 2011)

Parliament passed the Localism Act 2011 specifically to give villages legal control over where in their parish housing goes. The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Ashington Parish Council as the qualifying body under that Act, examined by an Independent Examiner, and put to a referendum of village residents on 6 May 2021, at which 796 voted in favour and 168 voted against - 82.57 per cent in favour. The Plan was formally made by Horsham District Council on 23 June 2021. Approving 120 dwellings at a location the made Plan explicitly rejected sets aside that democratic mandate.

8. Inappropriate scale for Ashington's Medium Village classification (HDPF Policy 3)

Ashington is classified as a "Medium Village" under Policy 3 of the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework 2015. The Medium Village category is defined by a moderate level of services and facilities and a reliance on larger nearby settlements for higher-tier needs. The proposed development, taken together with the cumulative approvals at Mousdell Close (74 homes), Chanctonbury Nursery, Land West of Ashington School, and the pending Devine Homes proposal at Billingshurst Road, would expand the village by over 40 per cent - a scale appropriate to a Larger Village or Small Town, not to a Medium Village. HDC's emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan does not propose to move Ashington up the settlement hierarchy. The application is therefore inconsistent with the Council's own settlement-hierarchy strategy.

9. Settlement expansion contrary to HDPF Policy 4

Policy 4 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 provides that development outside built-up area boundaries will be restricted, and that limited expansion may be appropriate only where it would not have an adverse impact on the character or function of the settlement. A scheme for up to 120 dwellings outside the BUAB is, by any measure, not "limited expansion". Its adverse impact on the character and function of the village (see grounds 13 onwards) is substantial.

10. Inappropriate development in the countryside (HDPF Policy 26)

Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 provides for the protection of the countryside outside the built-up area boundaries from inappropriate development. Residential development of this scale on greenfield agricultural land is precisely the type of inappropriate countryside development that Policy 26 exists to prevent.

11. Prematurity in advance of the emerging Local Plan (NPPF paragraphs 48-50)

Horsham District Council's emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan is at Examination and is not yet adopted. Under NPPF paragraph 48 the weight given to emerging plans depends on (a) the stage of preparation, (b) the extent of unresolved objections and (c) consistency with the NPPF. The proposed site is not an allocation in the emerging Plan, and the broader land area to which it belongs was rejected at the Reg 19 stage in December 2023 (ground 6). Approval in advance of the Inspector's report would be premature in the sense set out at NPPF paragraphs 49-50, prejudging emerging plan-led decisions on the scale and location of growth in this parish.

12. Harm to the natural environment and landscape character (HDPF Policy 25)

Policy 25 of the HDPF 2015 requires the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and landscape character. The Horsham District Landscape Capacity Study (2021) defined the broader Ashington Cluster as within Local Landscape Character Area AS3, with only a low-to-moderate landscape capacity for medium-scale development. A 120-home scheme on a previously undeveloped greenfield site at the village's edge represents the loss of countryside, the alteration of long-established field patterns and substantial visual change to the village's rural setting.

13. Biodiversity Net Gain - Environment Act 2021 and NPPF Chapter 15

The Environment Act 2021 requires every major development to deliver at least a 10 per cent Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), secured through condition or section 106. The applicant must demonstrate, through a properly conducted BNG metric assessment, that 10 per cent BNG can be achieved on or near the site, and that the mitigation hierarchy under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 has been properly applied. Any deficiency in the BNG assessment or in the proposed delivery and 30-year management mechanism is, on its own, a refusal ground under NPPF Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment).

14. Climate change and sustainability (HDPF Policy 35, NPPF Chapter 14)

Policy 35 of the HDPF 2015 requires development to mitigate and adapt to climate change. A car-dependent rural development of 120 homes on greenfield land, served by a road network without continuous footways or cycle infrastructure, is contrary to the principles of climate adaptation in NPPF Chapter 14. The proposal locks in private-car dependency for hundreds of additional residents and does not demonstrate that climate-adaptation measures - passive design, renewable energy, EV charging, sustainable transport options - are commensurate with the scale of the development.

15. Air quality on the A24 (HDPF Policy 24, NPPF paragraphs 192-193)

Policy 24 of the HDPF 2015 requires that development must not result in unacceptable impacts on air quality. NPPF paragraphs 192-193 require decisions to take into account the air-quality implications of cumulative impact and proximity to Air Quality Management Areas. The cumulative additional vehicle movements onto the A24 from this scheme and the pending and approved schemes nearby will increase air pollution along that corridor. The applicant must demonstrate, through a current Air Quality Assessment, that this impact has been properly modelled and is acceptable, including in the context of cumulative impact.

16. Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (NPPF paragraph 174)

NPPF paragraph 174(b) requires planning policies and decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital, including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). If any part of the proposed site is so classified, its loss is a material consideration that weighs against approval. The applicant must provide a current Agricultural Land Classification assessment.

17. Cumulative infrastructure inadequacy (HDPF Policy 39, NPPF Chapter 8)

Policy 39 of the HDPF 2015 requires that development must be supported by adequate infrastructure, secured before or alongside development. The cumulative load on Ashington's infrastructure from this scheme, together with the 74 homes recently approved at Mousdell Close, the Land West of Ashington School scheme, the Chanctonbury Nursery allocation, and the pending Devine Homes scheme at Billingshurst Road, exceeds the capacity of the village's existing facilities. There is no GP in the village. The primary school capacity has been raised as a concern in HDC's own evidence base. There is no secondary school. The section 106 contributions available on a single 120-home scheme cannot, on their own, deliver the strategic infrastructure provision that growth at this cumulative scale requires. Conflict with NPPF Chapter 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities) is therefore established.

18. Highway safety and capacity on Rectory Lane (HDPF Policy 40, NPPF Chapter 9)

Rectory Lane is, for much of its length, a single-carriageway road at national speed limit, with no continuous footway, with listed buildings on its frontage, and feeding directly into the A24. The cumulative additional vehicle movements from this scheme together with Mousdell Close (74 homes), the pending Devine Homes scheme (67 homes), and other approved development in the village are estimated at approximately 1,800 daily movements on the village's local road network at industry-standard residential trip rates. The applicant must provide a Transport Assessment that quantifies the cumulative impact on the Rectory Lane / A24 junction, on pedestrian safety, and on highway capacity, and must propose proportionate mitigation. Without such mitigation the proposal conflicts with HDPF Policy 40 (Sustainable Transport) and NPPF Chapter 9, including the safety requirements of NPPF paragraph 116.

19. Flooding and surface water drainage (HDPF Policy 38, NPPF Chapter 14)

Policy 38 of the HDPF 2015 and NPPF Chapter 14 require planning decisions to manage flood risk. Although the site may be within Flood Zone 1, the cumulative additional impermeable surface from this development plus other approved and pending schemes will increase surface-water runoff onto the local drainage network. The application must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of West Sussex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will reduce surface-water runoff to greenfield rates and will not exacerbate flood risk in the village. Any inadequacy in the SuDS proposal is a refusal ground.

20. Heritage - setting of listed buildings on Rectory Lane (HDPF Policy 34, NPPF Chapter 16, ANP Policy ASH4)

Listed buildings and Local Heritage Assets identified in Policy ASH4 of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan stand on Rectory Lane itself, including the Old School and the Old School House. The introduction of 120 dwellings, associated access, parking, lighting and additional traffic onto Rectory Lane will adversely affect the setting and significance of these heritage assets. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on the decision-maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed buildings and their settings. NPPF Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) also applies. The applicant must provide a Heritage Impact Assessment that addresses these specific heritage assets.

21. Schools - primary capacity and secondary access (NPPF paragraph 99)

NPPF paragraph 99 requires great weight to be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications. Ashington Church of England Primary School has been recorded as at or near capacity in HDC's own evidence base. There is no secondary school in the village. The applicant must demonstrate, in agreement with West Sussex County Council as Local Education Authority, that the additional primary-age and secondary-age children generated by 120 new dwellings can be educated within reasonable travel distance, and that the section 106 contribution offered is sufficient to deliver any required expansion or transport provision.

22. Healthcare capacity - no GP in the village (NPPF paragraph 96)

NPPF paragraph 96 (Promoting healthy and safe communities) requires the planning system to promote sufficient choice of accessible healthcare facilities. There is no GP service in Ashington. Residents must travel out of the parish to access primary care. The applicant must demonstrate, in agreement with the local Integrated Care Board / NHS England as statutory consultee, that the additional load of approximately 300 new residents can be absorbed within existing GP capacity in adjoining settlements, or that an appropriate section 106 contribution to expanded provision will be secured.

23. Sewerage and water-supply capacity (Southern Water)

Southern Water is a statutory consultee on planning applications of this scale. The applicant must demonstrate, in agreement with Southern Water, that the existing foul sewerage system has capacity to absorb the additional load from 120 dwellings, that water supply is adequate, and that any necessary network upgrades will be secured by condition or section 106 before occupation.

24. s.106 obligations cannot meet the Regulation 122 test against cumulative impact

Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 provides that any obligation imposed by section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 must be (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, (b) directly related to the development, and (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Against the cumulative load on Ashington's already-deficient infrastructure - no GP, primary school at capacity, no secondary school, narrow rural lanes - the s.106 contributions available on a single 120-home scheme cannot, in isolation, deliver the strategic infrastructure that the cumulative growth across the village requires. The mitigation available is therefore not, on the Reg 122 test, sufficient to make the development acceptable.

25. Housing mix does not match identified local need (HDPF Policy 16 / ANP)

Policy 16 of the HDPF 2015 and the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan require new housing to address an appropriate housing mix and to meet identified local needs. The Plan's Housing Needs Assessment 2017 quantified Ashington's local need at 225 dwellings to 2031, including a specific need for smaller properties suitable for older people. The 120-home proposal serves Horsham District Council's district-wide five-year housing land supply shortfall, not Ashington's identified housing need. The Plan's quantified local need is being met by the made allocations and the recently approved Mousdell Close scheme.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the application is in conflict with the made development plan for Ashington (the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 and the made Ashington Neighbourhood Plan), with relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, and with the section 38(6) duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. I respectfully request that the application is refused.

Please confirm receipt of this objection in writing.

Yours faithfully,



Cemmeas Meadow, RH203JR