

[REDACTED]

Sent: 12 March 2026 14:13
To: Jason.Hawkes; Planning
Subject: Fwd: Briefing for HDC Councillors Former Novartis Site Planning Application
Attachments: Briefing for HDC Councillors re DC 25 0629 12 March 2026 (1).docx
Categories: Comments Received

Dear Jason,

For your information, as Planning Application DC/25/0629 for the Former Novartis Site is due to go for consideration at the HDC Planning Committee meeting being held on Tuesday, 17th March 2026, today on behalf of our residents group I have sent this forwarded email and attachment to HDC Councillors to highlight our concerns on the proposed plans for the site.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

Dear Councillors,

Planning Application DC/25/0629 Former Novartis Site, Parsonage Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5AA

I am contacting you on behalf of Wimblehurst Road Residents Association who have worked collectively with residents of the Richmond Road Conservation Area and together with residents of North Heath Lane and Allcard Close. These roads are within close proximity of the Former Novartis Site in Horsham.

All of our group have been long term residents of the area and are very aware of the traffic and road safety issues affecting the area.

The Former Novartis Site was purchased by West Sussex County Council in 2016. Previous Planning Applications submitted by WSCC for the site were subsequently withdrawn. Currently there are two active Outline Planning Applications for the site, Planning Application DC/25/0415 and Planning Application DC/25/0629.

Planning Application DC/25/0415 is for the construction of 244 new homes (Class C3) with vehicular and pedestrian access from Parsonage Road, public open space, landscaping, parking and associated works. This Application was approved in October 2025.

Planning Application DC/25/0629 is for 204 dwellings and a commercial unit / residential unit, including the part demolition and conversion of 'Building 3' and demolition of 'Building 36', vehicular access taken from Wimblehurst Road, car and cycle parking, landscaping and open space and associated works and the replacement of the Blue Atlas Cedar trees.

This Planning Application is due to be considered at the HDC Planning Committee meeting being held on Tuesday, 17th March 2026.

Our residents are supportive of the Former Novartis Site being developed but we are not supportive of what is currently being proposed. We submitted a response of Objection to Planning Application DC/25/0415 and also to Planning Application DC/25/0629. Our key concerns are:- Over-

development; Highways, Access and Parking; Drainage and Environmental Considerations; Privacy, Light and Noise; Trees and Landscaping; and Loss of General Amenity.

In total if both Planning Applications proceed there would be 450 residential units on site housing over 1000 residents and space for 500 cars.

We have outlined these issues in more detail in the attached document together with a list of when our responses to both Planning Applications can be viewed on the HDC Planning Portal.

Our residents group would very much appreciate your time and attention if you are able to read through the attached document to help you evaluate the impact the development as proposed will have on the surrounding infrastructure.

Kind regards,

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Chair, Wimblehurst Road Residents Association,

c/o Chandos House, 14 Wimblehurst Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2ED.

Wimblehurst Road Residents Association

A briefing for HDC Councillors regarding outline Planning Application DC/25/0629. Former Novartis Site, Parsonage Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5AA

12 March 2026

Executive Summary

As of 11 March 2026 there were 389 documents on the HDC Planning Portal that relate to aspects of the DC/25/0629 Application. In the opinion of the Wimblehurst Road Resident's Association (WRRRA), many important issues have still not yet been addressed by Lovell. We are therefore concerned that a decision may be made about the Application, and its associated Conditions, which would not be in the best long-term interest of the residents of Phases 1 and 2, nor in the interests of the local community.

The paragraph numbers refer to the main report starting on Page 4

Density of housing (Para 1)

Our fundamental objection is that the density of housing cannot be supported by local services and with an acceptable level of additional traffic. The overall density of housing is not immediately obvious because the Applications have been filed individually. In total across the three Phases there are 460 housing units for over 1000 residents and space for 500 cars. When the Novartis plant was operational there were less than 80 vehicles on site – around 200 cars were parked on the area now occupied by the Braby Close development.

Water drainage (Paras 2 and 3)

WRRRA recognise that Lovells will be using the SuDs system of surface water drainage on site as recommended by the LLFA and that Southern Water have agreed there is currently capacity in the drainage network to accommodate this system. We still have concerns on how this system will impact the aged network of drains and sewers running through the adjacent Richmond Road Conservation Area.

Demolition of Building (Paras 3 4 & 5)

From the responses from Lovell representatives to WRRRA questions during the site visit on 17 December it became clear that the cause of the on-going flooding cannot be fully investigated until the demolition of the two wings of Building 3 and of Building 36 are completed. We are concerned that approval is therefore being sought for the construction of Phases 1 & 2 without any guarantee that the work will eventually be able to be completed and 206 housing units constructed. This demolition will also substantially increase the volume of construction traffic in the area – the potential impact on heavy vehicle use of Parsonage Road is not considered in the Revised Application.

Traffic congestion and road safety (Paras 6, 7 8 & 9)

It is accepted by WSCC and HDC that the roundabout already operates beyond capacity at peak times. No remedial measures have been proposed. The WSCC view is that drivers will just have to accept the congestion.

A feature of travel in the area are the queues that regularly arise from the closure of the level crossing, especially at the two periods when four trains traverse the crossing. The Travel Plans submitted for DC/25/0415 and DC/25/0629 only refer to Southern trains and exclude Thameslink trains.

The Application stresses the importance of providing support for cyclists but ignores the narrow width of Wimblehurst and North Heath Lane.

Pedestrian safety (Para 8)

There is also no detailed assessment of the challenges that pedestrians, students, parents with children and those with mobility issues face in negotiating crossing the face of the Wimblehurst Road site access, the island crossing on Parsonage Road and the island crossing on North Heath Lane to reach local schools, shops and bus stops. The Road Safety Audit Stage 1 was conducted at 10.30 in the morning, which is totally unrepresentative of the volume of pedestrian traffic in the morning, mid-afternoon at school closure and then in the evening.

Local facilities (Paras 10 & 11)

The local area has a single general practice surgery that also has to support the Mowbray development. There is a dentist in the Coltsfoot Way shopping arcade along with a general store. The hair salon and beauty salon on this site mean that there is considerable pressure on the car park space.

In the Application Lovell only references North Heath Lane and Holbrook schools, with no commentary on the extent to which these schools will be able to accommodate all the children on the development. No reference is made to the seven schools in the Roffey and Littlehaven area, nor to Forest and Millias secondary schools. In addition there are a number of shops and a dentist in Roffey.

As a result, there will be significant pedestrian and cycle traffic traversing the railway crossing. There is no consideration in the Application of the impacts on this traffic on personal safety at the crossing.

Off-site parking (Para 12)

We have concerns about the extent to which visitors and residents will park outside of the site. Not only is Richmond Road used by students at Collyers to park their cars but they are also using spaces in the hospital car park opposite Collyers. This is especially noticeable in college vacation periods and indeed most afternoons when many of the students will have left for the day.

Noise from the railway maintenance yard (Para 13)

There is an ongoing discussion between the Council and the Applicant about the noise generation from the Balfour-Beatty operated maintenance yard, which operates diesel

locomotives (85-90dB) and loose-coupled wagons which generate noise that is audible in Wimblehurst Road and Allcard Close.

Tree management (Paras 14 & 15)

The cedar trees have been a fundamental component of the site development since the initial application in 2018 and feature in the marketing material for the current Application. The full environmental implications, notably of the role of trees in water management and a strong biosystem have not been considered in adequate detail

1. Introduction

As of 11 March 2026 there were 389 documents on the HDC Planning Portal that relate to aspects of the DC/25/0629 Application. However, in the opinion of the WRRRA many important issues have still not been addressed by Lovell. We are therefore concerned that a decision may be made about the Application and its associated Conditions. This would not be in the best long-term interests of the residents of Phases 1 and 2, nor in the interests of the local community.

This briefing sets out some specific areas of concern.

2. Housing density

The proposal is for the construction of 206 residential dwellings of which 35% would be affordable housing and 252 parking spaces for the area of the site accessed from Wimblehurst Road. In our view it is important to note that together the housing allocated for the Parsonage Road section of the site and for the Wimblehurst Road section of the site there will be a total of over 450 housing units on the entire site together with over 570 parking spaces.

3. Noise

In our opinion the impact of noise from rail operations has not been adequately considered. In the Spectrum Report dated 28 February 2025 the location of the microphones relative to the railway network do not capture the noise generation from the Balfour-Beatty operated maintenance yard, which operates diesel locomotives with 85-90dB sound levels and loose-coupled wagons. The noise from these movements is audible in Wimblehurst Road, Richmond Road and Allcard Close.

4. Demolition

We were surprised to learn that Lovell had only commissioned an invasive assessment of the structural integrity of Building 3 after submitting the Application for the development of the site. At the on-site meeting on 17 December 2025 it became apparent that Lovell would not be able to assess the impact of the water table on the future of the two buildings until demolition was completed.

It was stated at the site visit that the internal aesthetic features of the clock tower are being protected but we would welcome reassurance that the structural integrity of the clock tower will not be impacted through the demolition of the two wings.

Once the demolition had been completed work would begin on Phase 3 (the Muse Application). We understand that the anticipated duration of the building of Phases 3 and Phases 1 & 2 would be two and a half-years.

The demolition of both the buildings will of course generate twice the initial volume of rubble. As a result, there will be a constant stream of heavy tipper trucks entering the site and then leaving fully laden to join the stream of traffic heading towards the level crossing. These slow-moving vehicles will inevitably add to the queue lengths, especially as they will have to be exceptionally careful traversing the railway level crossing.

5. Water management

We are conscious of the impact of flooding in West Sussex since the beginning of the year. The Meteorological Office attributes the high levels of rainfall to climate change and that these high rainfall levels are likely to be prevalent in the years ahead. We are therefore especially concerned about the extent to which the developments, both individually and collectively, will have an impact on the site and on the local area.

The WRRRA was invited by Lovell to attend a site visit on 17 December at which the reasons for the changes to the initial Application were presented. From the responses from Lovell representatives to WRRRA questions during the site visit on 17 December it became clear that the cause of the on-going flooding cannot be fully investigated until the demolition of the two wings of Building 3 and of Building 36 are completed.

In the course of our objections to both the current Muse and Lovell Planning Applications, and in the initial application in 2019, we highlighted features of the sub-ground level water distribution with the site. These included a major artesian well which provided a constant source of the high-purity water that is essential for pharmaceutical production and is a core reason why Novartis decided to make the site a major manufacturing centre in the mid-2000s.

WRRRA recognises that Lovells will be using the SuDs system of surface water drainage on site as recommended by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and that Southern Water have agreed there is currently capacity in the drainage network to accommodate this system. We still have concerns on how this system will impact the aged network of drains and sewers running through the adjacent Richmond Road Conservation Area. It should be noted that surface water drainage systems can also cause flooding when their capacity is exceeded, and they are not well maintained.

The Richmond Road Conservation Area lies adjacent to this proposed site where residents have witnessed significant increase in ground water issues, leading to tanking of lower rooms and fitting sump pumps in cellars. Many of these Victorian and Edwardian Homes were constructed with foundations in direct contact with the ground and are more susceptible to moisture problems.

The diversion of water from around these new developments raises the issue of potential impacts on properties in the Conservation Area by altering natural drainage patterns. The proposed site sits on land with active underground water, a remnant of historical streams. The water supply for the former Wimblehurst House estate was provided by large sub-ground level reservoir that was constantly replenished by these water sources.

6. Local facilities

There is no reference in the Application to the seven schools in the Littlehaven and Roffey areas. To reach these schools pupils and guardians will need to walk over railway level crossing and then cross over Parsonage Road on the north side. There are also many pupils walking to and from the Forest and Millais Schools.

There is no analysis in the Application on the extent to which the expansion plans for the schools are adequate for the number of children living on the site.

We note that there is no green area for team games on the site. Children wishing to play football (for example) will have to traverse Parsonage Road and North Heath Lane to visit the green space accessed from Woodstock Close.

The development will be served by the Holbrook GP Practice, which is difficult to reach from the site on foot or by public transport. There is no consideration of the extent to which the Practice will be able to cope with over 1000 extra residents from the site at a time when the continued growth of residents in the Mowbray development will also require GP services.

There is currently a dental practice in the Coltsfoot Drive development and another in Roffey. Only the Roffey practice accepts, on a limited basis, NHS patients.

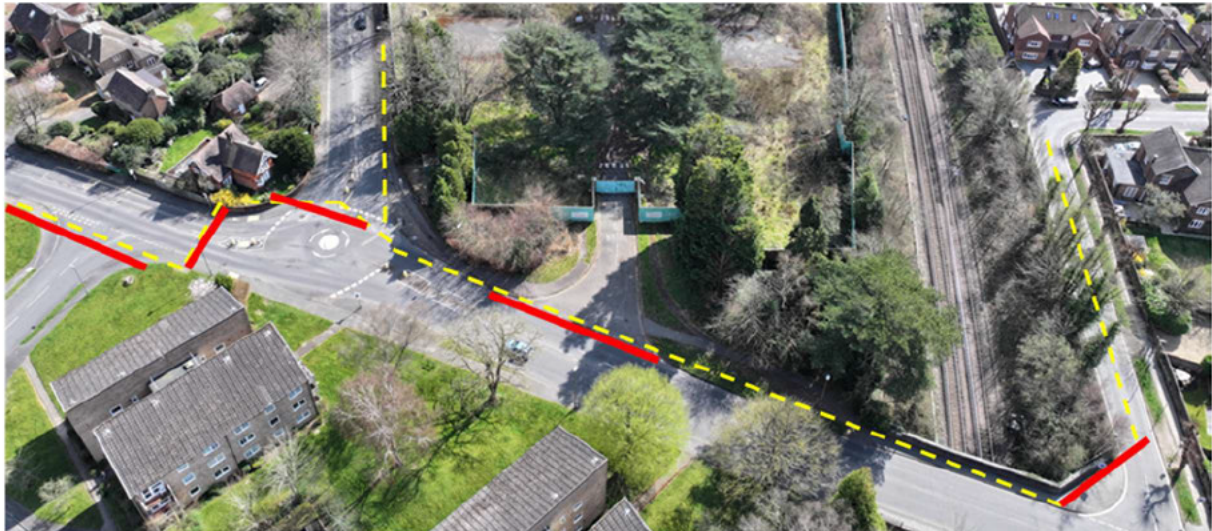
There is a small shopping area at Coltsfoot Drive but there is already significant pressure on car parking as many of the cars are parked for periods of time as a result of appointments at the dental practice, and the hair and beauty salons.

No mention is made in the Application of the range of shops in the Roffey area, which will take no longer to reach than the shops in Coltsfoot Drive. The importance though of these schools, shops and other facilities is that people using them will have to walk across the level crossing, increasing the risk of accidents.

7. Pedestrian Safety

There is significant current use of North Heath Lane and Wimblehurst Road by pedestrians, students and residents, especially those who are taking or escorting pupils to North Heath Lane and Holbrook Schools. Pupils at Bohunt Academy also use this route to cycle or walk to the school. All the above also require access to the north-bound

and south-bound bus stops on North Heath Lane. There is no discussion about the impact of these groups of people crossing Parsonage Road and North Heath Lane, and having to walk across the face of the Wimblehurst Road access when residents are both driving out of the site, and driving into the site.



The drone photograph above shows the pedestrian walkways in yellow and the places where pedestrians are going to have to cross active traffic flows are shown in red.

There is also no consideration of the potential dangers with these groups of people in having to cross Richmond Road to reach Collyers College, the Hospital, the Railway Station and into Horsham itself, as well as walking on down Wimblehurst Road.

8. Cycle safety

The Applicant has highlighted the opportunity for cyclists to travel around the site areas. There is little appreciation in either the Travel or Transport plans of the narrow width of the roads.



The photograph above shows a car moving across the centre line approaching the mini-roundabout in order to be a safe distance from the cyclists in a single file. It is very

dangerous to ride along Wimblehurst Road and North Heath Lane as buses and commercial vehicles need to make the maximum use of the width of the roads. Cyclists also have to negotiate the heavy traffic at the mini-roundabout.

9. Congestion and vehicle safety

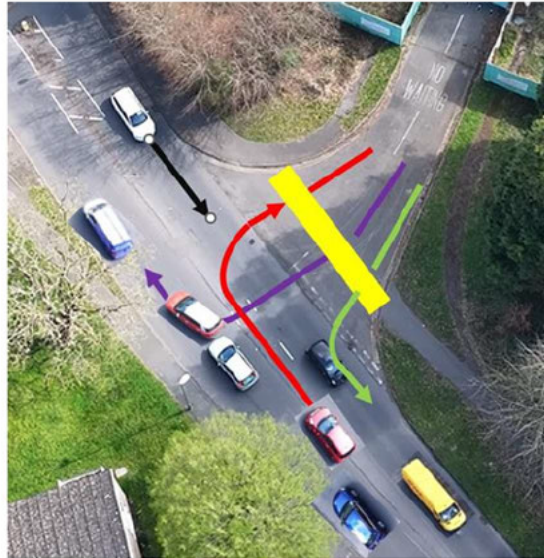


Both local residents and drivers using Parsonage Road to bypass the centre of the town experience long queue lengths on a frequent basis. In the Travel Plan at para 3.41 there is no reference to the Thameslink rail services, which in effect double the number of times the gates close.

Twice an hour (around 20 and 50 minutes past the hour throughout the day) four trains traverse the crossing, two Southern and two Thameslink within 6-8 minutes. Any delay in these trains can result in the crossing gates being closed for an extended period of time. The drone photograph above illustrates the queues that form.

When the gates are open a queue of west-bound traffic moves quickly down the clear road towards Wimblehurst Road, passing across the face of the Parsonage Road site and around and down towards the railway bridge, passing across the face of the Wimblehurst Road access. This queue compromises the rate at which vehicles can exit either of the site access gates.

There is no reference in the RSA Stage 1 to the potential impact of three lanes of traffic immediately outside of the Wimblehurst Road access. One lane will service traffic using the mini-roundabout to drive along North Heath Lane and Parsonage Road. The second northbound lane will be created by traffic passing over the railway bridge and wishing to turn right into the development.



The yellow band indicates the likely path of pedestrians across the face of the Wimblehurst access.

Our major concern is the poor sight line from the exit towards vehicles turning around the corner from Parsonage Road.



The sequence above was shot on a car dash cam and shows a set of photographs at an interval of 1 second to show how little warning either the car driver or the van driver had to avoid a collision. The van driver had to brake hard. In wet conditions they would not have been able to do so.

10. Off-site parking

We have concerns about the extent to which visitors and residents will park outside of the site. Not only is Richmond Road used by students at Collyers to park their cars but they are also using spaces in the hospital car park opposite Collyers. This is especially noticeable in college vacation periods and indeed most afternoons when many of the students will have left for the day.

11. Ecology

Being mature evergreens, the Blue Atlas Cedars would continue to provide consistent ecosystem services by acting as sound barriers to reduce noise pollution, sequestering

carbon and absorbing higher levels of air pollutants from traffic etc, and reducing urban heating from the cooling effects from shade and tree transpiration – all environmental benefits that new, deciduous replacements simply can't equal. Even when they eventually reach maturity, they will be without their leaves for 4-5 months/at least a third of the year. The fallen leaves will fall on the pathways of the site causing slippery

In addition, the cedars are drought-tolerant whereas the Dawn Redwoods need a lot of water to establish (sometimes called the “water fir”) and don't become resistant to drought until mature. Although fast growing, it will take them years to have any hope of matching the environmental benefits of the cedars. They could eventually grow to 160 feet tall but that will depend on conditions and how well they are cared for when planted (Blue Atlas Cedars are recognised as an increasingly suitable species for our warming climate).

It is extremely likely that bats use these trees judging by the frequency they are seen by residents during warmer months despite none being reported the moment the bat survey was done. Bats are protected under both British and European Law making it illegal to disturb their roosts, or obstruct access to them, even when bats aren't present.

List of the dates of submissions made by WRRRA

DC/25/0415

23/4/2025

17/06/2025

18/07/2025

13/08/2025

15/09/2025

DC/25/0629

19/05/2025

17/06/2025

30/06/2025

22/12/2025

22/09/2025

15/09/2025

22/09/2025

19/05/2025