

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 20 August 2026 20:50
To: Planning
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0266
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 20/08/2026 8:49 PM [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address:	Thakeham Mushrooms Storrington Road Thakeham Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3DY
Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide 150 dwellings, including affordable housing, land for the community land trust, works to public right of way and associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure. (AMENDMENTS INCLUDING AMENDED PLANS, SITE LOCATION PLAN AND RED LINE BOUNDARY)
Case Officer:	Sam Whitehouse

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Address:	8 Abingworth Crescent Thakeham Pulborough West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Overdevelopment
Comments:	Further Representation / Objection in Response to Amended Plans Planning Application: DC/26/0266 Site: Former Thakeham Mushroom Site, Storrington Road, Thakeham Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide 150 dwellings,

including affordable housing, land for the Community Land Trust, works to public right of way and associated landscaping, biodiversity net gain bank, public open space, storage building, ancillary parking and associated infrastructure.

I write to maintain my objection to application DC/26/0266 and to make this further representation following the submission of the amended plans and Planning Statement Addendum dated August 2026.

I acknowledge that the present proposal represents a substantial reduction from the previous appeal scheme for 247 dwellings and that a number of changes have been made in response to the Inspector's decision and representations from residents. Nevertheless, the fundamental concerns regarding the scale of development, sustainability of the location, dependence on private vehicles, effect upon the character and function of Thakeham and conflict with the adopted development plan and Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan remain unresolved.

Indeed, aspects of the amended submission reinforce those concerns.

1. The Fundamental Sustainability Problem Has Not Been Resolved

The June 2025 appeal decision, APP/Z3825/W/24/3350094, is particularly important to the consideration of this application.

The Inspector identified as one of the main issues whether development at this site would be sustainably located in relation to facilities and services so as to minimise reliance upon private vehicles. The Inspector recognised that Thakeham remains reliant upon larger settlements for most requirements and concluded that the previous development would not be sustainably located and would not provide future residents with realistic alternatives to private vehicle use.

Although the number of dwellings has now been reduced from 247 to 150, the geographical location of the site has not changed.

The applicant's own August 2026 Planning Statement Addendum continues to describe Thakeham as a "Smaller Village", characterised by limited services and facilities and with residents reliant on larger settlements to access most of their requirements.

The Addendum also expressly acknowledges that:

- * the proposal would introduce approximately 360 additional residents;
- * some of those residents' needs would continue to be met by travelling to larger neighbouring settlements; and
- * private vehicle use would remain necessary for certain journeys.

Those acknowledgements are highly significant.

The issue identified by the previous Inspector was not merely the numerical amount of traffic generated by 247 houses. It was the underlying locational sustainability of the site and the absence of genuine choice in how residents access everyday facilities, services and employment.

Reducing the number of houses reduces the magnitude of that problem, but it does not resolve the problem itself.

This is particularly relevant because the amended proposal no longer includes the Demand Responsive Transport service previously advanced as part of the sustainable transport package. The remaining measures - including electric cycle hire, a mobility hub, car club provision, pedestrian improvements and traffic calming - may be welcome in themselves, but they do not provide an alternative means by which ordinary household journeys to schools, employment, healthcare, significant food shopping and other services can realistically be undertaken by the majority of residents.

Electric cars and car clubs may reduce emissions from individual journeys, but they do not make an inherently car-dependent location sustainable in transport terms.

The Council should therefore scrutinise whether the amended Transport Assessment actually demonstrates that the sustainability concerns identified by the Inspector have been overcome, rather than simply demonstrating that the highway network has sufficient numerical capacity to accommodate additional vehicle movements.

2. 150 Dwellings Remains a Disproportionate Expansion of a Smaller Village

The proposal would introduce 150 additional homes and approximately 360 residents into a settlement which both adopted and emerging policy continue to classify as a Smaller Village.

This needs to be assessed in the context of the substantial expansion that Thakeham has already experienced.

In the previous appeal decision, the Inspector recorded a baseline of approximately 550 dwellings within Thakeham, together with further planned housing, and specifically recognised the significant expansion already experienced through Abingworth Meadows.

Even allowing for subsequent development, 150 additional dwellings would therefore still constitute a very substantial further increment in the size of this rural settlement.

My previous objection raised concern that continued large-scale expansion would materially alter the character of Thakeham and erode its identity as a small, close-knit rural community. That concern remains.

The applicant now argues that previous growth has caused Thakeham to evolve into a larger and more sustainable community and that this, in turn, supports further development.

I consider that reasoning to be circular.

Previous development cannot of itself establish that continued large-scale expansion is appropriate. If that approach were accepted, each significant development would provide justification for the next, resulting in incremental but ultimately fundamental alteration of the settlement.

The relevant policy question remains whether the nature and scale of the development is appropriate to Thakeham's position and function within the settlement hierarchy.

The applicant has not, in my view, convincingly demonstrated why adding 150 dwellings and approximately 360 residents represents an appropriate scale of growth for a settlement which continues formally to be classified as a Smaller Village and which remains reliant upon neighbouring settlements for many everyday requirements.

3. The Previous Inspector's Findings Remain Highly Relevant

The previous appeal should not be treated as irrelevant merely because the number of homes has been reduced.

The Inspector found that:

- * Thakeham remained reliant upon larger settlements;
- * the Council's sustainability evidence indicated that additional development would increase unsustainable travel patterns;
- * the village had already experienced substantial recent expansion;
- * the loss of employment at the Mushroom Site increased outward commuting;
- * sustainable transport measures did not overcome the locational disadvantages of the site; and
- * the proposal conflicted with the spatial strategy because of its nature, substantial scale and poor relationship with facilities and services.

The new application undoubtedly changes the degree of some of these impacts.

It does not change the underlying factual characteristics of the location.

The Council should therefore require clear evidence demonstrating why the Inspector's findings concerning this site's relationship with services and sustainable travel should now lead to a materially different conclusion.

4. Conflict With the Adopted Development Plan and Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan Remains

It is notable that the applicant expressly acknowledges that the application conflicts with HDPF Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 and with Policy 3 of the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan anticipated alternative uses for the Mushroom Site following cessation of the mushroom operation, including appropriate recreational, solar, employment/commercial and tourism uses, rather than residential development of this scale.

The applicant's case is therefore not that there is no conflict with the adopted development plan. Rather, it argues that the weight attached to that conflict should be reduced because of the Council's housing-land-supply position and the operation of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

Even where the paragraph 11(d) balance is engaged, however, the actual harms arising from inappropriate scale, poor locational sustainability, increased car dependence, countryside impact and effects upon settlement character remain material considerations.

The Council should not treat the housing-land-supply shortfall as establishing a presumption that any quantum of residential development adjoining Thakeham is necessarily sustainable or appropriate.

5. Significant Weight Should Not Prematurely Be Given to an Unadopted Change to the Built-Up Area Boundary

The applicant places considerable reliance upon proposed changes to the emerging Horsham District Local Plan and, in particular, an extension of the Built-Up Area Boundary which it says would include the Application Site.

The applicant itself acknowledges that consultation on those Main Modifications remains underway and that the outcome is presently unknown.

That is important.

The proposed boundary alteration has not yet completed examination and has not been adopted. Representations on the Main Modifications remain to be considered by the Local Plan Inspector.

The applicant's assertion that "significant weight" should already be afforded to the altered boundary should therefore be approached cautiously.

Changing a line on a proposed Policies Map does not itself change the physical characteristics of Thakeham, improve its level of services, create public transport provision, provide employment opportunities or alter the accessibility problems previously identified by the Inspector.

Any assessment under emerging policy must therefore still confront the substantive question: is development of 150 dwellings appropriate in scale and function for this particular Smaller Village?

6. The New Land West of PRow 2474 Requires Proper Assessment as Development of

Greenfield Countryside

The revised application significantly enlarges the proposal by incorporating agricultural greenfield land west of Public Right of Way 2474.

This land is proposed to change from agricultural use to public open space and enhanced habitat, incorporating, amongst other things:

- * extensive play facilities;
- * recreational routes and woodland walks;
- * lookout points;
- * a wildlife pond;
- * a ten-space car park;
- * a maintenance/storage building; and
- * associated access and infrastructure.

I recognise the community benefit which high-quality public open space can provide.

However, this should not mean that the physical effects of changing agricultural countryside to a more intensively managed recreational use are disregarded.

The Council should carefully assess the consequences of the car park, access road, maintenance building, play infrastructure, increased activity, signage, hard surfacing and any lighting upon the rural character, tranquillity and appearance of this presently undeveloped land.

The substantial amount of proposed open space should also be considered in proper context. The applicant identifies a site requirement of approximately 1.67 hectares but proposes approximately 18.78 hectares.

That may provide a benefit, but the amount of mitigation and open space being introduced should not obscure the fundamental assessment of whether 150 homes in this location are sustainable in the first place.

A planning balance should distinguish between measures genuinely necessary to mitigate the effects of the development and genuinely additional public benefits.

7. Potential Future Development of the Retained Mushroom Site Land

The Addendum contains a particularly significant statement concerning land within the applicant's ownership which has now been excluded from the application boundary.

It states that this retained land may subsequently be promoted through Local Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plan processes for potential development of up to a further 85 dwellings and/or other uses.

I appreciate that those potential 85 dwellings do not form part of DC/26/0266 and that any such scheme would require separate consideration and planning permission.

Nevertheless, the statement is directly relevant to understanding the long-term development strategy being contemplated for the wider Mushroom Site.

It reinforces the importance of avoiding incremental decision-making in which each additional development is considered without adequate regard to the cumulative transformation of Thakeham.

The Council should ensure that granting permission for the current 150 dwellings would not prejudice appropriate comprehensive long-term planning of the wider site or create an expectation that further substantial residential expansion is inevitable.

This is particularly important given the amount of growth the village has already experienced.

8. Traffic Calming Does Not Resolve Car Dependence

The proposed extension of the 30mph speed limit and provision of traffic calming measures along Storrington Road may provide highway-safety benefits and I do not object to those measures in themselves.

However, they should not be confused with resolving the wider sustainability issue.

Traffic calming manages vehicles once journeys are being made. It does not remove the necessity for those journeys.

The applicant accepts that future residents will continue to require access to facilities in neighbouring settlements and that private vehicles will remain necessary.

The appropriate question is therefore not simply whether the additional traffic can physically be accommodated, but whether locating approximately 360 additional residents here represents sustainable development in circumstances where a substantial proportion of everyday journeys will remain dependent upon the private vehicle.

9. The Planning Balance

I recognise the benefits of the revised proposal, including:

- * delivery of market and affordable housing;
- * redevelopment and improvement of the former Mushroom Site;
- * Community Land Trust land;
- * additional public open space;
- * biodiversity enhancements;
- * traffic-calming measures; and
- * removal of the three-storey and commercial elements of the previous scheme.

However, those benefits have to be weighed against the enduring harms.

The central issue is not whether 150 dwellings are preferable to the previous proposal for 247 dwellings. Plainly they represent a reduction.

The question for the Council is whether 150 dwellings are themselves appropriate and sustainable in this particular location.

For the reasons above, I do not believe that has been demonstrated.

The amended proposal would still:

- * represent a substantial expansion of a Smaller Village;
- * introduce approximately 360 additional residents into a settlement with limited services;
- * remain materially dependent upon private vehicle travel;
- * conflict with the adopted spatial strategy and Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan;
- * contribute to the cumulative expansion and alteration of Thakeham;
- * introduce development and more intensive recreational uses onto additional greenfield countryside; and
- * potentially form only one stage in the longer-term residential development of the wider former Mushroom Site.

Conclusion

I therefore respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuse planning permission for DC/26/0266.

If officers are nevertheless minded to recommend approval, I ask that these matters - particularly the continuing relevance of the previous Inspector's findings on sustainability and scale - are addressed explicitly and fully in the officer report to Planning Committee

rather than treated as resolved solely by the reduction from 247 to 150 dwellings.

I also ask that appropriate weight continues to be afforded to the adopted development plan and Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan and that the emerging alteration to the Built-Up Area Boundary is not treated as determinative before the Main Modifications process has concluded.

Where did you
hear about this
application?

Word of Mouth

Kind regards

Telephone:

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