From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 November 2026 20:28:27 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0366
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 01/11/2026 8:28 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land North West of Southwater
Proposal:	Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for primary access to the highway) for a phased development comprising: the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of up to 1,000 residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Class C3); up to 80 specialist accommodation units (Use Class C2); a mixed-use neighbourhood centre (Use Classes E and F); education facilities (Use Class F1(a)); business and employment floorspace (Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g)); redevelopment of existing agricultural buildings including construction of a building for community use (Use Classes E and F2); improvements to public rights of way; sports pitches; gypsy and traveller pitches/plots; public open space; landscaping, and associated infrastructure
Case Officer:	Matthew Porter

Click for further information

Customer Details

Address:	31 Blakes Farm Road Southwater Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:
- Other
- Overdevelopment

Comments:

I am writing to register my strong objection to planning application DC/26/0366 for the proposed development of land northwest of Southwater.

I recognise the need for additional housing, including affordable housing, and accept that sustainable development is necessary to meet future housing requirements. However, I believe this proposal represents an excessive and disproportionate expansion of Southwater, fails to respect the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and raises serious concerns about the cumulative impact of development on the village and its infrastructure.

Southwater has already experienced substantial residential growth over the past 10-15 years. The proposed addition of up to 1,000 further dwellings, alongside specialist accommodation, employment premises and community facilities, would place further significant pressure on a settlement that has already undergone considerable expansion.

My objection is not to development in principle, but to the scale, location and cumulative consequences of this particular proposal.

1. Conflict with the Adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan

My principal objection concerns the apparent conflict between this application and the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan was developed through a democratic, community-led process and formally adopted in June 2021. It established an agreed framework for managing future development while protecting the character, identity and sustainability of Southwater.

The plan identifies land for approximately 450 new homes in the northwest of Southwater. Berkeley's proposal for up to 1,000 dwellings represents more than double that provision.

Furthermore, parts of the proposed development extend beyond the boundaries identified for development within the adopted plan.

This is not a minor departure from an agreed planning framework. It represents a fundamental change in the scale and extent of development envisaged for the area.

The Neighbourhood Plan was intended to give residents a meaningful influence over the future of their community. Residents participated in good faith in a process designed to balance housing requirements with infrastructure capacity, environmental protection and the preservation of village character.

To permit development so substantially exceeding the parameters of that plan risks undermining public confidence in the planning system and the value of community-led planning.

I recognise that emerging planning policies may identify different development requirements. However, an emerging allocation should not automatically override an adopted Neighbourhood Plan without proper consideration of the relevant planning policies and material considerations.

I strongly support Southwater Parish Council's formal objection to this application and ask Horsham District Council to give appropriate weight to the conflicts identified with the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Cumulative Overdevelopment of Southwater

Southwater has already accommodated considerable residential development over the past 10-15 years, including Broadacres and other substantial housing developments around the village.

These developments have significantly increased the size of Southwater and the demands placed upon its roads, schools, healthcare services, public transport and community infrastructure.

The proposed development must therefore be considered in the context of the substantial growth that has already occurred.

My concern is not simply the number of dwellings proposed in this application. It is the cumulative effect of successive large-scale developments on a community whose infrastructure has not necessarily expanded at the same rate as its population.

The fact that previous developments have been approved and constructed should not be regarded as justification for further expansion without demonstrating that the settlement can sustainably accommodate it.

Southwater cannot reasonably be expected to absorb successive major developments without a comprehensive assessment of their combined consequences.

I therefore request that Horsham District Council explicitly considers:

* The total number of dwellings completed and approved in Southwater over the past 15 years.
* The cumulative increase in population resulting from those developments.
* Whether investment in local infrastructure and public services

has kept pace with residential growth.
* The combined impact of existing, approved and proposed developments on local traffic and highway capacity.
* The cumulative loss of countryside and the gradual erosion of Southwater's distinct village character.
* Whether further development on the scale proposed is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

The planning authority should not consider this application in isolation or assess its impact as though Southwater had not already experienced substantial expansion.

The central question is whether Southwater has the capacity to accommodate another 1,000 homes without unacceptable consequences for existing residents and the long-term sustainability of the village.

3. Loss of Village Identity and Settlement Separation

Southwater has a distinct identity as an established village, with its own community facilities, village centre and relationship with the surrounding countryside.

Continued large-scale residential expansion risks fundamentally changing that character.

I am particularly concerned about the potential coalescence of Southwater and Christ's Hospital.

The separation between settlements is important in maintaining their individual identities and preventing the gradual urbanisation of the surrounding countryside.

Development of the scale proposed would extend the built environment into areas currently forming part of the rural setting of Southwater.

The resulting landscape changes would be permanent and largely irreversible.

The cumulative effect of successive developments must also be recognised. While individual housing schemes may appear manageable, their combined impact can progressively erode the character and identity of a settlement.

I believe the planning authority should give significant consideration to the landscape impact of this proposal and the importance of maintaining meaningful separation between Southwater and neighbouring settlements.

4. Pressure on Existing Infrastructure and Public Services

The proposed development would generate substantial additional demand for local infrastructure and essential public services.

Southwater has already experienced significant population growth, and there are legitimate concerns about the capacity of existing facilities to accommodate further expansion.

Of particular concern are healthcare provision, school capacity, transport infrastructure, drainage and community facilities.

Although the application includes proposals for educational and other facilities, their inclusion within an outline application does not provide sufficient assurance that they will be delivered at the point they are needed.

I am concerned that residential construction could proceed significantly ahead of the infrastructure required to support the additional population.

It would be unacceptable for existing residents to experience further pressure on essential services while waiting for promised facilities to materialise.

The planning authority must require robust evidence demonstrating that the necessary infrastructure is deliverable, adequately funded and appropriately phased.

Where infrastructure provision is dependent on future development phases, clear and enforceable commitments should be secured before permission is granted.

Housing growth and infrastructure investment must proceed together. Existing communities should not be expected to absorb the consequences of development undertaken without adequate supporting facilities.

5. Traffic Congestion and Highway Safety

The proposed development would generate a substantial increase in vehicle movements, both during construction and following occupation.

A development comprising up to 1,000 homes, specialist accommodation, employment premises, educational facilities and a neighbourhood centre will inevitably create additional demand on the surrounding highway network.

Even allowing for sustainable transport measures, it is unrealistic to assume that a development of this scale will not result in significant additional private vehicle use.

The impact must be assessed across the wider road network,

including routes through Southwater, connections to Horsham and access to the principal highway network.

Particular consideration should be given to peak-hour congestion, school-related traffic, pedestrian safety and the cumulative effects of other existing and approved developments.

I would expect the Council to require comprehensive transport modelling that reflects realistic travel patterns and fully incorporates the cumulative impact of Southwater's previous residential expansion.

Any proposed highway improvements must be demonstrably sufficient to accommodate the additional demand without creating unacceptable congestion or safety risks.

6. Environmental Impact and Permanent Loss of Countryside

The proposal would result in the permanent transformation of a substantial area of countryside.

The environmental consequences extend beyond the immediate loss of green space and include potential impacts on biodiversity, established habitats, wildlife corridors and the wider landscape.

I am particularly concerned about the potential impact on protected species, including bats, and the fragmentation or loss of existing habitats.

The provision of landscaping, ecological mitigation areas and public open space should not automatically be regarded as adequate compensation for the loss of established natural environments.

The planning authority must ensure that all relevant ecological assessments are comprehensive, independently scrutinised and supported by credible mitigation measures.

The cumulative environmental consequences of successive developments around Southwater must also be considered.

Once countryside has been developed, its landscape character and ecological functions cannot necessarily be recreated through landscaping schemes.

The permanent nature of these changes warrants careful consideration before any further large-scale development is permitted.

7. Drainage, Flood Risk and Utilities

The substantial increase in buildings, roads and other

impermeable surfaces raises concerns about surface water drainage and potential flood risk.

The capacity of existing drainage, sewerage and water supply infrastructure must be assessed in the context of both the proposed development and the substantial residential growth already experienced by Southwater.

It is essential that the development does not increase flood risk to neighbouring properties or place unacceptable additional pressure on existing utility networks.

The Council should require clear evidence that the necessary infrastructure improvements are technically feasible, adequately funded and deliverable within appropriate timescales.

These matters should not be left unresolved until after outline permission has been granted.

8. Sports, Recreation and Community Facilities

I note Southwater Parish Council's concerns regarding the adequacy of the proposed sports and recreational facilities.

Southwater already has existing recreational needs, and the addition of a substantial new population would increase demand for sports pitches, community facilities and accessible open space.

A development of this scale should make a meaningful contribution to addressing existing deficiencies as well as meeting the needs of its future residents.

It is important that proposed facilities are genuinely accessible to the wider Southwater community and that their delivery is secured through appropriate planning obligations.

There should also be a clear distinction between usable recreational space and land designated primarily for ecological mitigation or landscaping.

The provision of nominal open space should not be treated as equivalent to delivering the sports and community facilities that residents actually require.

9. Integration with the Existing Village

The proposal includes a new neighbourhood centre and associated community facilities.

While such facilities may provide benefits, I am concerned that a development of this magnitude could effectively create a separate

community rather than an integrated extension of Southwater.

Southwater already has an established village centre at Lintot Square, which plays an important role in supporting local businesses and community life.

Any new commercial and community provision should complement rather than undermine the vitality and viability of the existing village centre.

The applicant should demonstrate how the development will integrate with Southwater through appropriate pedestrian, cycling, public transport and community connections.

The objective should be to strengthen the existing community rather than create a largely self-contained residential development alongside it.

10. Uncertainty Regarding the Outline Application and Development Phasing

I am concerned that an application of this scale is being submitted with almost all matters reserved, other than primary highway access.

While outline applications are an established part of the planning process, the magnitude and complexity of this proposal make certainty regarding its ultimate form and delivery particularly important.

Significant questions remain about the eventual density, layout, building heights, infrastructure provision and timing of community facilities.

These matters are fundamental to understanding the impact of the development on Southwater.

In particular, there must be enforceable safeguards to ensure that essential infrastructure is delivered in step with residential occupation.

The Council should not rely solely on broad commitments or aspirations that may subsequently be amended or delayed.

11. Respect for the Community-Led Planning Process

Finally, I wish to emphasise the importance of respecting the democratic process through which Southwater's future development was considered and agreed.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan was not simply an expression of local preferences. It was developed through a

formal process and became part of the statutory development plan.

It provided residents with a degree of certainty about the anticipated scale and location of future development.

Southwater residents have already witnessed significant changes to their village through successive housing developments.

To now contemplate a further development of up to 1,000 dwellings, more than twice the housing provision identified for the relevant area within the Neighbourhood Plan, raises serious questions about the meaningful influence of local communities over planning decisions.

If adopted neighbourhood plans can be substantially departed from without compelling and properly evidenced justification, public confidence in the planning system is inevitably weakened.

I therefore ask Horsham District Council to give full and proper consideration to the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, the formal objections raised by Southwater Parish Council and the cumulative impact of development already experienced by the community.

Conclusion

I recognise the importance of providing new homes, including affordable housing, and I am not opposed to appropriately planned and sustainable development.

However, Southwater has already made a substantial contribution to housing growth over recent years.

The village's capacity to accommodate further expansion should not be treated as unlimited.

The proposed development raises serious concerns regarding:

* Its apparent conflict with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.
* The cumulative impact of substantial residential growth over the past 15 years.
* The ability of existing infrastructure and public services to accommodate further development.
* Increased traffic congestion and pressure on the surrounding highway network.
* The permanent loss of countryside and potential environmental harm.
* The erosion of Southwater's distinct village identity and the potential coalescence with Christ's Hospital.
* The adequacy and timely delivery of essential infrastructure and

community facilities.

Southwater's future development should be determined through a coherent, sustainable and community-informed planning framework, not through successive major expansions that risk exceeding the capacity of the settlement and undermining an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

I believe this application represents a disproportionate expansion of Southwater and that its potential adverse consequences have not been adequately justified.

I therefore formally object to planning application DC/26/0366 and request that Horsham District Council refuses planning permission unless the applicant can demonstrate compliance with the statutory development plan, or that material considerations justify any departure from it, and that the identified impacts can be satisfactorily addressed.

I also request that full consideration is given to the objections submitted by Southwater Parish Council.

Kind regards

Telephone:

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Horsham District Council