
From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 22 March 2026 18:03
To: Planning
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 22/03/2026 6:02 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 residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Classes C2 and C3); 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: 8 FLETCHERS SOUTHWATER

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Loss of General Amenity
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: I am writing to formally object to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater. I live directly adjacent to the proposed site, and I have serious concerns regarding the cumulative impact of this development on the village, its infrastructure, environment, and community well-being. My objection is based on six primary grounds, each of which I set out below.

1. Infrastructure Cannot Support Further Growth

Southwater is already absorbing significant growth. Approximately 350 homes are under construction at Broadacres, and around 800 have planning permission at the Horsham Golf Club site. Adding 1,000 more homes would bring the total to over 2,150, more than doubling the number of households on the western side of the village.

Essential infrastructure - roads, schools, and healthcare - is already under severe strain. GP surgeries are struggling to meet existing demand, resulting in long waiting times. Schools are experiencing large class sizes, limiting educational quality. Emergency response times are among the poorest in Sussex, exacerbated by Southwater's distance from hospitals.

No cumulative assessment of infrastructure for all three developments has been carried out. Berkeley Homes has only assessed its own site in isolation. Approving this development without a full, independent, and publicly published assessment of combined infrastructure impact is neither sound nor legally responsible.

Sewage infrastructure is also failing. Southern Water has a track record of non-compliance, including 51 criminal offences in 2020 and ongoing disputes over funding essential upgrades. Foul drainage from the proposed site would place Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works under further strain before upgrades are complete, posing a serious environmental and public health risk.

Personal note: As a resident, the strain on roads, schools, and healthcare is something I already feel daily. Additional traffic and construction would directly affect my commute and the safety of my children walking to school.

2. Threat to Ancient Woodland and Wildlife

Two areas of irreplaceable ancient woodland - Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse - sit immediately adjacent to the site. These habitats cannot be replaced or compensated for if damaged. Hydrological impacts from extensive drainage works could harm these woodlands without any direct physical encroachment. Berkeley Homes has not provided an independent assessment of this risk.

Wildlife surveys are incomplete and are proposed to be carried out after approval, which is not legally permissible. [REDACTED]

The 10% biodiversity net gain required under the Environment Act 2021 cannot credibly be achieved on this site due to Weald Clay soil and drainage constraints. Any reliance on off-site biodiversity credits risks creating a local ecological desert.

Personal note: I regularly see deer on these fields - sometimes up to 10 at a time - as well as foxes, [REDACTED] and other wildlife. These are daily experiences that would be lost forever if this development proceeds.

3. Permanent Change to Village Character

The 141-hectare site is equivalent to roughly 200 football pitches. Combined with the Golf Club and Broadacres developments, Southwater would add over 2,000 homes in a single generation, effectively turning a large village into a small town.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan requires that development respect the village's landscape character and maintain separation from neighbouring settlements, including Christ's Hospital. This proposal fails to demonstrate compliance and threatens coalescence, undermining both local and national planning principles.

Southwater sits on a gently elevated plateau, offering open views across the Low Weald countryside. A continuous development of 1,000 homes would be visible for miles, permanently altering the skyline and irreversibly damaging the village's rural character. No combined Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been conducted to consider the cumulative effect of all three concurrent developments.

Personal note: I live directly backing onto the proposed development fields. The transformation of these open views into continuous rooftops would directly affect my home and the quality of life for my family.

4. Water Scarcity and Sewage Failures

Southwater is in a designated water-stressed zone. The 2025 drought - the hottest summer on record with preceding extreme dryness - demonstrated the fragility of local water supply.

Hosepipe bans were imposed regionally, and the Environment Agency confirmed that England required at least 100% of average winter rainfall to recover, which did not occur.

Southern Water cannot be relied upon to provide a sustainable supply. Its historical criminal

convictions, ongoing investment disputes, and high leakage rates leave serious doubts over its capacity to serve an additional 1,000 homes. Water usage forecasts for this development assume unrealistic conservation levels that residents at Broadacres have already found unachievable. Groundwater abstraction at Hardham is already under ecological stress, which would be exacerbated by this development.

There is no credible, independently verified strategy demonstrating that the water network can reliably serve this development, particularly during drought conditions. Approving it without such verification would be both irresponsible and unsafe.

Personal note: I already experience low water pressure during dry periods. Adding 1,000 homes would likely reduce availability further and make daily life - cooking, washing, showering - difficult and unreliable.

5. Southwater Has Already Done Its Fair Share

The Neighbourhood Plan sets a housing allocation of 420-460 homes, agreed by referendum in 2021. Broadacres (350 homes) and the Golf Club site (800 homes) already exceed this allocation, totalling 1,150 homes - nearly three times the Plan's figure. Adding Berkeley Homes' 1,000 homes would bring the total to over 2,150, nearly five times the allocation, representing a 62.9% increase above already committed growth.

This proposal is developer-led rather than based on community-identified need. Berkeley Homes' own promotional materials confirm the site was "identified in the draft Local Plan as suitable," following the withdrawal of their 1,500-home application. This is inconsistent with the Local Plan's purpose to independently assess and allocate housing objectively.

Brownfield sites elsewhere, such as the former Novartis site in North Horsham, are available for development and should be prioritised over greenfield farmland in Southwater. Approving further greenfield development here while brownfield sites remain underutilised would be contrary to national planning principles.

Personal note: I feel that Southwater residents have already contributed more than our fair share of housing. This level of growth feels imposed rather than planned with community needs in mind.

6. Direct Impact on Residents' Health, Wellbeing, and Environment

I use the open fields adjacent to my home for daily walks, exercise, and fresh air - essential for my mental and physical well-being. The fields are home to deer, foxes, [REDACTED], and birds, which I see regularly.

Construction, traffic, noise, and air pollution from 1,000 new homes would directly affect my property, reduce the quality of the environment, and limit opportunities for outdoor activity. The destruction of these spaces would have irreversible effects on residents' health and the local community.

Personal note: Losing these green spaces would remove a vital part of daily life for me and my family, including regular exercise, observing wildlife, and enjoying clean air. It would be a direct and personal detriment.

Conclusion

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuse the Berkeley Homes proposal. The combined impacts on infrastructure, environment, water supply, village character, and resident well-being make this development unsustainable.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**

