

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 March 2026 11:10:34 UTC+01:00
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 26/03/2026 10:10 AM.

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: 56 King Edward Close Christs Hospital Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Design
- Highway Access and Parking

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

Comments:

Object, Object, Object.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the site cannot be safely drained.

The entire site sits on Weald Clay - a soil type officially classified by the Environment Agency as having almost no ability to absorb water. This is the fundamental hydrological character of this land. It is not a marginal issue that can be engineered away.

On Weald Clay, standard drainage solutions - soakaways, permeable paving, infiltration trenches - simply do not work. Berkeley Homes would have to rely entirely on large above-ground storage ponds, underground tanks, and carefully managed outflows to local streams and ditches. At the scale of 1,000 homes, with thousands of roofs, roads and driveways replacing farmland, this is an enormous engineering challenge.

Planning rules now require drainage systems to cope with a 40% increase in rainfall intensity to account for climate change. The 2025 drought - the worst in 132 years - demonstrates this is not a theoretical risk. Berkeley Homes has not provided an independently verified drainage strategy that proves this is achievable.

Gardens on the Blakes Farm estate nearby have flooded repeatedly over many years - direct evidence of what happens when this clay soil is built over without adequate drainage.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the drainage works required could permanently damage two areas of ancient woodland.

Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse lie immediately alongside the proposed development site. Both are designated ancient woodlands - habitats that have been continuously wooded for over 400 years and are considered irreplaceable under national planning law. Once damaged, ancient woodland cannot be restored.

The threat is not just from bulldozers entering the woodland directly. Large-scale drainage engineering on Weald Clay can lower or alter groundwater levels across a wide surrounding area. Ancient woodland trees have root systems extending far beyond the woodland boundary, and changes to soil moisture caused by attenuation ponds and drainage channels nearby can kill these trees silently over years, without any direct physical contact.

This is a well-evidenced, recognised risk - yet Berkeley Homes has not submitted any independent hydrological assessment of the impact their drainage works would have on these

woodlands. A developer's own consultant assessment is not sufficient for something this serious and irreversible.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the local road network is already at breaking point and this development will make it far worse.

The A24, which is the only realistic route in and out of Southwater for most journeys, is already at or beyond capacity at peak times. This is not residents' opinion - it is confirmed in Horsham District Council's own evidence base.

The Hop Oast roundabout, which would be one of the main access points for the Berkeley Homes development, is already at capacity according to the Council's own figures - and this is before a single Berkeley Homes home is built. Adding 1,000 new homes, alongside the 800 already approved at the Horsham Golf Club site, would bring 1,800 new car-dependent households through this single junction.

Adding 1000 homes will increase car dependency and increase the number of cars on local roads by approximately 1500 in the village which will add to the traffic attracted to the village for school drop off and pickup from villages outside Southwater. The problem will not simply be an increase of traffic due to houses but also due to the new school being promoted as part of the proposal.

When Berkeley Homes previously applied for 1,500 homes on the same site, West Sussex County Council Highways raised serious unresolved objections on traffic grounds. The application was withdrawn. Those concerns were never resolved - and the traffic position has got worse since then.

Adding traffic signals or road markings to an already-overloaded junction does not solve the problem. It delays it and makes it slightly more orderly. The underlying capacity is still exhausted and would create traffic bottlenecks within the village and on the A24 resulting in gridlock for new and existing residents.

Objection to car park on The Warren:

There is no business case - the current car park has a 35% average occupancy with the busiest days (Mon-Thurs) averaging 51.7%.

There is poor access - it's a single track road with no scope to widen that floods regularly.

There would be a loss of beautiful and irreplaceable countryside.

There would be increased noise, pollution, disturbance and crime for local residents.

There would be a loss of privacy for local residents.

Kind regards

Telephone:

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