

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 March 2026 16:50:28 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 23/03/2026 4:50 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: 1 Roberts Close Southwater Horsham West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity

- Overdevelopment
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater because...

1) The proposal is more than double what Southwater's Neighbourhood Plan allows. Southwater residents voted in a democratic referendum in June 2021 to approve a Neighbourhood Plan that set a clear and legally binding limit on new housing in the village - between 420 and 460 homes. That was agreed through a proper community-led process. Berkeley Homes is now proposing more than double that number - 1,000 homes. This is not a slight overshoot. It is a 117% breach of the limit that residents themselves set. National planning rules state clearly that where a proposal conflicts with the current and in-date Neighbourhood Plan, planning permission should not normally be granted. The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan is recent, legally adopted, and carries full weight. Berkeley Homes has provided no independent evidence to justify overriding a community plan that was voted for by local people just five years ago. Housing planners may state that the plan is "out of date" being 5 years old but an online petition against this proposal has already attracted over 3000 signatories so the community sentiment back in 2021 is still current. I ask that the proposal be refused because it directly and fundamentally conflicts with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan on the number of homes allowed.

2) Local infrastructure cannot cope: No proper assessment has been made of the combined impact of all the growth Southwater is already absorbing. Southwater is not starting from zero. Approximately 350 homes are already under construction at Broadacres. Around 800 more have planning permission at the Horsham Golf Club site. That is already around 1,150 new homes committed before Berkeley Homes has built a single house. Adding 1,000 more brings the total to over 2,150 new homes - more than doubling the number of households in a village whose roads, schools, doctors' surgeries and sewage system were not built to cope with growth at this scale. No one has carried out an assessment of what all this growth means for Southwater's infrastructure together. The timescale of this development compounds the problem further. At Berkeley Homes' known build-out rate of 50-60 homes per year, and with a further estimated 200 units yet to be built elsewhere, construction on this site would extend over 20 years. A planning authority is only legally obliged to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply - yet approving this application would effectively hand a single developer a 20-year land supply in this location. Locking up this land for two decades since one developer's build-out capacity is not a sound or proportionate use of the planning system. When Berkeley Homes applied for 1,500 homes on this same site in 2022, Horsham planning officers concluded the cumulative infrastructure impact was one of the key reasons the application was

unacceptable. That application was withdrawn in February 2023. The infrastructure position has got worse since then, not better - yet Berkeley Homes is now asking for 1,000 homes with no better evidence. The doctors surgery is already over subscribed with getting appointments impossible at 8am already. Southwater is also geographically isolated from the main hospitals. As a result, ambulance response times for our area are among the worst in the whole of Sussex. Adding over 2,000 more homes will put even greater pressure on emergency response capacity. Exiting Roberts Close at peak times is difficult already and queuing at the pinch point causes tail backs already so adding additional houses will make this impossible.

3) The Development Will Damage Irreplaceable Ancient Woodland and Destroy Local Wildlife. it poses a serious risk to two irreplaceable areas of ancient woodland. Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse sit immediately alongside the proposed development site. Both are designated ancient woodlands - habitats that have existed continuously for over 400 years. Under national planning law, ancient woodland has near-absolute protection. It cannot be recreated. It cannot be compensated for by planting trees elsewhere. Once damaged, it is gone. The risk is not limited to direct physical encroachment. The massive drainage engineering that would be required on this Weald Clay site - large attenuation ponds, underground storage tanks, and controlled drainage channels - would change the movement of water through the soil across a wide area around the site. Changes to groundwater levels and soil moisture can damage and kill ancient woodland trees through their root systems without any physical entry into the woodland.

4) Southwater sits on a flat open plateau - 1,000 homes will be visible for miles and will permanently alter the skyline. Unlike settlements protected by valleys or woodland, the quality of Southwater's setting is defined by its wide, open views across the Low Weald countryside. This is one of the things that makes living here distinctive - the sense of being in a village in open countryside rather than in continuous suburban sprawl. Building 1,000 homes along the western edge of the village will fundamentally alter what is visible from the surrounding countryside. A continuous line of rooftops, streets and buildings extending across the current farmland will be visible for considerable distances - changing the character of the landscape irreversibly. There is an added cumulative dimension. The Golf Club site to the north and Broadacres to the east are both adding hundreds of homes to Southwater's edges at the same time. No Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been done that looks at all three developments together and honestly assesses what Southwater will look like from the surrounding countryside when they are all complete. This is not a subjective preference. Protecting landscape character is a specific requirement of national planning law and the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan.

There are many more objections, the list is endless! I thereby respectfully request that HDC refuse the planning permission for this application

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



Horsham District Council, Alberty House, Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2GB
Telephone: 01403 215100 (calls may be recorded) www.horsham.gov.uk Chief Executive: Jane E aton