

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 23 March 2026 13:45
To: Planning
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0366

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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 1:44 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

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Customer Details

Address: 30 Roundstone Park Worthing Road Southwater

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Highway Access and Parking
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: I moved to Southwater 14 years ago with my wife. In that time we have seen Southwater increase in size at a vast rate. [REDACTED]. These are becoming overwhelmed already and we fear for the future. Our local roads are already overcrowded at times. When the A24 is closed and traffic is diverted through the

village, it can take many minutes to get out of our park already.

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 ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a fully independent, peer-reviewed hydrological impact assessment on Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse has been completed and published for public scrutiny.'

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the development will increase surface water flooding that already affects existing residents. The 141-hectare site is currently farmland. Farmland, even on clay, slows the movement of rainwater into local streams and ditches. Once it is replaced with 1,000 homes' worth of roofs, roads, driveways, pavements and car parks, the volume of rainwater running off the site into local watercourses will increase dramatically - and it will arrive faster. The scale of attenuation required to manage this runoff is substantial. The roofs alone - at 50m² per home across 1,000 properties and a rainfall of 0.75m - would generate enough water to require 7.5 hectares of child-safe attenuation area (defined as no more than 50cm water depth). Once anticipated climate change factors are applied, that figure rises to 10.5 hectares. This is an enormous land take within the development, and there is no evidence that Berkeley Homes has adequately planned for it. Local streams and drainage channels in this area already overflow during heavy rain. Residents already experience waterlogged gardens and flooded access routes after storms. Adding the runoff from 141 hectares of new hard surfaces - however it is managed by attenuation ponds - creates a real and material risk of making this significantly worse. Climate change is making extreme rainfall events more frequent and more intense. The drainage system for this development must be designed for the worst case, not average conditions. There is no evidence that Berkeley Homes has done this. If flooding increases after the development is built, there is no remedy available to affected residents. The damage is permanent.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that it poses an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of increasing flood risk to existing Southwater residents and properties.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because 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. Berkeley Homes has assessed only its own proposal in isolation - ignoring the 1,150 homes already in the pipeline. That approach is not good enough. 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.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a full, independent cumulative infrastructure assessment covering all committed and proposed Southwater development has been completed and published.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that NHS and healthcare infrastructure is already overwhelmed, and no plan exists to expand it. Anyone who lives in Southwater knows how hard it is to get a GP appointment. The surgeries serving the village are already under serious pressure from the population that is already here - let alone the 1,150 new homes already approved and under construction. The situation is not simply one of physical capacity: the local surgery appears to have room to accommodate additional GPs but is currently unable to recruit them. Approving 1,000 more homes does nothing to solve a staffing crisis that the NHS itself has not been able to resolve. Access to NHS dentistry in the area is also severely constrained, with many residents unable to register with any NHS dentist at all. 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. NHS England has not confirmed that primary healthcare capacity exists or can be funded to serve the additional population from Berkeley Homes' proposal. There is no costed, legally secured plan for a new GP surgery or expansion of existing facilities. 'We will work with the NHS to address this' is not a plan - it is a hope. Previous large Southwater developments came with promises of community infrastructure that did not materialise on time, or at all. Residents have already been let down once. Approving 1,000 more homes based on promises is not acceptable.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until NHS England has formally confirmed that funded, deliverable primary healthcare provision exists to serve the combined population increase from all committed Southwater developments.

Kind regards

Telephone:

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**Horsham
District
Council**



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