

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 31 January 2026 16:42:19 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/25/2057
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 31/01/2026 4:42 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land North of Little Slaughterford Chapel Road Barns Green West Sussex
Proposal:	Proposed development of 68 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian accesses, public open space, hard and soft landscaping and associated works including supporting foul and surface water drainage works, and works to existing culverted watercourse on site.
Case Officer:	Alice Johnson

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: 2 Finians Field Barns Green Horsham West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Overdevelopment - Trees and Landscaping
Comments:	OBJECTION: Application DC/25/2057 Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road, Barns Green 68 Dwellings - Miller

Homes

I object to this application for the reasons as set out below.

(1) Discharge of Sewage into Stream from Sewage Works

There are already many documented incidents of the discharge of raw sewage contaminating the local watercourses at times of heavy rainfall, with the proposed development only exacerbating this already serious issue.

The Council's own committee reports have documented that in 2022 Barns Green experienced no less than 43 sewage overflow events totalling 411 hours which equates to more than 17 days of raw sewage discharge. Overflows in 2022 are not an isolated case, monitoring by local residents has confirmed that the discharge of sewage from the treatment works is a regular and continuing issue.

Southern Water's response makes no mention of these overflow events and provides no assurance that additional flows from the proposed development will not exacerbate the sewage discharge. Their response only considers the immediate connection by confirming capacity at 'manhole reference TQ12265901', it does not assess downstream network capacity and overall ability to cope including the sewage treatment works or mention the sewage discharge events.

It is therefore, an incomplete and misleading response.

(2) Flooding - Roadway Surface Water and Other Runoff

The applicant's planning submission claims there is no evidence of flooding which is incorrect.

Serious flooding has occurred recently and regularly in this area with water flowing down the hill entering buildings including the Village Shop which is opposite the site.

This flooding risk will be exacerbated by the increased volume and speed of runoff from the proposed housing development with all its paved areas and roadways in place of water-absorbing green space.

Drainage measures proposed by the developers will in no way guarantee the resolution of this risk of flooding which will increase due to the proposed development.

(3) The Removal of Ancient Hedges

The developers propose to remove the ancient hedge to the front of the site to provide traffic sight lines and facilitate road widening. This will destroy established and protected natural habitat which is so important to wildlife.

Without the removal of this hedge it will not be possible provide safe traffic movement in and out of the proposed development at what is already a traffic bottleneck in the centre of the village.

This hedge is also an important contributor to drainage management and flood prevention because it acts as a buffer holding soil on the land which would otherwise enter the drainage system.

(4) Harm to Ancient Woodland and Other Habitat Loss

The western boundary of the site adjoins Ancient Semi Natural Woodland recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as

reference ANCWO0122269. This is an irreplaceable habitat protected under NPPF paragraph 186(c), which states:

'Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'.

There are no exceptional reasons in this case, in fact there are a number of reasons why this development should not be approved from a habitat loss consideration alone, including:

- An Inadequate Buffer Zone - the applicant proposes an inadequate buffer zone of only a 15m buffer, the minimum recommended in the Standing Advice. However, the Standing Advice explicitly states:

'Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone'.

A larger buffer is warranted in this case because:

- Dormice are present. The applicant's own Dormouse Survey Report (2025) confirms the presence of hazel dormice, a European Protected Species in hedgerows connecting to the woodland

- Significant recreational pressure. 68 homes will generate approximately 156+ residents, plus visitors, pets and vehicles, creating substantial pressure on and around the woodland edge

- The site is on Weald Clay with already well-documented drainage issues; changes to surface water management could irreversibly affect the woodland's hydrology.

- Footpath Through the Buffer Zone - most seriously, the applicant proposes to route a permanent public footpath through the 15 m buffer zone, connecting the development to the bridleway network.

The Standing Advice is clear on what buffer zones should comprise:

'A buffer zone should consist of semi-natural habitats such as: woodland; a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland'. And crucially 'You should not approve development proposals, including gardens, within a buffer zone'.

A surfaced, maintained footpath serving as the primary pedestrian route for 156+ residents is not a semi-natural habitat. It is a form of development within the buffer zone that the Standing Advice explicitly states should not be approved.

The applicant attempts to justify this by claiming the route utilises an 'existing agricultural access point'. This reasoning is fundamentally flawed because an occasional agricultural vehicle passing a few times per year is not comparable to a permanent recreational path used daily. The proposed footpath will open up the area and will encourage regular incursion into the ancient woodland.

To this end dog walkers, children, and residents will inevitably stray beyond the path into the woodland itself causing further damage to the habitat.

- Indirect Effects Will Cause Deterioration

The Standing Advice identifies specific indirect effects that can cause deterioration of ancient woodland. The following will all occur if this development proceeds:

Standing Advice: Indirect Effect How This Development Causes It
Increasing disturbance to wildlife from additional people and traffic
68 homes = 156+ residents + over 200 vehicle movements daily
Increasing damage to habitat from trampling Footpath through buffer; inevitable informal access beyond
Increasing damaging activities like domestic pets' Cats predating wildlife; dogs disturbing ground-nesting birds and dormice
Increasing light and air pollution Street lighting, car emissions, changed drainage patterns

NPPF paragraph 186(c) protects ancient woodland from deterioration, not just direct loss. The cumulative indirect effects from 68 new homes will cause deterioration of this irreplaceable habitat over time.

(5) Inadequate Infrastructure including Electricity Supply
The applicant's Energy Statement confirms all 68 homes will use air source heat pumps for heating which constitutes a significant electrical load. Yet their application documents contain no consultation with UK Power Networks and no assessment of grid capacity.

The recent Sumners Fields development comprised of just 32 houses requires a backup diesel generator because the local network cannot reliably supply those homes. If this is the case it is clear that the infrastructure to support an additional 68 houses with electric heating is not in place and has not been considered! It is also of concern that the school will have capacity for additional pupils.

(6) Traffic Generation and Parking Impact

The proposed site and its junction are positioned directly opposite the Queens Head pub and the village shop. This location is already a known bottleneck for traffic and the parking serving the village shop which will be worsened massively by the proposed development.

The application includes 'traffic calming' measures and pedestrian safety features that will create further pinch points and significantly reduce already scarce on-road parking. The supporting report is inconsistent, stating space for 10 cars in commentary but showing only 9 on the plans. This reduction will adversely affect residents, customers of the pub and shop, and complicate deliveries to both businesses.

More fundamentally, NPPF paragraph 116 requires assessment of 'residual cumulative impacts' on the road network. The applicant has only modelled the site access junction, incorrectly dismissing wider impacts as 'negligible'. This ignores the new 32 homes at Sumners Fields, the 50+ homes allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan, and the combined effect on the Chapel Road/Two Mile Ash Road junction.

In addition, the school bus that currently drops the school children back into the village each weekday afternoon stops in the area immediately adjacent to the proposed access point to the new development. The reduced road space and increased traffic the development will cause will pose considerable risk to schoolchildren alighting from the bus and crossing the road into The Hordens.

The cumulative traffic impact has been ignored and not assessed.

(7) Public Transport Limitations and Issues

The applicant's Transport Statement relies heavily on a 'Vision Scenario' assuming significant modal shift away from private cars. In a rural village with almost non-existent public transport, this is fantasy.

The applicant's own data shows 81% of local residents drive to work. Christ's Hospital station is 3.7km away which is too far for most people to walk or cycle regularly.

Furthermore there is only a very limited bus service which the applicant's Transport Statement's own timetable reveals:

Monday 4 buses

Tuesday 8 buses

Wednesday 2 buses (at 07:00 and 16:57 only)

Thursday 8 buses

Friday 4 buses

Weekends No buses

Evenings No buses

The optimistic assumptions in the applicant's Transport Statement are not credible. With only two buses on a Wednesday and no evening services at all, it is abundantly clear that this is not a location where sustainable transport is a credible alternative to the car in any way.

(8) Loss of Village Amenity

The field where the development is proposed is currently used as a village amenity which also hosts the annual Classic Car Show (raising tens of thousands for charity) and Run Barns Green (supporting St Catherine's Hospice). These community and charity support events would be lost forever.

(9) Village Character, Listed Buildings and Heritage Impact

The Neighbourhood Plan's Landscape Character Assessment describes the fields north and west of the village as 'important small pastoral fields' that provide important green gaps that contribute to a settlement with rural character and provides a transition to the wider countryside.'

Which is precisely what this field does. It is the green buffer between the village centre and open countryside. Building here would:

- Irreversibly destroy this green gap entirely
 - a development of this size in this location will seriously harm the setting of listed buildings in close proximity, including Little Slaughterford, Bennetts, Herons Reach and the Queen's Head.
 - surround the pub which is a vital community asset with housing.
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(10) Loss of Rural Amenity

The proposed housing development will destroy the current Rural Amenity which is created by the field with grazing animals adjacent to historic buildings.

(11) Over Development

Even the draft HDC Local Plan only allocated this site for 50 homes. The applicant is proposing 68 which is a 36% increase with no justification.

Consequently 68 homes would represent clear overdevelopment. This development will conflict with Planning Policy representing a disproportionate increase in the number of dwellings in the Parish, at a density which is out of alignment with neighbouring properties.

(12) Housing Mix and Deliverability Concerns

The consultation response from the Council's Housing Officers dated 15th January 2026 does not support the development for the following significant reasons:

- Wrong Housing Mix

The proposed affordable housing is heavily weighted towards 2-bedroom units (76% of provision). Yet the Housing Register shows that 61% of demand is for 3-4 bedroom family homes - households who in need of this type of accommodation are waiting three times longer than those needing smaller accommodation.

As the Housing Officers state: 'The scheme would largely eliminate the identified two-bedroom requirement while failing to adequately address the most acute and long-standing housing needs within the parish'.

- Deliverability and Demand Concerns

The Housing Officers express further concern that the scheme may not attract Registered Providers due to its small size and rural location. They warn of 'a risk that the applicant may seek a commuted sum in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision at a later stage'.

The implications of these concerns are that if the Council's own Housing team do not support this application, how can it be argued that this is a suitable and appropriate development. The applicant's primary justification is addressing housing need and yet the homes proposed are at odds with the need identified on the Housing Register.

At the time of writing at least 20 of the recently constructed homes in Sumners Fields remain empty and unsold which gives a strong indication that the genuine demand for new homes in this location is nowhere near the levels implied.

The proposed development will create a further 68 homes, the demand against which from both private and housing association buyers is highly dubious, with it being highly likely that once constructed homes will sit unsold and / or unoccupied.

In Addition to the Reasons Given Above the Applicant's Submitted

Information Includes Inaccuracies and Mis-leading Information
Several consultee responses indicate that further information is required and identify that incorrect information has been submitted, which invalidates aspects of the Application and question its overall validity, including:

- Southern Water's response addresses only the immediate connection point and does not assess the aforementioned documented sewage overflow problems or cumulative network capacity.
 - Air Quality Assessment Errors. The Environmental Health consultation response identifies significant errors in the submitted Air Quality Assessment:
 - two different traffic figures are used (341 and 329) without explanation
 - the Emissions Factor Toolkit outputs are described as 'inaccurate' - 'too low for NO2 emissions and higher than expected for PM2.5'
 - the damage cost calculations do not follow the correct methodology
- Environmental Health carried out their own calculations and arrived at a much lower cost than was reported.
- The Statement that 'there is no evidence of flooding'.
 - Water Course and Catchment References in the consultant's flood risk assessment report refer incorrectly to the Arun catchment and not the Adur and Ouse, which questions the whole credibility of this report.

Conclusion

I recognise that Horsham District Council are experiencing pressure to deliver housing, and with a justified and proven local demand this has to take place. The Barns Green community has already accepted growth through the Neighbourhood Plan process and identified sites where it could be accommodated sustainably.

This development application is not one of the identified sites and is not meeting proven local housing demand in an appropriate manner and should be refused.

I would be grateful if the full contents of this letter could be placed before the Planning Committee.

Yours faithfully,

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 Eaton