
From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 30 January 2026 18:47
To: Planning
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 30/01/2026 6:46 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:	VALEWOOD VALEWOOD LANE BARNs GREEN
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Other - Overdevelopment - Trees and Landscaping
Comments:	Dear Sir/ Madam, OBJECTION TO APPLICATION DC/25/2057 Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road, Barns Green Proposed 68 Dwellings by Miller Homes I write to register my formal objection to this planning application. I have lived in Barns Green for almost 17 years and have seen first-hand how our village infrastructure struggles to cope with existing demands. This proposal would cause serious harm that cannot be mitigated.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN MUST BE RESPECTED

Our community spent years developing a Neighbourhood Plan. We held consultations, attended meetings, debated where growth should go, and voted in a referendum in September 2025. The Plan was formally made in October 2025 - just a few months ago.

This site was considered and rejected. That was not an accident. The community chose other locations that could accommodate development more sustainably.

If Miller Homes can simply ignore our Neighbourhood Plan and build wherever they wish, then what was the point of all that effort? The Government says communities should shape development in their areas. Approving this application would make a mockery of that promise.

OVERDEVELOPMENT, INAPPROPRIATE DESIGN AND DENSITY

The proposal represents a significant and unjustified departure from the draft HDC Local Plan, which allocated this site for a maximum of 50 dwellings. By proposing 68 homes - a 36% increase over the allocation-the applicant is pursuing a level of overdevelopment that is entirely out of scale with the Parish.

The resulting density is more characteristic of an urban enclave than a rural village, creating an aesthetic that fails to integrate with the surrounding built environment. Furthermore, the imposing height and massing of the buildings are inappropriate for this sensitive location. This design approach is in direct conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan, which requires development to respect the local character and rural setting of the village.

Housing Mix and Deliverability Concerns

The applicant's primary justification for the scheme - addressing housing need - is fundamentally undermined by the formal consultation response from the Council's Housing Officers (dated 15th January 2026). The Housing Department does not support the application for the following reasons:

Misaligned Housing Mix: The affordable housing provision is heavily skewed toward 2-bedroom units (76%), whereas 61% of the Housing Register demand is for 3-4 bedroom family homes. Families in need of larger accommodation currently wait three times longer than those needing smaller units. As the Housing Officer explicitly stated, the scheme fails to address the "most acute and long-standing housing needs" within the parish.

Risk to Affordable Housing Delivery: The Housing Officers have raised significant concerns regarding the deliverability of these units. Given the small scale and rural location, there is a documented risk that Registered Providers may not take on the site. This creates a high probability that the applicant will later seek a commuted sum (financial payment) in lieu of actually building affordable homes on-site, resulting in zero social benefit to the local community.

If the Council's own Housing team cannot support the application on the basis of need and deliverability, the applicant's case for "exceptional circumstances" or public benefit completely collapses.

Countryside Policy

The proposed development site is located outside the Built-up Area Boundary (BUAB) and is designated as Countryside. Policy 26 of the HDC Local Plan clearly states that development within the countryside will only be permitted where it is essential to that location. As the proposal is a speculative housing development, it cannot be considered essential and therefore conflicts with this policy.

SEWAGE - A SYSTEM ALREADY FAILING

Discharges of raw sewage contaminating local watercourses at times of heavy rainfall are already documented, further pressure through development will only exacerbate the issue. The statistics confirm what we already know: 43 overflow events in 2022 alone, totalling 411 hours of raw sewage discharge, however we know that discharge from the sewage treatment works is a regular occurrence.

Southern Water's response to this application is deeply concerning. They only consider manhole reference TQ12265901, with no regard for the downstream capacity, including the sewage treatment and sewage discharge issue. This is not acceptable.

They claim there is "adequate capacity" - but residents have discovered they assessed a manhole in Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey. That is in Thames Water's area, not even in West Sussex.

How can the Council rely on a capacity assessment that looked at the wrong county? Furthermore, Southern Water's own figures show the treatment works has capacity for

approximately 1,400 people. Local calculations suggest the current population served is already around 1,390. We are already at the limit - before adding 156+ new residents. The information provided by Southern Water is incomplete at best, but certainly cannot be classed as credible in relation to this planning application. This is not acceptable. Our watercourses, which flow towards the Knepp rewilding estate, are being polluted by sewage. More homes will mean more pollution.

REMOVAL OF ANCIENT HEDGES

The developers propose to remove the ancient hedgerow at the front of the site and I must strongly disagree with this. This will destroy an established and protected natural habitat. Furthermore, the hedge has an essential role for reducing run off and flooding acting as a buffer before Chapel Road - water which otherwise would reach the road and enter the drains.

ANCIENT WOODLAND AT RISK

The western edge of this site borders ancient woodland - habitat that has existed for centuries and cannot be recreated. (reference ANCWO0122269 on the Ancient Woodland Inventory) It is protected under NPPF paragraph 186(c), which mandates that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of such habitats should be refused unless "wholly exceptional reasons" and compensation strategies exist. There are no exceptional circumstances in this instance; yet there are several critical factors why this proposal fails on the grounds of habitat protection alone;

An inadequate buffer zone - the developer has proposed a 15metre buffer zone. This is the absolute baseline suggested in Natural England's Standing Advice, the same guidance which explicitly states that a larger buffer is required when impacts are likely to extend beyond that distance. A significantly wider buffer is essential at this location due to;

Presence of protected species the applicants own Dormouse Survey Report confirms the presence of Hazel Dormice - a protected species - within the hedgerows and this is directly linked to the woodland.

Intense Recreational Pressure - a development of 68 homes brings over 150 new residents, along with visitors, creating a unsustainable level of human activity along the woodlands edge.

Hydrological Sensitivity - This site is on Weald Clay, known for its drainage challenges. Any alteration to the surface water management poses a direct threat to the woodland's delicate hydrology.

Footpath through the buffer zone - a huge concern is the proposed permanent surfaced public footpath within the 15 metre buffer zone to connect to the wider bridleway network. Natural England's advice states a 'buffer zone must consist of semi natural habitats and "you should not approve development proposals...within a buffer zone"

A formal high traffic pedestrianized path is built infrastructure , not a semi natural habitat. The applicant's attempt to justify this by citing an 'existing agricultural access point' is a false equivalence. The impact of an occasional farm vehicle is negligible compared to daily concentrated footfall encouraged by a permanent path. The path creates a permanent feature, which in turn will lead to trampling of flora and fauna by residents and pets off lead.

The proposal represents a clear breach of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and should be refused.

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 proposal represents a clear breach of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and should be refused.

THE ROADS CANNOT COPE

Chapel road, from the pub to the bend after Sumner's Ponds entrance is already difficult to navigate. Parking is tight for patrons and delivery lorries. The proposed development threatens to severely compromise the existing parking and logistical challenges that serve these community hubs.

While the application proposes traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures, these create pinch pointed and lead to a significant loss of on road parking for the shop and pub. The applicant's supporting documentation is inconsistent, claiming capacity for 10 vehicles in the text, yet the plans illustrate only 9. This reduction in parking will have an immediate adverse effect on residents, alongside customers using the shop and pub, while simultaneously obstructing delivery access for both businesses.

Furthermore, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of NPFF paragraph 116 (2026 update) which mandates an assessment of "residual cumulative impacts" on the transport network. The applicant has erroneously limited their modelling to the site access junction only, dismissing wider consequences as "negligible". This approach fundamentally ignores the combined pressure of;

32 new homes a Sumners Fields

50 plus homes already allocated with the Neighbourhood Plan

The resulting intensified strain on the Chapel Road/ Two Mile Ash Junction

By failing to account for these committed developments, the applicant has entirely ignored the cumulative impact, rendering the current transport assessment incomplete and unsound.

UNREALISTIC SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ASSUMPTIONS

The applicant's Transport Statement relies fundamentally on a scenario that assumes a significant modal shift away from private vehicle use. In a rural context characterized by nearly non-existent public transport, these projections are entirely unsubstantiated. The applicant's own data contradicts this "vision," confirming that 81% of local residents currently rely on private cars to commute to work.

The site's connectivity is insufficient to support a move away from car dependency for the following reasons:

- Inaccessible Rail Links: Christ's Hospital station is situated 3.7km away, a distance that far exceeds the threshold for regular walking or cycling for the vast majority of residents.
- Minimal Bus Provision: The applicant's own Transport Statement reveals a service that is functionally unusable for professional commuters. The timetable confirms a skeleton service of only 4 buses on Mondays and Fridays, and a negligible 2 buses on Wednesdays (limited to 07:00 and 16:57).

- Total Lack of Essential Services: There are no evening or weekend services, rendering the development entirely car-dependent for social, domestic, and emergency travel.

The optimistic assumptions within the Transport Statement lack credibility. It is a fallacy to suggest that sustainable transport is a viable alternative in a location where a resident literally cannot return home by bus in the evening or travel at all on a Sunday.

In today's society, I would be keen to be shown evidence of any new development seeing a reduction in car usage.

This development will inevitably result in a significant increase in private vehicle movements, further exacerbating the traffic and parking issues previously identified.

LOSS OF VILLAGE AMENITY AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed development site is not merely an empty field; it is a vital community asset. Formerly the village green, the land continues to serve as a central hub for village life, hosting major charitable events such as the Classic Car Show and Run Barns Green. These events generate tens of thousands of pounds for local causes, including St Catherine's Hospice. The permanent loss of this space would extinguish these long-standing traditions and the much needed charitable support they provide.

Beyond the loss of open space, the development poses a direct threat to the economic viability of the village's core services:

- Threat to Local Businesses: The proposed road layout-specifically the entry road positioned directly opposite the village shop-will destabilise the delicate parking balance in the village centre. Both the Queen's Head landlord and the village shop owner have formally advised that their businesses will become unviable without the current level of on-street parking.

- Impact on Vulnerable Residents: The potential closure of the pub, village shop, and Post Office would be catastrophic for the community. These are not just amenities; they are essential lifelines for elderly and less mobile residents.

- Compounded Isolation: Given the "near non-existent" public transport links previously evidenced, the loss of these walking-distance services would leave residents entirely isolated, forcing further car dependency and destroying the village's social fabric. Under NPPF Paragraph 97 (2026 update), planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which "promote social interaction" and "support healthy lifestyles." By removing the primary site for community events and threatening the survival of the village's only shop and pub, this proposal stands in direct opposition to national and local planning objectives.

The proposed development site is located outside the Built-up Area Boundary (BUAB) and is designated as Countryside. Policy 26 of the HDC Local Plan clearly states that development within the countryside will only be permitted where it is essential to that location. As the proposal is a speculative housing development, it cannot be considered essential and therefore conflicts with this policy.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

I understand the new homes at Sumners Fields require a backup diesel generator because the electricity grid cannot reliably supply them. If 32 homes have overwhelmed the grid, how can we possibly add another 68 - all with electric heating?

The application contains no consultation with UK Power Networks. This is a basic oversight that must be addressed before any decision is made.

FLOODING

The village shop has flooded. Properties in Six Acres Close have flooded. The field where this development is proposed currently absorbs rainwater and slows runoff. Covering it with houses, roads, and driveways will make flooding worse, not better.

THIS IS OVERDEVELOPMENT

Even when the Council was considering allocating this site, the figure discussed was 50 homes. Miller Homes wants 68 - a 36% increase. The density is more suited to an urban area than a rural village.

Barns Green has already absorbed 32 homes at Sumners Fields. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates further sites. At what point do we say enough is enough?

CONCLUSION

I am not opposed to all development. Our community accepted growth through the Neighbourhood Plan and identified appropriate sites. This is not one of them.

This application should be refused because:

1. It conflicts with our recently-made Neighbourhood Plan
2. The Council's Housing Officers do not support it
3. Southern Water assessed the wrong location - no valid sewage capacity assessment exists
4. The sewage system is already at capacity and regularly overflowing
5. Ancient woodland will be harmed by the footpath through the buffer
6. The electricity grid cannot cope
7. The road network and parking will be severely impacted
8. The pub and shop - vital community assets - are at risk
9. It represents overdevelopment of a rural village

I urge the Planning Committee to refuse this application and to respect the wishes of our community as expressed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Yours faithfully,



Kind regards

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**Horsham
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