From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 March 2026 09:56:00 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 11/03/2026 9:56 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:	7 Courtlands Southwater Horsham West Sussex

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Loss of General Amenity

- Other
- Overdevelopment

Comments:

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the water supply infrastructure for this area cannot reliably support this level of additional demand.

The summer of 2025 was the hottest since weather records began in 1884. The preceding spring was the driest in 132 years. Hosepipe bans were imposed across the region. The Environment Agency confirmed in October 2025 that England needed at least 100% of average winter rainfall just to recover from drought - and that rainfall did not materialise at the required levels.

Sussex is among the parts of England where water stress is already most acute. The Environment Agency projects a national water deficit of nearly 5 billion litres per day by 2050. This is not a future forecast that planners can choose to ignore - it is a present reality that is getting worse year by year.

The basis on which Horsham District Council is monitoring water demand capacity is itself fundamentally flawed, and this materially undermines any assurance that supply infrastructure can accommodate this development. HDC's Planning Policy Team Leader has confirmed that the Council uses an assumed consumption figure of 110 litres per person per day (lpppd) - described as being in line with Building Regulations for a water-stressed area. That figure is not a current consumption measure. It is an aspirational target set by the Environment Agency for achievement by 2050. Using it as a monitoring baseline is a methodological error, not a pragmatic approximation.

Southern Water's own published data for April 2025 to March 2026 records actual average consumption as follows: 232 litres per day for single occupancy households; 301 litres per day for dual occupancy households; and approximately 335 litres per day for an average 2.5-person household. HDC's assumption of 110 lpppd equates to approximately 275 litres per day for a 2.5-person household - a discrepancy of approximately 60 litres per household per day, representing an underestimate of around 21%. A sample survey of actual consumption at the nearby Broadacres new-build development - properties fitted with water-efficient fittings - recorded average consumption of approximately 200 lpppd, nearly double

the Council's monitoring
assumption.
This error was raised explicitly with HDC, supported by Southern Water's own published data.
Despite being informed that its methodology is in error by approximately 21%, the Council has
confirmed it intends to continue using this figure. Save Rural Southwater has raised this failure as
a formal maladministration complaint. The Council is therefore on notice that its monitoring
methodology is not only technically wrong but is the subject of an active formal complaint - and
yet it continues to use that methodology as the basis for approving major new development. The
31
practical consequence is that HDC risks approving a volume of development that will exceed
Southern Water's actual supply capacity, resulting in water shortages for existing and future
residents alike.
Berkeley Homes' own application contains no credible water supply strategy. There is no
assessment of cumulative demand from the 1,150 homes already committed in Southwater
alongside the 1,000 proposed. There is no independently verified analysis of whether Southern
Water's network - already under stress in dry years - has the headroom to serve this additional
population. There is no contingency for the worsening drought conditions that the Environment
Agency has already identified as a structural trend. The application simply assumes that water will
be available. That assumption is not evidence, and in a formally designated water-stressed area it
is not an acceptable basis for granting planning permission.
Southern Water imposed hosepipe bans in 2025. It cannot currently guarantee supply reliability to
its existing customers in dry years. Adding 1,000 new homes - on top of the 1,150 already
committed in Southwater - without a confirmed, independently verified supply strategy is not
acceptable. Removing the formal water neutrality planning condition in October 2025 removed a
legal mechanism - it did not solve the physical water supply problem. The drought is real. The
shortage is real.
I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Southern Water has
provided a formal, independently verified confirmation that water supply can reliably serve
1,000 additional homes in Southwater - including during drought years.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk

Horsham District Council