

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 24 March 2026 15:25
To: Planning
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 24/03/2026 3:25 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: 3 Roberts Close Southwater Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Design
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Overdevelopment

Comments:

I write to express my strong OBJECTION to Application DC/26/0366 the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater.

I am a local resident, living in Roberts Close, a location in the north end of the Village that will

be directly impacted by the proposals put forward by Berkeley Homes. I would request that my concerns, and that of my fellow Villagers are heard.

I make reference to seven specific points as part of my objection below.

In summary, the proposed development is in clear and fundamental conflict with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, would result in significant and irreversible harm to the character and setting of the village, and would place unacceptable pressure on already overstretched infrastructure, particularly in relation to flooding and healthcare provision. When considered cumulatively with other committed developments, the scale of growth is wholly disproportionate and unsustainable. Furthermore, the proposal fails to demonstrate that reasonable alternatives, including the full utilisation of brownfield land across the district, have been properly exhausted.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Application DC/26/0366 should be REFUSED by Horsham District Council.

1. The proposal is more than double what Southwater's Neighbourhood Plan allows - the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal should be refused because it directly and fundamentally conflicts with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan on the number of homes allowed.

I and my fellow 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.

Berkeley Homes is now proposing more than double that number. 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 3,000 signatories so the community sentiment back in 2021 is still current.

2. The proposal creates a second village centre, which the Neighbourhood Plan prohibits - the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal should be refused because it violates Neighbourhood Plan policy SNP1.1(a) by creating a second village centre and extends beyond the village boundaries set in the adopted plan.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan contains a specific and clear policy: Southwater must remain a single-centre village, with its shops, services and facilities focused around Lintot Square. This is not a minor preference; it is a core planning principle that residents voted to adopt.

Berkeley Homes' proposal includes a large new cluster of shops, community facilities, a primary school, and other services on the western edge of the village, effectively creating a second village centre. This would split the village in two, diverting activity away from the existing centre and changing the fundamental character of Southwater.

I strongly believe that introducing a second village centre will create a 'north / south divide' in the village and will encourage anti-social behaviour. I also chose to live in the North end of Southwater as it was a mile away from the 'centre', as I didn't want to be so closely situated to it. This proposal will mean that my property will be amongst the 'centre' of this new proposed village centre.

The proposal also extends development well beyond the village boundaries set in the Neighbourhood Plan. Much of the proposed site is on land that the Plan specifically identifies as outside the permitted development area.

A previous Berkeley Homes application for 1,500 homes on the same site (reference DC/22/1916) was withdrawn in February 2023 after Horsham District Council planning officers concluded it was unacceptable. These fundamental concerns have not been resolved, they have simply been repackaged.

3. Flooding from this development would affect existing residents and cannot be undone - the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal should be refused on the grounds that it poses an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of increasing flood risk to existing Southwater residents and their properties, including my own.

The development will increase surface water flooding that already affects existing residents. I am deeply concerned at this as the proposed development site is in close proximity to my residence and that of my neighbours.

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.

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. As a resident, my property already experiences waterlogged front and rear gardens during rainfall. 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.

4. GP and NHS capacity is already overstretched and no plan exists to expand it - the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal should be refused outright, but especially until NHS England has formally confirmed that funded, deliverable primary healthcare provision exists to serve the combined population increase from all committed Southwater developments.

NHS and healthcare infrastructure is already overwhelmed, and no plan exists within the Berkeley Homes proposals 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. Adding 1,000 new homes without further funded, deliverable primary healthcare provision by the Government would be, in my opinion, life threatening for the residents of Southwater.

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. Whilst I am lucky enough to be registered with the NHS dentist in the village, I am currently facing a 4-month wait for my next appointment.

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.

[REDACTED]. There are many more examples, from my own experience alone of how the healthcare system is failing under the current population of the local area.

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.

5. At 1,000 homes, this turns a village into a small town - the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal should be refused on the grounds that it will cause permanent and unacceptable harm to the landscape character and rural setting of Southwater village.

Because at this scale of this proposed development, it does not extend the village, it fundamentally transforms it.

Southwater is a village. That is what me, my family and my fellow neighbours and villagers chose to live in. The open farmland to the northwest, in very close proximity to my residence, is the equivalent of roughly 200 football pitches and currently forms a natural transition between the village edge and the open Low Weald countryside.

Once it is built over, that countryside is gone permanently.

A development of 1,000 homes is not a modest expansion. Combined with the 800 homes already approved at the Golf Club site nearby and 350 at Broadacres, Southwater would be adding more than 2,000 homes in a single generation. That transforms a large village into a small town. The scale of this proposed development vastly exceeds anything Southwater was designed to absorb. It is not an extension of an existing settlement; it is being dumped on top of one.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, voted for by myself and other Southwater residents, specifically requires that development avoids coalescence with neighbouring settlements and respects the existing landscape character of the village. This proposal does the opposite.

Berkeley Homes has not demonstrated that it has engaged seriously with any design framework governing how growth should be integrated into Southwater. It is unclear whether the applicant has referenced Horsham District Council's design guidance, any settlement-specific design guide, or the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan's own design principles. HDC should satisfy itself that such a framework exists and that Berkeley Homes has been required to demonstrate compliance with it. Without that, there is a real risk that this development degrades the character and coherence of the settlement rather than adding to it.

No combined landscape assessment has been carried out looking at the Berkeley Homes proposal alongside the Golf Club site and Broadacres development together. The cumulative visual impact on Southwater, and on the risk of coalescence with neighbouring settlements, has never been honestly assessed.

6. Southwater is already absorbing four times its Neighbourhood Plan housing allocation - the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal should be refused on the grounds that Southwater has already substantially exceeded its proportionate and democratically agreed housing contribution. Enough is enough.

Southwater has already committed to far more housing growth than its own community plan identifies as appropriate.

In 2021, Southwater residents, including myself, voted to set our housing contribution to Horsham District at approximately 420 to 460 homes. That figure was arrived at carefully, based on what the village's infrastructure could support.

Since that vote, two large developments have been approved that already far exceed this figure. Broadacres (around 350 homes) is under construction and I believe not all sold as yet. It is also worth noting that the introduction of Broadacres has already started to change the dynamic of the Village in a negative way, in my opinion. The Horsham Golf Club site (around 800 homes) has received planning permission. Together, that is already 1,150 homes, two and a half times the figure residents voted for.

Berkeley Homes now wants to add another 1,000 on top bringing the total to over 2,150 new homes. That is nearly five times the Neighbourhood Plan figure. That would represent a 62.9% increase on top of what is already in the pipeline.

There is no planning principle that requires a single village to absorb this level of growth. Housing need exists across Horsham District and should be distributed across many locations, not concentrated on a village that has already done more than its fair share.

7. Brownfield land elsewhere in the district should be developed first - Horsham District Council should be required to demonstrate that all identified brownfield land on its December 2024 Brownfield Register has been fully considered before any further greenfield development at Southwater is permitted.

Brownfield land elsewhere in Horsham District should be developed before more farmland in Southwater is built on.

The principle that brownfield land should be built on before greenfield farmland is a core planning principle. It protects the countryside, reduces the infrastructure cost of new development, and puts homes closer to existing services and employment.

The former Novartis pharmaceutical factory site in North Horsham is a ready example. It already has planning permission for 244 affordable homes, granted in October 2025. It is closer to Horsham town centre, rail services, and the district's main employment areas. It requires no new road infrastructure to be genuinely sustainable.

Horsham District Council's own December 2024 Brownfield Register makes the position plain.

Across the entire district, HDC has identified just 18 brownfield sites with a combined capacity of approximately 827 dwellings, covering around 20.98 hectares. That total includes sites already under construction, sites with lapsed permissions, and sites that have been in the pipeline for years without progressing.

The largest single site, the former Novartis site in North Horsham, with permission for 300 dwellings remains unbuilt. Several other sites with permissions granted as far back as 2014 have still not been implemented.

Berkeley Homes is seeking permission for 1,000 homes on a single greenfield site.

That is more homes than the entire brownfield land supply HDC has been able to identify across the whole district. Before approving the destruction of 141 hectares of open farmland at Southwater, the Council must demonstrate that its brownfield pipeline has been fully explored, actively promoted, and genuinely exhausted. There is no evidence that this has been done. Granting permission for large-scale greenfield release at Southwater while brownfield sites across the district sit unbuilt and unprogressed is not consistent with the brownfield-first principle that lies at the heart of national planning policy.

Kind regards

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