From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 November 2026 17:38:01 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0266
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 11/11/2026 5:38 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Thakeham Mushrooms Storrington Road Thakeham Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3DY
Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide 150 dwellings, including affordable housing, land for the community land trust, works to public right of way and associated landscaping, biodiversity net gain bank, public open space, storage building, ancillary parking and all associated infrastructure.
Case Officer:	Sam Whitehouse

Click for further information

Customer Details

Address:	The Pitons High Bar Lane, Thakeham Pulborough

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Highway Access and Parking - Other - Overdevelopment
Comments:	Although I have submitted previous objections to this application, new expert reports have been logged on the Planning Portal, and the 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has since

been published.

I wish to reiterate my strong objection to planning application DC/26/0266 for 150 dwellings at the former Thakeham Mushroom Farm.

While the number of units has been reduced from the previously dismissed appeal (DC/24/0021), the fundamental planning flaw identified by the Planning Inspectorate in July 2025 remains entirely unresolved: this site is not a sustainable location for major residential development.

I would also ask that due consideration is given to the "Planning Statement Addendum August 2026", prepared by Savills on behalf of Bellway, and logged on the portal on the 10th of August 2026. Please particularly note point 2.8 in Section 2 "Amendments to The Proposal"

"The retained land may be promoted through the relevant emerging Local Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plan processes for future development, potentially including up to 85 dwellings and/or other appropriate uses. However, no proposals for this land form part of this application. Any future development proposal would need to be considered through a separate planning application and assessed against the planning policy framework applicable at that time."

Although this point only refers to the potential for another 85 properties no one would realistically expect that Bellway will not seek permission to add those properties to the site, especially when one considers the text below from the Summary Conclusions in the letter from Turner Morum to the developer dated 2nd of June 2026 (uploaded to the planning portal 1st of October).

"In terms of a summary comparison, my viability analysis showed the 150-dwelling scheme to be approximately £3.666m in deficit"

Whether the application is for 150, 235 or the refused application's 247 dwellings, the facts regarding site sustainability remain the same.

Assessed against the 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the proposal fails on the following material grounds:

1. Lack of Genuine Transport Choice (NPPF Chapter 15, Policy TR3 & Glossary Definition)

Under the 2026 NPPF, "sustainable transport modes" are strictly defined as walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport- explicitly excluding private electric vehicles or carsharing. Policy TR3 requires development to be located where residents have

genuine alternatives to private car use. Thakeham has negligible public transport. A development of 150 households here will inevitably bake in high levels of private car dependency for commuting, education, healthcare, and everyday shopping.

2. Unsafe and Unreasonable Walking/Cycling Routes to Storrington (NPPF Chapter 15 & Placemaking Principles)
The 2026 NPPF sets a benchmark of around 800 metres (a 10-minute walk) as a reasonable walking distance to services, explicitly requiring assessment of the quality and safety of the route (including continuous footways, segregated cycle infrastructure, and street lighting).
- Because Thakeham lacks essential services, residents must travel to Storrington for a GP surgery, banking, and full grocery shopping. In addition, although Thakeham Primary School lies within the Parish boundary it is more that 2km from the development site.
- Storrington is well beyond a reasonable walking distance from the Mushroom Farm, and the rural road network connecting the two settlements is narrow, mainly unlit, and lacks continuous, safe pedestrian or segregated cycle infrastructure. Expecting families, children, or older residents to walk or cycle along these routes to access healthcare or schools is completely unrealistic and unsafe.
- WSCC Highways are familiar with the site location and the local road - B2139. Having previously logged an objection on the 21st of September, the WSCC Highways response was amended to recommended Refusal on the 20th of October. The WSCC Officer cites the issues associated with the B2139 both to the North and South of the site location. Jackets Hill to the South of the site has seen 2 fatalities in recent years, the most recent being on Sunday the 2nd of August 2026.
3. Severely Limited Local Facilities in Thakeham (NPPF Policy S5 & Settlement Sustainability)
While the site sits outside the Built-Up Area Boundary and relies on Policy S5 (including previously developed land provisions under S5(1)(d)), development outside settlements must still demonstrate sustainable access to day-to-day facilities.
- In the 2025 appeal decision, the Inspector noted that Thakeham is a small settlement with limited functionality that relies heavily on larger towns.
- Since that decision, local retail provision has contracted even further: the single village shop at Abingworth now operates almost exclusively as a café rather than a practical convenience store for household groceries. Furthermore, the site remains poorly connected by safe, direct pedestrian routes to Thakeham Primary School.
4. Conflict with the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan (NPPF Policy S6)
Policy 3 of the made Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan specifically allocates this site for rural employment, recreation, or tourism-not estate-scale housing. Under NPPF Policy S6, the severe and permanent harm caused by placing 150 car-dependent homes in

an isolated rural location substantially outweighs the benefits of the scheme, particularly as the site no longer provides the local employment that previously mitigated out-commuting.

Setting aside the unsustainable location, I would ask that the following issues are given due consideration:

Horsham District Council Local Plan 2023 - 2040

The Developer has relied heavily upon the "tilted balance" argument. However, I believe that the significant progress made regarding the HDC Local Plan, as defined in the Inspector's letter to HDC, dated the 30th of October 2026, following the recent Examination Inspection Hearings changes the landscape.

Inspector Bore has concluded at this stage that the revised housing requirement and the revised spatial strategy are sound, subject to the proposed Main Modifications and further changes.

In a press release dated the 23rd of October, after the conclusion of the Examination Hearings, Cllr Ruth Fletcher, Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure, stated that following the conclusion of the hearings, the Council is on track to adopt the new Local Plan early in 2027.

The Thakeham Mushroom Farm is not an identified site in the Local Plan 2023 - 2040. As the emerging Local Plan identifies enough locations with housing volumes, that more than meet the mandated HDC targets, this site should no longer be judged using the tilted balance argument.

Affordable Housing

I recognise the desperate need for affordable housing in the Horsham District and particularly applaud the recent HDC initiatives, like the plan to convert unusable garages into homes.

Therefore, the potential for this application to deliver more than 50 affordable homes leaves me in a conflicted position, when considering my strong objection.

However, I am most concerned by Savills response dated the 23rd of September to the comments made by the HDC Housing Officer on the 25th of August. I quote the following from Savills letter:

"To test market interest, Bellway undertook a tender exercise in March 2026. This involved approaching 20 Registered Providers (RP) from the Council's preferred list to express interest in acquiring and managing the affordable homes with the scheme. Due to the absence of planning permission and the resulting uncertainty regarding the delivery of the scheme, together with

uncertainty around grant allocations, there was limited interest in the scheme."

"Notwithstanding this, Bellway remains confident that, once planning permission has been secured, there will be interest from RPs and that they will be able to secure a provider to acquire and manage the affordable housing units."

We have seen a recent request in relation to a smaller approved development (DC/23/2152) immediately to the South of the Mushroom Farm, for a request to pay a commuted sum in lieu of delivering the 10 affordable homes - S106/26/0048. The developer has stated they have been unable to identify an RP, hence the amendment request. If the issues this developer have encountered, are repeated by Bellway then the inability to provide the 50+ affordable houses will be a major blow.

I would therefore ask that if the HDC Officers and Councillors are minded to approve this application, they insist upon seeing evidence that Bellway's confidence is not misplaced and that a written agreement with an RP is in existence prior to the grant of planning permission.

For the reasons, that the site fails the sustainable location tests of Policies S5, S6, and TR3 of the 2026 NPPF, and the points I raise regarding the Horsham District Council Local Plan 2023- 2040, as well as concerns regarding affordable housing provision, I urge the Council to refuse permission.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk

Horsham District Council