

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 March 2026 12:48:44 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 16/03/2026 12:48 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: 21 Wild Orchid Way Southwater Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment: - Overdevelopment

Comments:

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater.

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. That was agreed through a proper community-led process.

Berkeley Homes is now proposing more than double that number - 1,000 homes. 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 3000 signatories so the community sentiment back in 2021 is still current.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused because it directly and fundamentally conflicts with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan on the number of homes allowed.

I have lived in Southwater for over 35 years, during which time the village has exploded with development. The infrastructure is struggling with the current housing, and cannot cope with any further buildings.

Also, I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the site cannot be safely drained.

The entire site sits on Weald Clay - a soil type officially classified by the Environment Agency as having almost no ability to absorb water. This is the fundamental hydrological character of this land. It is not a marginal issue that can be engineered away.

On Weald Clay, standard drainage solutions - soakaways, permeable paving, infiltration trenches - simply do not work.

Berkeley Homes would have to rely entirely on large above-ground storage ponds, underground tanks, and carefully managed outflows to local streams and ditches. At the scale of 1,000 homes, with thousands of roofs, roads and driveways replacing farmland, this is an enormous engineering challenge.

Planning rules now require drainage systems to cope with a 40% increase in rainfall intensity to account for climate change. The 2025 drought - the worst in 132 years - demonstrates this is not a theoretical risk. Berkeley Homes has not provided an independently verified drainage strategy that proves this is achievable.

Gardens on the Blakes Farm estate nearby have flooded repeatedly over many years - direct evidence of what happens when this clay soil is built over without adequate drainage. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until an independent, specialist drainage engineer - with specific Weald Clay experience - has verified that flooding risk will not increase for existing residents or downstream watercourses.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



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