

WARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTATION COMMENTS

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
SITE ADDRESS:	Land at Station Road Warnham West Sussex RH12 3SR
PROPOSAL:	Outline application for the erection of approximately 24 residential dwellings, with all matters reserved except for access.
REFERENCE:	DC/26/0585
RECOMMENDATION:	Objection

Warnham Parish Council objects in the strongest possible terms to planning application DC/26/0585 for the proposed development of 24 dwellings on land at Station Road, Warnham.

The Parish Council considers that the proposal represents an unsustainable and inappropriate form of development in open countryside that would result in significant and demonstrable harm to the character of the area, highway safety, ecology, drainage infrastructure and the integrity of the adopted Warnham Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst the Parish Council acknowledges the current absence of a five-year housing land supply within Horsham District, it is firmly of the view that the adverse impacts of this proposal substantially and demonstrably outweigh any benefits when assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework.

Site Context

Station Road is a small rural hamlet comprising approximately 21 existing dwellings. The proposed development would more than double the size of the settlement and fundamentally alter its established rural character.

The site currently forms part of an existing smallholding and informal green space to the north of the current properties. It contributes significantly to the open and rural setting of the hamlet and provides habitat value for wildlife and amenity value for residents.

The application has been submitted in outline form with all matters reserved except access. Consequently, there remains no clarity regarding layout, scale, density, appearance, landscaping or the wider visual impact of the development.

Conflict with Planning Policy

The application site lies outside the Warnham Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB) and is therefore classified as countryside under both the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the adopted Warnham Neighbourhood Plan (June 2019).

The proposal is contrary to the spatial strategy and objectives of:

- HDPF Strategic Policy 3 – Development Hierarchy
- HDPF Strategic Policy 25 – The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- HDPF Strategic Policy 26 – Countryside Protection
- The adopted Warnham Neighbourhood Plan

Importantly, Station Road was specifically considered and rejected as a housing allocation during the preparation of the Warnham Neighbourhood Plan. The reasons for rejecting the site remain entirely valid and relevant.

To approve this application would fundamentally undermine the integrity and purpose of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan and the locally agreed strategy for sustainable growth within the parish.

Grounds for Objection

1. Development Outside the Settlement Boundary

The proposal represents unjustified residential development in open countryside beyond the defined settlement boundary.

The site is not allocated for development within the development plan and does not form a logical or sustainable extension to Warnham village. Instead, it would create a disproportionate expansion of a small rural hamlet lacking the infrastructure and services necessary to support major residential growth.

The proposal would urbanise a currently open rural area and erode the established settlement pattern of the parish.

2. Highway Safety and Traffic Impact

Warnham Parish Council has serious concerns regarding highway and pedestrian safety.

Station Road has no pavements and no street lighting. Children regularly walk and cycle along the route to access schools and local facilities. The road network is narrow, rural in character and unsuitable for a development of this scale.

Particular concern exists regarding the A24 / Station Road / Bell Road junction, which has a documented history of serious and fatal accidents.

The development is likely to generate a substantial increase in vehicle movements, estimated to be in the region of 35 additional vehicles associated with 24 dwellings. This would place further pressure on an already constrained and hazardous road network.

No pedestrian crossing facilities are proposed and there are no safe walking routes connecting the site to key services.

3. Unsustainable Location

The site is not a sustainable location for residential development.

Public transport provision is extremely limited. Rail services are infrequent, with approximately one train per hour, no Sunday service and no evening service after 19:00 on Saturdays.

There is no bus service serving the hamlet and no safe pedestrian or cycling route to Warnham village, which is approximately 1.5 kilometres away along an unlit route without pavements.

As a result, future residents would be heavily reliant upon private vehicles for virtually all daily activities, including access to schools, shops, healthcare and employment.

This level of car dependency is contrary to both local and national planning policies promoting sustainable patterns of development.

4. Ecology and Loss of Green Space

The application site supports a range of wildlife including bats, birds, reptiles and deer. Development of the site would result in direct habitat loss, fragmentation of ecological corridors and disturbance to wildlife.

In addition, the proposal would result in the loss of an important informal green space currently enjoyed by local residents. No meaningful assessment has been provided regarding the community value of this land and no replacement provision has been proposed.

The Parish Council considers the ecological information submitted with the application to be inadequate and insufficient to properly assess the environmental impact of the development.

5. Flood Risk and Drainage

Warnham Parish Council has serious concerns regarding flood risk, surface water drainage and the adequacy of the submitted drainage strategy.

The area surrounding Boldings Brook already experiences regular flooding issues affecting nearby land and existing properties to the south of the site. Development on elevated land to the north has the potential to materially increase surface water run-off and exacerbate flood risk to neighbouring homes.

These concerns are reinforced by the formal objection submitted by West Sussex County Council in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority, dated 14 May 2026.

The Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed that:

- The proposed drainage strategy is not acceptable.
- The applicant proposes discharging surface water into an existing public foul sewer, contrary to National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Southern Water has also objected to the proposed method of discharge.

- Further information and an alternative drainage solution are required before the application can be properly assessed.
- The submitted climate change allowance calculations are incorrect and require revision.

Leeds City Council v SSCLG [2009] EWHC 1014

Midcounties Co-operative Ltd v Wyre Forest DC [2009] EWHC 964

“If there are concerns arising from a planning application about the capacity of wastewater infrastructure, applicants will be asked to provide information about how the proposed development will be drained and wastewater dealt with...The timescales for works to be carried out by the sewerage company do not always fit with development needs. In such cases, local planning authorities will want to consider how new development can be phased, for example so it is not occupied until any necessary improvements to public sewage system have been carried out.

The Parish Council considers this objection highly significant. At present, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the site can be safely and sustainably drained without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

In the absence of a robust and policy-compliant drainage strategy, the proposal fails to demonstrate that it constitutes safe or sustainable development.

6. Harm to Rural Character and Settlement Coalescence

The proposal would fundamentally alter the scale, character and identity of Station Road.

A development of 24 dwellings within a hamlet of approximately 21 existing homes represents a wholly disproportionate expansion that would erode the rural nature of the area and introduce an urbanising form of development into open countryside.

The Parish Council is also concerned that the proposal would place further pressure on the important strategic gap between Warnham and the expanding North Horsham urban extension, contributing towards gradual coalescence and erosion of settlement separation.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, Warnham Parish Council objects strongly to planning application DC/26/0585.

The proposal conflicts with the adopted development plan, represents unsustainable development in the countryside, would create unacceptable highway safety and drainage concerns, would harm ecology and rural character, and would undermine the integrity of the adopted Warnham Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council respectfully requests that Horsham District Council refuses planning permission for this application.

NAME:	OPTIONAL
DATE:	19th May 2026