
Sent: 02 October 2026 17:06
To: Planning
Subject: Planning application DC/26/0954 – Residential development for 21 dwellings at Land South of Athelstan Way.
Attachments: Comments on Planning Application DC-26-0954 - Photos of vegetation clearance.pdf
Categories: Comments Received

I object to planning application DC/26/0954 – Residential development for 21 dwellings at Land South of Athelstan Way. Please refuse this planning application and save this important recreational asset that supports the recovery of nature and provides a rural setting for the town.

Loss of General Amenity

I visit Chesworth Farm several times a week. I go there to be in the countryside and enjoy the peace and tranquility that it brings. For me, as for many other people, the countryside begins as I walk through the gate into the application site. That is the point that the urban landscape disappears and is replaced by a wonderful openness with views across the field. As I progress up the hill, views extend to the countryside beyond.

If the proposed development goes ahead, I won't reach the countryside until I'm over the brow of the hill or I take the gate into the next field, Horsham Hill. The countryside will be further away. That is very annoying for me. I can go the extra distance to get to the countryside. I feel sorry for other people I see when I walk through the application site. Elderly people, people with disabilities, the guy on the mobility scooter, people with young children. That extra distance may put the countryside out of their reach. People who live a long way from the development site may also feel it is too far to continue going there.

The site is adjacent to a densely populated part of the town. The gate in the northwest corner of the site is a primary access point to Chesworth Farm. Hundreds of people walk along the bridleway every day. Hundreds of people will be affected by this development. According to Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standard, people should have access to green space in excess of 10ha within 1km of their home. How many more properties will fall outside of the 1km standard if the access point to the green space is moved at least 100m further away?

The development proposal is contrary to NPPF section HC1, which mandates that planning decisions should enable and support healthy communities. Also, under HDPF Policy 42 (Health and Wellbeing) and Strategic Policy 27 of the emerging Local Plan, the Council has a duty to ensure development maintains inclusive and accessible green spaces, not take them away. By increasing the distance residents must travel to reach natural open space, the proposal discourages short, active journeys on foot and contradicts the Council's commitment to promoting healthy, walkable communities and reducing carbon emissions.

Supporting the recovery of nature.

The application site is particularly important to nature. In addition to being part of a Local Wildlife Site, it is a core site within the Horsham District Nature Recovery Network. I hope that you will consult Sussex Wildlife Trust to establish the impact that the proposed development will have on the nature recovery network. I also hope that you will consider the Council's statutory duty to conserve nature and support the Local Nature Recovery Strategy under the Environment Act 2021.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Hedgerows, scrub and small trees along the western and northern boundaries of the application site were cut down and burnt over the winter of 2024/25, prior to the calculation of the pre-development biodiversity value. This action has circumvented the requirement to deliver a biodiversity net gain. See photographic evidence attached.

Rural setting of Horsham town

The application site is on the top of a hillside and contributes to the countryside setting of the town. If you stand on the top of the hill and look around, you will see an array of windows that look out over the site. Not just houses adjacent to the field but also houses far away. This field and the surrounding trees give them their rural setting.

Previous attempts to develop the other part of Muggeridge Field failed due to the importance of the rural setting provided by the field:

- In the Horsham District Local Plan of 1994, part of Muggeridge Field was allocated for development, with a proposal for 37 dwellings. When the plan was examined, the allocation went to a public inquiry. The planning inspector concluded that the development would have a seriously harmful impact on the character and appearance of the open rural area to the south of the town and the proposal was unacceptable. The allocation was removed from the local plan.
- In 2011, WSCC submitted an outline planning application to develop 2.8 hectares of the field with 70 dwellings (DC/11/0224). In 2012, the application went to appeal but it was dismissed. The planning inspector said, "I attach weight to the contribution that the development of the site would make to the supply of housing in the area. However, this would be achieved at the considerable expense of the loss of an attractive area of open countryside where the impact of the proposal would be significant. The replacement of part of the existing open area which forms a valuable green backdrop to the existing edge of town by a sub-urban housing area would have an unacceptably negative effect on the character of the area."

The proposed dwellings will be higher than existing dwellings to the north and east of the site and will dominate the skyline far and wide. Part of the rural setting of the town will be lost.

Drainage of surface water.

Prior to the installation of the hardcore surface in 2021, the bridleway used to become a quagmire over the winter. The northwest corner of the site was like a marsh with standing water. Even now, after prolonged periods of rain, a large puddle forms on the bridleway by the gate to the site. Water doesn't drain away from the ditch, it just sits in the ditch. If more rainwater is diverted into this area, it will lead to localised flooding that will stop people from accessing the bridleway.

Regards,



Kestro, Kentwyns Drive, Horsham, RH13 6EU.

Comments on Planning Application DC/26/0954 – Residential development for 21 dwellings at Land South of Athelstan Way.

Vegetation Clearance

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Photographic Evidence.

2021 – aerial view showing extent of boundary vegetation. Following this WSCC removed part of the vegetation on the western boundary when they repositioned the bridleway in 2021.



Spring 2025 – Extent of vegetation removal along northern boundary is clearly visible. The round brown patches are from previous bonfires. A huge mound of vegetation has been piled up in the centre of the field; this was burnt in August 2025.



June 2023 – Looking south from gate before the vegetation was removed by the new owner.



May 2024 – Looking south from gate. New fence installed on western side of bridleway. Area between new fence and eastern boundary was still full of vegetation including small trees.



February 2025 – Looking south from the gate. Vegetation removed from eastern boundary.



July 2023 – Looking north down the bridleway before vegetation removal.



February 2025 – Looking north down the bridleway after vegetation removal.



June 2023 – View north to northern boundary before vegetation removal. Houses to the right are hidden by small trees and bushes. Another small tree to the left. Long grass and wildflowers in the field.



February 2025 – View north to northern boundary. All trees and bushes along northern boundary removed. Grass and wildflowers cut short. Bonfires ready to be lit.

