

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 October 2026 19:42:51 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0954
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 02/10/2026 7:42 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land South of Athelstan Way Horsham West Sussex
Proposal:	Residential development for 21no. 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings with associated parking, hard and soft landscaping at Land South of Athelstan Way, Horsham.
Case Officer:	Nicola Pettifer

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	4 Oxford Road Horsham
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Other - Overdevelopment - Trees and Landscaping
Comments:	Objection to Planning Application DC/26/0954 Land South of Athelstan Way, Horsham Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to object to planning application DC/26/0954 for the residential development of 21 dwellings on land south of Athelstan Way, Horsham.

My objection is not to the principle of providing additional housing. Rather, it concerns the suitability of this particular site and the significant landscape, ecological, recreational, drainage and cumulative planning impacts that would arise from its development. The site occupies a sensitive countryside-edge location outside the settlement boundary, forms part of the wider Chesworth Farm landscape and lies within the Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site. In my view, the submitted evidence does not demonstrate that these constraints have been satisfactorily overcome.

1. Harm to the Countryside Edge and Landscape Character

The application site forms part of a wider undeveloped field that contributes significantly to the transition between Horsham's built-up area and the open countryside associated with Muggeridge Field, Chesworth Farm, the Chesworth Allotments and Public Bridleway HOR-1670/1. The land provides openness, visual relief and an important buffer between existing residential development and the wider rural landscape.

The proposal would introduce dwellings, roads, parking areas, lighting, domestic boundaries and associated infrastructure into what is currently an undeveloped countryside setting. The result would be permanent urbanisation of part of the countryside edge and a material change in the relationship between the settlement and the surrounding landscape. Whilst landscaping may soften some impacts, it cannot recreate the openness and rural character that would be lost.

The site's elevated position further increases its sensitivity. The proposed dwellings would be visible from surrounding countryside and public rights of way and would introduce built form into views that are currently predominantly rural in character. The applicant's own Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment identifies adverse effects on landscape character and views from parts of Public Bridleway HOR-1670/1. These effects should be given appropriate weight in the planning balance.

2. Recreational Value, Health and Wellbeing

The field forms part of a valued and accessible countryside resource used regularly by local residents, including myself, for walking, dog walking, recreation and enjoyment of nature. It provides a direct and convenient connection between residential

areas and open countryside which is particularly valuable for families, older residents and those with limited mobility.

Its loss would therefore affect not only landscape character but also opportunities for physical activity, mental wellbeing and everyday access to the natural environment. These benefits are difficult to replace through landscaping within a residential development.

3. Impact on Public Bridleway HOR-1670

Public Bridleway HOR-1670 runs immediately alongside the site and is an important recreational route. Although the Public Rights of Way Team raises no objection to the proposal in principle, it highlights the importance of protecting the route from drainage impacts, maintaining safe access throughout construction and occupation, preserving its full width and ensuring that adjacent development does not compromise its use.

The planning impact extends beyond the physical route itself. The value of the bridleway derives substantially from the openness, tranquillity and rural character currently experienced by users. The introduction of housing, roads, vehicles, lighting, gardens and domestic activity would fundamentally alter that experience and diminish the character of the route and its setting.

4. Conflict with the Council's Own Evidence Base

The Council's June 2026 Site Assessment Report identified the wider site as SA060 and did not recommend it for housing allocation. The assessment highlighted landscape sensitivity, Local Wildlife Site designation, recreational value, protected trees, access constraints and visual impacts, concluding that the site was unsuitable for allocation and recording an estimated housing yield of zero.

Whilst the emerging Local Plan is not yet adopted, the evidence supporting it is directly relevant. The officer report should clearly explain how the present application overcomes the constraints identified in the Council's own recent assessment of the same wider area.

5. Piecemeal Development and Future Expansion

The proposed access arrangement raises legitimate concerns regarding the future development potential of the remainder of Muggeridge Field. The alignment and positioning of the access appear capable of facilitating future expansion beyond the current 21-dwelling proposal.

The Council should therefore require a clear explanation regarding the purpose, design and future potential of the access route, together with any associated service corridors or infrastructure capable of serving further development. The cumulative implications of such infrastructure should be assessed now rather than deferred.

6. Ecology and Biodiversity

The site lies within the wider Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site. Ecological effects should not be assessed solely by reference to habitat within the red-line boundary but should also consider ecological connectivity, movement corridors, disturbance and the wider functioning of the ecological network.

The ecological consultee raises no objection subject to conditions and is satisfied that sufficient information exists to determine the application. However, that conclusion depends upon the successful implementation and long-term maintenance of substantial mitigation measures including ecological buffers, native planting, biodiversity enhancements, construction controls and wildlife-sensitive lighting.

The ecological evidence records the presence of numerous bat species, including rare species recordings. The Council should therefore ensure that the proposed dark corridor, wildlife-friendly lighting strategy and habitat management arrangements are secured through robust and enforceable planning conditions. Whilst ecological consultees have accepted the proposed approach, concerns remain that vegetation and scrub removal occurred prior to the preparation of the ecological assessment. The ecological consultee notes that compensation planting is proposed for the removed northern scrub corridor. The Council should ensure that replacement planting and ecological connectivity measures are successfully delivered and maintained over the long term.

7. Trees and Landscape Buffers

The arboricultural Officer raises no objection in principle but identifies outstanding matters requiring clarification. In particular, further information is sought regarding the relationship between the drainage infrastructure and the Root Protection Area of retained Category A Oak tree T6. The officer also notes the desirability of reinstating a vegetated landscape buffer along the northern boundary.

These matters should be resolved before determination to ensure that the proposed drainage strategy can be implemented without harming retained trees or undermining the long-term quality of the

landscape setting.

8. Drainage, Surface Water and Flood Risk

Drainage remains the most significant unresolved technical issue. The Lead Local Flood Authority currently objects to the application and has requested substantial additional information before it can support the proposal. Outstanding matters include compliance with current national standards, complete hydraulic modelling, runoff calculations, groundwater monitoring data, infiltration-testing evidence, confirmation of discharge arrangements and evidence regarding downstream connectivity of the receiving watercourse.

These concerns reinforce fears already expressed by local residents regarding flooding, groundwater and surface-water management. Residents in nearby Weald Close report existing waterlogging and prolonged standing water following periods of heavy rainfall, and the site's topography results in a natural fall towards existing residential properties.

Until the information requested by the Lead Local Flood Authority has been submitted and independently assessed, it cannot reasonably be concluded that the drainage strategy is compliant with current standards or that flood risk will not increase elsewhere.

The Public Rights of Way Team has also specifically highlighted the need to ensure that the proposal does not create flooding or drainage problems affecting Bridleway HOR-1670.

9. Affordable Housing Remains Unresolved

The housing benefits of the scheme should be treated with caution because the affordable housing package remains unresolved.

The Housing Officer has requested further information and is unable to support the affordable housing proposals in their current form. The application does not identify which units will be affordable, does not specify the tenure mix and does not provide evidence of engagement with a Registered Provider. The Housing Officer has stated that additional information is required before support can be given.

Accordingly, the headline affordable housing benefit should not be afforded substantial weight until the details, deliverability and provider arrangements have been satisfactorily demonstrated.

10. Archaeological Interest

The site lies within Archaeological Notification Area DWS8533 associated with the historic Chesworth House medieval moated site and surrounding landscape. The archaeological adviser considers the archaeological potential of the site to be uncertain and recommends further investigation secured through planning conditions. This reinforces the need for careful consideration of the wider historic and environmental significance of the site before development proceeds.

11. Cumulative Impact

The cumulative impact of the proposal is more significant than any individual issue considered in isolation.

The Council should consider the combined effect of:

- Development outside the settlement boundary;
- Loss of countryside-edge character and openness;
- Harm to the setting of Public Bridleway HOR-1670;
- Erosion of a valued recreational resource;
- Development within the Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site;
- Reliance upon long-term ecological mitigation measures;
- Outstanding drainage objections from the Lead Local Flood Authority;
- Outstanding arboricultural concerns;
- Unresolved affordable housing matters; and
- The Council's own evidence indicating that the wider SA060 site was unsuitable for allocation.

Conclusion

This application should not be viewed as a routine 21-dwelling scheme. The site occupies a sensitive countryside-edge location within the wider Chesworth Farm landscape and Local Wildlife Site and performs important landscape, recreational and ecological functions.

Whilst several consultees have indicated that specific matters may be capable of mitigation through planning conditions, significant concerns remain. In particular, the Lead Local Flood Authority maintains an objection, the Housing Officer requires further information before supporting the affordable housing offer, the Arboricultural Officer seeks clarification regarding retained trees and drainage infrastructure, and archaeological investigations remain outstanding.

For all of the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that planning application DC/26/0954 be refused.

Alternatively, if the Council is minded to approve the application, determination should be deferred until the drainage, affordable housing, arboricultural, archaeological and other outstanding matters have been fully resolved and independently assessed.

Kind regards

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