

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 March 2026 16:43:24 UTC+01:00
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 26/03/2026 3:43 PM.

Application Summary

Address: Land North West of Southwater

Proposal: Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for primary access to the high-way) for a phased development comprising: the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of up to 1,000 residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Class C3); up to 80 specialist accommodation units (Use Class C2); 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

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Customer Details

Address: Pennock Barn, Swallowfield Copse, Southwater,

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment: - Highway Access and Parking
 - Other
 - 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.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan contains a specific and clear policy: Southwater must remain a single-centre village, with its shops, services and facilities focused around Lintot Square. This is not a minor preference - it is a core planning principle that, as a long term resident of Southwater, I voted to adopt. Berkeley Homes' proposal includes a large new cluster of shops, community facilities, a primary school, and other services on the western edge of the village - effectively creating a second village centre. This would split the village in two, diverting activity away from the existing centre and changing the fundamental character of Southwater. The proposal fails to consolidate the existing settlement of Southwater and would effectively create a split two-neighbourhood settlement instead of a coherent community. The proposal also extends development well beyond the village boundaries set in the Neighbourhood Plan. Much of the proposed site is on land that the Plan specifically identifies as outside the permitted development area. A previous Berkeley Homes application for 1,500 homes on the same site (reference DC/22/1916) was withdrawn in February 2023 after Horsham District Council planning officers concluded it was unacceptable. These fundamental concerns have not been resolved - they have simply been repackaged.

I am also objecting because the local road network is already at breaking point and this development will make it far worse. Living just off of Southwater Street, I have already experienced significant increase in traffic along, what is effectively a rural lane, caused through the recent expansion of Southwater. Southwater Street has become a major thoroughfare as drivers use it as a cut

through to south Horsham, with high volumes of traffic including HGV's, which it was not built for. Due to its narrowness and excessive speeding of cars, HGV's regularly mount the pavement on the north side of the road, making it very dangerous for pedestrians and cars alike. Southwater Street is already overloaded and dangerous so what will happen once the 350 houses still to be built are finished and this proposal to add another 1000 goes through?

The A24, which is the only realistic route in and out of Southwater for most journeys, is already at or beyond capacity at peak times. This is not residents' opinion - it is confirmed in Horsham District Council's own evidence base. The Hop Oast roundabout, which would be one of the main access points for the Berkeley Homes development, is already at capacity according to the Council's own figures - and this is before a single Berkeley Homes home is built. Adding 1,000 new homes, alongside the 800 already approved at the Horsham Golf Club site, would bring 1,800 new car-dependent households through this single junction. Adding 1000 homes will increase car dependency and increase the number of cars on local roads by approximately 1500 in the village which will add to the traffic attracted to the village for school drop off and pickup from villages outside Southwater. The problem will not simply be an increase of traffic due to houses but also due to the new school being promoted as part of the proposal. When Berkeley Homes previously applied for 1,500 homes on the same site, West Sussex County Council Highways raised serious unresolved objections on traffic grounds. The application was withdrawn. Those concerns were never resolved - and the traffic position has got worse since then. Adding traffic signals or road markings to an already-overloaded junction does not solve the problem. It delays it and makes it slightly more orderly. The underlying capacity is still exhausted and would create traffic bottlenecks within the village and on the A24 resulting in gridlock for new and existing residents.

I am also objecting on the grounds that NHS and healthcare infrastructure is already overwhelmed, and no plan exists to expand it. Anyone who lives in Southwater knows how hard it is to get a GP appointment. The surgeries serving the village are already under serious pressure from the population that is already here - let alone the 1,150 new homes already approved and under construction. The situation is not simply one of physical capacity: the local surgery appears to have room to accommodate additional GPs but is currently unable to recruit them. Approving 1,000 more homes does nothing to solve a staffing crisis that the NHS itself has not been able to resolve. Access to NHS dentistry in the area is also severely constrained, with many residents unable to register with any NHS dentist at all. Southwater is also geographically isolated from the main hospitals. As a result, ambulance response times for our area are among the worst in the whole of Sussex. Adding over 2,000 more homes will put even

greater pressure on emergency response capacity. NHS England has not confirmed that primary healthcare capacity exists or can be funded to serve the additional population from Berkeley Homes' proposal. There is no costed, legally secured plan for a new GP surgery or expansion of existing facilities. 'We will work with the NHS to address this' is not a plan - it is a hope. Previous large Southwater developments came with promises of community infrastructure that did not materialise on time, or at all. Residents have already been let down once. Approving 1,000 more homes based on promises is not acceptable.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused because:

1. it directly and fundamentally conflicts with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan on the number of homes allowed.
2. it violates Neighbourhood Plan policy SNP1.1(a) by creating a second village centre and extends beyond the village boundaries set in the adopted plan.
3. The A24 corridor and local road network cannot accommodate the traffic it would generate, and no viable mitigation has been demonstrated.
4. Lastly, I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until NHS England has formally confirmed that funded, deliverable primary healthcare provision exists to serve the combined population increase from all committed Southwater developments.

Kind regards

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