

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 March 2026 13:42:16 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0266
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 20/03/2026 1:42 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Thakeham Mushrooms Storrington Road Thakeham Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3DY
Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide 150 dwellings, including affordable housing, land for the community land trust, works to public right of way and associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure.
Case Officer:	Sam Whitehouse

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: The Pitons High Bar Lane Thakeham, Pulborough

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Highway Access and Parking - Loss of General Amenity - Other - Overdevelopment
Comments:	I wish to strongly object to this revised planning application for the redevelopment of the Thakeham Mushroom Farm. As a long-term resident of Thakeham, I am concerned about the

scale of change this proposal would bring. I therefore focus my comments on planning considerations and the relevant national policy and the Horsham District Council (HDC) Planning Framework. In particular, the HDC Planning Framework supports sustainable development of settlements through an appropriate scale of development which retains the existing settlement pattern over the plan period. Since that Framework was adopted, Thakeham has already seen a settlement expansion of more than 25%; further additions will continue to erode the existing settlement pattern.

The HDC Planning Framework also requires managed development around the edges of existing settlements in order to prevent the merging of settlements and to protect the rural character and landscape. This application presents a significant risk of further westwards expansion and potential future coalescence with West Chiltington.

The HDC Planning Framework recognises the need to generate local employment opportunities and seeks to identify existing sites of important employment use. There is a stated objective to safeguard their function through flexible policies and designation of Key Employment Areas, together with supporting the rural economy, to allow people the opportunity to work close to where they live. If approved this application would remove a substantial agricultural/horticultural facility from the economy.

Aside for employment during construction which is unlikely to benefit many local residents this application removes the potential to create local jobs. Most potential residents if the application were to be approved are likely to move into Thakeham from outside the local area and will commute to work.

Individual planning applications must be considered on their merits, but the previous rejected application DC/24/0021, must be considered when reviewing this application. I would particularly draw Officers and Councillors attention to the reasons given by the Planning Inspector for refusing Bellway's appeal, which were substantive and not based upon narrow technicalities.

The 'theoretical' reduction in the number of intended properties to be located on this site, would still cause the transport problems previously identified, because Thakeham is an inappropriate location for another development of this nature.

I have used the term theoretical because the submitted materials indicate the site may be intended to come forward in additional phases beyond the 150 units covered by this application. This is not speculation; the submitted documentation refers explicitly to future phases. The following is a direct quotation from page 87 of the Design Concept document:

"12: The canopies of new tree planting will create ecological connectivity along this boundary. Hedgerows have not been included so as not to compromise connectivity between this and future phases of development."

In documentation relating to DC/24/0021, there also appears to have been an editing error where a higher target figure of 600 units was not replaced consistently with the number of 247 for which planning permission was sought. While I cannot confirm Bellway's long-term intentions, the reference to future phases indicates that further applications could follow. Considered in that context, a piecemeal approach can make it more difficult to assess cumulative impacts and to secure proportionate, timely infrastructure contributions across the whole site.

Since the Inspector refused the appeal, an application to build an additional 28 properties in Thakeham has been approved and an additional application for 108 properties on a brown field site allocated in the Emerging Local Plan, has been submitted (DC/25/2087).

Those two developments and this revised application equal 286 properties, which using the established trip metrics means a 15% traffic increase above the number of journeys, attributable to Bellway's original plans, that the Inspector previously deemed to be unsustainable.

Taking into consideration the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, I would draw attention to Point 77 on page 20, from which I have extracted the following text:

"77. The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should:

- a) consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;
- b) ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;"

150 new homes might not be a large-scale development, however in the context of Thakeham which is a smaller village, this

proposed development represents a further significant increase in the size of the community. Given the almost total absence of existing infrastructure and facilities, Thakeham does not meet the required provision of being well located.

Infrastructure is lacking in the following significant areas.

- There are negligible local employment opportunities and access to local towns is only feasible via private car journeys along a narrow B class road, with deep cuttings at both ends of the central area of the village close to the site. The applicant's own assessment indicates that more than 85% of journeys would be by car, which materially limits any genuine choice of transport modes. On that basis, the proposal appears inconsistent with the NPPF expectation that development be supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities, including a genuine choice of transport modes. WSCC Highways have detailed deficiencies in the proposal in relation to transportation, and I do not repeat those points here.
- Thakeham Primary School (ages 4 - 11) which is located over a mile from the site has an annual pupil capacity of 104 - 105 pupils and has a published admission number (PAN) of 15 for 2026. A development of the nature proposed will obviously generate a substantial number of pupils who will not be accommodated in the local school, necessitating journeys of several miles to other potential schools.
- There are no local NHS dentists and residents complain of significant wait times to get a GP appointment at the surgery located more than 2 miles away in Storrington.

Aside from not meeting the provisions of the NPPF 2024, this application appears inconsistent with the HDC Planning Framework requirement that proposals ensure development is of a scale that can retain the character and role of the settlement in terms of the range of services and facilities and community cohesion, as set out in the Settlement Sustainability Review background document.

I have noted comments made by the HDC Housing Officer regarding the unacceptable affordable housing mix, which if the development is approved, I presume the Officers will address with Bellway. I would expect that if approval were granted there will be a truly binding condition for Bellway to confirm contracts are in place with a Social Housing Provider prior to being allowed to commence construction. Many recent news articles have described difficulties developers claim to experience in reaching agreements with Social Housing Providers and later seek planning amendments to remove the affordable housing obligations.

Finally, I wish to comment on the Bio Net Gain claims made by Bellway. For this initial phase of development there maybe some negligible gains due to the additional tree planting, however the

amount of green space on the initial development area will be reduced, as there is a large, grassed area between the farm buildings. If as appears to be Bellway's intention to develop on the area to the West of the PROW, then there will be a huge Bio deficit.

Bellway have made a proposal to offer a small part of the site to Chanctonbury Community Land Trust (CCLT), in the area adjacent to the B2139. CCLT have made a counter proposal to Bellway to also lease on a long-term basis the South Western part of the site (West of the PROW where the composting sheds used to be located), to retain the area as a community accessible informal wildlife area. Initial discussions have been held by CCLT with Sussex Wildlife Trust who have confirmed the potential ecological benefits of such a programme. Bellway agreeing to this nature area proposal would disprove that there is an intention to develop the whole site, and demonstrate good faith by Bellway.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**

Horsham District Council, Albery House, Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2GB
Telephone: 01403 215100 (calls may be recorded) www.horsham.gov.uk Chief Executive: Jane Eaton