

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 07 April 2026 18:19
To: Planning
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 07/04/2026 6:18 PM.

Application Summary

Address: Land North West of Southwater

Proposal: Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for primary access to the highway) 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: 23 Rascals Close Southwater

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: There are so many, many reasons why this latest Berkeley Homes development should not be permitted. Southwater will no longer be a village and will have absolutely no appropriate infrastructure or essential, much needed NHS facilities such as a 24 hour A&E. There will be no reasonable public transport routes or educational facilities. There is already a lack of suitable local shops or community facilities. And along with all of this, the ecological

destruction, the impact upon local people and wildlife is absolutely horrendous.

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.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused because it directly and fundamentally conflicts with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan on the number of homes allowed.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused, or at minimum deferred until the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan review is complete, so that the community's democratic voice is properly respected.

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 re

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.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the local road network is already at breaking point and this development will make it far worse. 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 ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that the A24 corridor and local road network cannot accommodate the traffic it would generate, and no viable mitigation has been demonstrated

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because this is one of the worst possible locations for large-scale housing in terms of car

dependency. Southwater has no railway station. Christ's Hospital station - the nearest - is remote from the village, served by infrequent trains and has no meaningful car parking. The bus service is sparse and does not serve newer housing estates. There is no viable cycling or walking route across the A24 dual carriageway or the railway line that separates Southwater from Horsham town centre and the district's main employment areas. The result is that every new Southwater resident will need a car for virtually every significant journey. This is not a lifestyle choice - it is a geographical fact. HDC's own Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2020) confirms that the A24 and railway are hard physical barriers that cannot realistically be crossed on foot or by bike. Southwater has very limited employment of its own. People who move here for work will commute by car, adding daily vehicle movements to roads that are already at capacity. This is the opposite of the sustainable development that planning rules require. The question of where new residents will look for services and schools deserve scrutiny. Berkeley Homes' supporting documents suggest a school linkage with the Horsham Golf Club development, but this connection has not been made sufficiently clear by the applicant. It is also unclear whether the Golf Club development is looking to Southwater more broadly for other services and infrastructure - or whether, in practice, residents of both developments will look to Horsham for schools, healthcare and employment rather than to Southwater at all. If the latter is the case, it further undermines the case for locating large-scale development here: new residents will not be served by Southwater's limited facilities, they will simply add to the traffic burden on routes into Horsham. Berkeley Homes' proposal includes aspirational commitments to bus services and cycle routes - but these are not funded, not contracted, and not enforceable. Aspirations are not infrastructure. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that the site is inherently car-dependent by geography, with no credible prospect of genuinely sustainable travel alternatives being delivered.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the traffic assessment for the proposed secondary school is seriously wrong and creates a real child safety risk. Berkeley Homes' transport assessment claims the new secondary school would generate very little additional traffic - arguing that most pupils will walk or cycle. This conclusion is not credible. A new secondary school south of Horsham would attract pupils from across a wide area, including from the 800 homes already approved at the Horsham Golf Club site. However, the A24 dual carriageway lies between the Golf Club development and the proposed school. The A24 is a highspeed, high-volume trunk road. There is no safe pedestrian or cycle crossing at a suitable point for school-age children. Without a safe crossing, the assessment's walking and cycling projections for school trips are worthless. Children who try to cross the A24 at an informal or unsignalized point are at serious risk of a road accident. This is not a detail to be sorted out at a later stage - it is a fundamental safety constraint that must be resolved before planning permission is granted. The only adequate solution is a grade-separated crossing - either an underpass or a footbridge. This is expensive infrastructure that Berkeley Homes has not committed to fund, design or deliver. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Berkeley Homes has committed in writing to fund and deliver a fully safe, grade-separated pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A24 as a condition of any permission.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because it poses a serious risk to two irreplaceable areas of ancient woodland. Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse sit immediately alongside the proposed development site. Both are designated ancient woodlands - habitats that have existed continuously for over 400 years. Under national planning law, ancient woodland has near-absolute protection. It cannot be recreated. It cannot be compensated for by planting trees elsewhere. Once damaged, it is gone. The risk is not limited to direct physical encroachment. The massive drainage engineering that would be required on this Weald Clay site - large attenuation ponds, underground storage tanks, and controlled drainage channels - would change the movement of water through the soil across a wide area around the site. Changes to groundwater levels and soil moisture can damage and kill ancient woodland trees through their root systems without any physical entry into the woodland. Berkeley Homes has not provided any independent assessment of this specific hydrological risk to Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse. A developer's own consultant report is not sufficient for a risk that is permanent and irreversible. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a fully independent, peer-reviewed assessment of the hydrological impact on Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse has been carried out and published

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because at this scale, it does not extend the village - it fundamentally transforms it. Southwater is a village. That is what it is and what residents chose to live in. The open farmland to the northwest - 141 hectares, the equivalent of roughly 200 football pitches - currently forms a natural transition between the village edge and the open Low Weald countryside. Once it is built over, that countryside is gone permanently. A development of 1,000 homes is not a modest expansion. Combined with the 800 homes already approved at the Golf Club site and 350 at Broadacres, Southwater would be adding more than 2,000 homes in a single generation. That transforms a large village into a small town - irreversibly. The scale of this proposed development vastly exceeds anything Southwater was designed to absorb. It is not an extension of an existing settlement; it is being dumped on top of one. The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, voted for by residents, specifically requires that development avoids coalescence with neighbouring settlements and respects the existing landscape character of the village. This proposal does the opposite. Berkeley Homes has not demonstrated that it has engaged seriously with any design framework governing how growth should be integrated into Southwater. It is unclear whether the applicant has referenced Horsham District Council's design guidance, any settlement-specific design guide, or the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan's own design principles. HDC should satisfy itself that such a framework exists and that Berkeley Homes has been required to demonstrate compliance with it. Without that, there is a real risk that this development degrades the character and coherence of the settlement rather than adding to it. No combined landscape assessment has been carried out looking at the Berkeley Homes proposal alongside the Golf Club site and Broadacres development together. The cumulative visual impact on Southwater - and on the risk of coalescence with neighbouring settlements - has never been honestly assessed. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that it will cause permanent and unacceptable harm to the landscape character and rural setting of Southwater village.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the homes described as 'affordable' are not affordable to the people who live and work in Southwater. In the planning system, 'affordable housing' means homes priced at up to 80% of the open market value. In Southwater, where the median house price is approximately [REDACTED], that means an 'affordable' home would cost around [REDACTED]. Berkeley Homes does not appear to be proposing any social rented housing at all - only affordable homes to buy. Yet 80% of market value is unaffordable to most people on local wages, making the distinction between 'affordable to buy' and 'market price' largely meaningless in practice. The median wage for people in this area is approximately [REDACTED] per year. A person on that salary can borrow approximately [REDACTED] on a standard mortgage. That is less than half the price of an 'affordable' home. This is not affordable. Calling it affordable does not make it affordable. The gap between local wages and local house prices is so wide that the standard definition of 'affordable housing' is essentially meaningless in this part of West Sussex. Horsham District Council's policy requires 40% of homes in major developments to be genuinely affordable - 70% as affordable rent and 30% as shared ownership. Berkeley Homes must demonstrate, with independent evidence, that it will deliver this in a form that local people can genuinely access. Crucially, Berkeley Homes has not demonstrated that any registered provider has committed to taking on the affordable housing element of this development. Without that commitment, the affordable housing offer is unverified and cannot be relied upon. Where housing is intended to accommodate residents displaced from other municipalities, it is essential that those homes are in places with good access to employment, schools, services and public transport. Southwater currently lacks all of these at the scale this development would demand. Placing displaced residents in a location where they cannot access work, education or services without a car does not constitute a housing solution - it creates a dormitory settlement. That would represent a serious failure of planning policy and an unacceptable outcome for the people placed there. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Berkeley Homes demonstrates, with independently verified evidence, that the affordable homes proposed will be genuinely accessible to people on local average wages in Southwater

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that brownfield land elsewhere in Horsham District should be developed before more farmland in Southwater is built on. The principle that brownfield land - previously developed sites - should be built on before greenfield farmland is a core planning principle. It

protects the countryside, reduces the infrastructure cost of new development, and puts homes closer to existing services and employment. The former Novartis pharmaceutical factory site in North Horsham is a ready example. It already has planning permission for 244 affordable homes, granted in October 2025. It is closer to Horsham town centre, rail services, and the district's main employment areas. It requires no new road infrastructure to be genuinely sustainable. West Sussex County Council is currently investing in bus and cycling improvements along the A264, A281 and Horsham-Crawley-Gatwick corridor. These investments make development along those corridors genuinely sustainable. None of this investment reaches Southwater. Horsham District Council's own December 2024 Brownfield Register makes the position plain. Across the entire district, HDC has identified just 18 brownfield sites with a combined capacity of approximately 827 dwellings, covering around 20.98 hectares. That total includes sites already under construction, sites with lapsed permissions, and sites that have been in the pipeline for years without progressing. The largest single site - the former Novartis site in North Horsham, with permission for 300 dwellings - remains unbuilt. Several other sites with permissions granted as far back as 2014 have still not been implemented. Berkeley Homes is seeking permission for 1,000 homes on a single greenfield site. That is more homes than the entire brownfield land supply HDC has been able to identify across the whole district. Before approving the destruction of 141 hectares of open farmland at Southwater, the Council must demonstrate that its brownfield pipeline has been fully explored, actively promoted, and genuinely exhausted. There is no evidence that this has been done. Granting permission for large-scale greenfield release at Southwater while brownfield sites across the district sit unbuilt and unprogressed is not consistent with the brownfield-first principle that lies at the heart of national planning policy. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused, and that Horsham District Council be required to demonstrate that all identified brownfield land on its December 2024 Brownfield Register has been fully considered as an alternative.

Kind regards

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