

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 April 2026 14:27:47 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 01/04/2026 2:27 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

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: 14 Robin Close Southwater Horsham

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

Comments:

1. Conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan
In June 2021, Southwater residents voted in a democratic referendum to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan setting a clear, legally binding cap of 420-460 new homes in the village. This figure emerged from a thorough, community-led process. Berkeley Homes is now proposing 1,000 homes - a 117% breach of the limit that residents themselves set. National planning policy states that where a proposal conflicts with an in-date Neighbourhood Plan, permission should not normally be granted. The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan is recent, formally adopted, and carries full legal weight. Claims that the plan is "out of date" are contradicted by current community sentiment: an online petition opposing the scheme has already attracted over 3,000 signatures, clearly demonstrating that the views that shaped the 2021 plan remain valid.

2. No assessment of cumulative development already committed
Southwater has already absorbed - or is in the process of absorbing - significant growth:

350 homes under construction at Broadacres
800 homes approved at the Horsham Golf Course site
Total already committed: 1,150 new homes

Adding Berkeley Homes' 1,000 units brings the total to over 2,150 new homes, more than doubling the size of the village. Berkeley Homes has only assessed its own site in isolation. No one has evaluated the combined impact of the 1,150 homes already approved. This omission is critical and renders the application incomplete and unsound.

3. A 20-year build-out is incompatible with the planning system
At Berkeley Homes' typical build-out rate (50-60 homes per year), and with around 200 other units still to be completed elsewhere, construction would extend for approximately 20 years. A planning authority is only required to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Granting permission for a scheme effectively delivering a 20-year supply to a single developer is neither proportionate nor aligned with planning policy. The 2022 proposal for 1,500 homes on this same site was partly rejected due to unacceptable cumulative infrastructure impacts. Those impacts have worsened, not improved, since that decision.

4. Water supply limitations remain unresolved
The lifting of the 'water neutrality' requirement in October 2025 does not mean the water supply problem has been solved. Changing a rule does not create more water. The Sussex North Water Supply Zone remains officially designated as water-

stressed.

Key concerns include:

A severe 2025 drought - the worst in 130 years - followed by inadequate winter rainfall.

England faces a projected 5 billion litre/day water deficit by 2050. Broadacres residents (a Berkeley Homes site) are already experiencing low pressure, forcing them to remove water-saving devices just to meet basic needs.

Horsham District Council's own water-demand calculations differ by 21% from Southern Water's published figures, calling into question the accuracy of the modelling used to justify this proposal.

The physical constraint on groundwater abstraction at Hardham has not been resolved.

5. Sewage infrastructure is already failing

Residents have experienced repeated sewage overflow issues for years - problems Southern Water has failed to resolve.

The developer's drainage strategy confirms that sewage would be treated at Barns Green Wastewater Treatment Works, which Southern Water states will require at least 24 months to upgrade, potentially longer. Approving development before this upgrade is secured risks unlawful discharges into local watercourses.

Southern Water's track record adds further concern:

Convicted in 2020 of 51 criminal offences for deliberate sewage dumping

Fined £90 million

Ofwat has required a 44% rise in bills to fund essential investment - which Southern Water is now appealing

Planning permission cannot rely on assumptions that a company resisting regulatory investment will provide the necessary infrastructure. A legally binding commitment to expand sewage capacity must be required before any approval.

6. Healthcare infrastructure is already overwhelmed

Local GP surgeries are struggling to meet current demand. The main practice serving Southwater has physical capacity to take on additional staff but is unable to recruit them. This is a workforce issue, not a buildings issue, and adding 1,000 homes cannot fix it. Other concerns:

Access to NHS dentistry is severely limited

Southwater's distance from 24-hour A&E hospitals contributes to some of the worst ambulance response times in Sussex

NHS England has not confirmed funding or capacity for additional residents

Promises to "work with the NHS" are not a deliverable mitigation

strategy.

7. Wildlife surveys are incomplete and cannot be deferred
Planning law is clear: wildlife impacts must be fully assessed before permission is granted.
Berkeley Homes has not completed surveys for protected species, including badgers, despite long-standing foraging routes across the site. Deferring this work until after allocation is unlawful and removes meaningful scrutiny.

8. The road network is already over capacity

The A24 is at or beyond capacity at peak times
Hop Oast roundabout is already at capacity according to HDC evidence
This development, plus the 800 homes at Horsham Golf Club, would route up to 1,800 car-dependent households through the same junction
The proposed primary school will draw additional car trips from outside the village

Previous applications on this land were rejected on traffic grounds by West Sussex County Council Highways. Conditions have worsened since then, not improved.
Adding signalisation does not increase road capacity - it simply reorganises congestion.

9. Southwater's character and identity are at risk
For long-term residents, this scale of expansion - without matching infrastructure - is devastating. The village risks losing its identity and becoming a continuous urban extension of Horsham and Christ's Hospital.
Southwater has already taken more than its fair share of development. If any further growth is ever considered, it must come only with cast-iron, funded commitments for schools, healthcare, water infrastructure, sewage capacity, and community services.
Residents should not be expected to tolerate reduced services, water restrictions, failing sewage systems, and worsening congestion simply because infrastructure is not keeping pace with development.

Conclusion

For all the reasons above - planning conflict, cumulative impacts, water scarcity, sewage capacity, traffic congestion, healthcare strain, incomplete wildlife assessments, and long-term community harm - I strongly object to this proposal. It is not sustainable, not justified, and not in the best interests of Southwater or its residents.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



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