

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 April 2026 13:00:54 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 02/04/2026 1:00 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

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: 41 York Close Southwater Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Design
- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

I write to formally object to the above planning application for an outline phased development of up to 1,000 residential dwellings on farmland north west of Southwater. My objections are set out below.

1. CONFLICT WITH THE SOUTHWATER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) was approved by community referendum and formally adopted in June 2021. It is a legally material consideration that must be given significant weight in the determination of this application. The SNP specifically envisaged modest and proportionate growth - far below the scale proposed here. This application directly conflicts with the SNP's vision for Southwater and with the democratic will of residents who voted to shape their own community's future under the Localism Act 2011.

2. DISPROPORTIONATE POPULATION INCREASE AND LOSS OF VILLAGE CHARACTER

Southwater is a village, not a town. The proposed development of up to 1,000 homes, when combined with the 350 homes currently under construction at Broadacres and the 800 homes already consented at the Horsham Golf and Fitness Club site, would result in a population surge of approximately 40%. This would fundamentally and irreversibly transform the character of Southwater. The cumulative impact of these consents has not been adequately assessed in this application and must be given full weight by the planning authority.

3. INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE - SCHOOLS, HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The application does not present a credible, funded, and legally binding plan for the infrastructure required to support this level of growth. Residents will be acutely aware that a school was promised as part of the Broadbridge Heath development and was never delivered. Promises of a new primary or secondary school in this application must not be relied upon unless secured by

unambiguous and enforceable planning obligations. The Council has itself acknowledged it has no control over whether a school will ultimately be built. Healthcare capacity in the Southwater area is already under strain and no satisfactory proposal to expand GP or hospital provision has been put forward.

4. WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE CONCERNS

Southwater sits within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone (SNWRZ), which is one of the most over-stressed water supply zones in the country, served solely by abstraction at Hardham near Pulborough. A professional study commissioned by Horsham District Council and other affected authorities (JBA Consulting, 2022) identified an annually increasing shortfall between water supply and demand even without significant new development. The withdrawal of the water neutrality requirement by Natural England does not resolve the underlying physical constraint - it simply removes a policy safeguard. The applicant has not demonstrated that adequate water supply can be guaranteed for up to 1,000 additional homes over the long term. Drainage and wastewater capacity concerns equally remain unresolved.

5. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Worthing Road (the A24 corridor) is already operating close to capacity at peak times. This application proposes to add a substantial volume of additional vehicle movements onto the local road network without a credible, fully funded transport mitigation strategy. The proposed link road and junction improvements at the Hop Oast roundabout do not adequately address the cumulative highway impact of this development alongside the already-consented 800 homes at Horsham Golf Club.

6. PREMATURE - LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION NOT CONCLUDED

Horsham District Council's Local Plan is currently subject to a full re-examination from scratch by a newly appointed Planning Inspector, with Stage One hearings on housing requirements scheduled for April 2026 and Stage Two (covering specific site allocations including the Southwater site) not due until September 2026. It is wholly premature to grant planning permission for a strategic site of this scale before the Local Plan examination has concluded and housing numbers and site allocations have been properly determined. Granting permission now would pre-empt and undermine the statutory plan-making process.

7. COUNTRYSIDE AND LANDSCAPE HARM

The site currently comprises working farmland, ancient woodland, and open countryside beyond the defined Built-Up Area Boundary of Southwater. The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) Policy 26 protects countryside from development of this nature. The current Built-Up Area Boundary was deliberately drawn to exclude this land. The application would result in permanent and irreversible harm to the rural setting of the village, the loss of productive agricultural land, and damage to biodiversity including ancient woodland habitats.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONCERNS

There is no guarantee that the affordable housing element will be delivered at an adequate level, in genuine perpetuity, and accessible to local people with local connections. Past experience with large Berkeley Homes developments demonstrates that viability arguments are frequently used at reserved matters stage to reduce affordable housing provision below the originally stated levels.

CONCLUSION

For all of the reasons above, I strongly urge the Council to refuse this application. The scale of development proposed is contrary to the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, unsupported by adequate infrastructure, premature in light of the ongoing Local Plan re-examination, and would cause significant and permanent harm to the character and sustainability of Southwater as a village. The cumulative impact of this proposal, together with already-consented developments in the area, has not been adequately addressed.

Kind regards

Telephone:

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