

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 23 March 2026 11:29
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 23/03/2026 11:29 AM.

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 residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Classes C2 and C3); 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: Braclea New Road Southwater

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: Trees and Landscaping. Loss of General Amenity. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the wildlife impact surveys are incomplete, and Berkeley Homes is seeking to carry them out after approval rather than before, which is not permitted. Planning law is clear: the impact on protected wildlife must be properly assessed before planning permission can be granted. It cannot be deferred to a later stage. This is not a technicality, it is a fundamental safeguard designed to prevent irreversible harm to wildlife being done first and assessed second. There is established evidence of [REDACTED] wildlife using foraging routes across this land that have existed

for generations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The disruption caused by a 1,000-home development to these routes and habitats has not been adequately assessed. Berkeley Homes has argued that full surveys should wait until after the allocation is confirmed. This approach is legally improper and should be rejected. It is designed to avoid scrutiny at the stage when it is most meaningful. The scale of wildlife using this land, [REDACTED] has not been assessed in any rigorous, independent way. This is a significant and unresolved gap in the evidence base. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until fully independent, comprehensive wildlife surveys covering the entire site have been completed, published, and independently assessed. In addition, I am objecting because the drainage works required could permanently damage two areas of ancient woodland. Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse, lie immediately alongside the proposed development site. Both are designated ancient woodlands; habitats that have been continuously wooded for over 400 years and are considered irreplaceable under national planning law. Once damaged, ancient woodland cannot be restored. The threat is not just from bulldozers entering the woodland directly. Large-scale drainage engineering on Weald Clay can lower or alter groundwater levels across a wide surrounding area. Ancient woodland trees have root systems extending far beyond the woodland boundary, and changes to soil moisture caused by attenuation ponds and drainage channels nearby can kill these trees silently over years, without any direct physical contact. This is a well-evidenced, recognised risk, yet Berkeley Homes has not submitted any independent hydrological assessment of the impact their drainage works would have on these woodlands. A developer's own consultant assessment is not sufficient for something this serious and irreversible. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a fully independent, peer-reviewed hydrological impact assessment on Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse has been completed and published for public scrutiny.' As a Southwater resident, this affects me directly because the existing landscaping of the village will be under threat by the planned application. I feel very strongly about protecting this ancient woodland and the wildlife that lives there.

Other. Flooding. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the development will increase surface water flooding that already affects existing residents. The 141-hectare site is currently farmland. Farmland, even on clay, slows the movement of rainwater into local streams and ditches. Once it is replaced with 1,000 homes' worth of roofs, roads, driveways, pavements and car parks, the volume of rainwater running off the site into local watercourses will increase dramatically; and it will arrive faster. The scale of attenuation required to manage this runoff is substantial. The roofs alone (at 50m² per home across 1,000 properties and a rainfall of 0.75m) would generate enough water to require 7.5 hectares of child-safe attenuation area (defined as no more than 50cm water depth). Once anticipated climate change factors are applied, that figure rises to 10.5 hectares. This is an enormous land take within the development, and there is no evidence that Berkeley Homes has adequately planned for it. Local streams and drainage channels in this area already overflow during heavy rain. Residents already experience waterlogged gardens and flooded access routes after storms. Adding the runoff from 141 hectares of new hard surfaces (however it is managed by attenuation ponds) creates a real and material risk of making this significantly worse. Climate change is making extreme rainfall events more frequent and more intense. The drainage system for this development must be designed for the worst case, not average conditions. There is no evidence that Berkeley Homes has done this. If flooding increases after the development is built, there is no remedy available to affected residents. The damage is permanent. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that it poses an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of increasing flood risk to existing Southwater residents and properties. As a Southwater resident, this affects me directly because my garden and drainage ditches have been full to overflowing during the winter months after prolonged rainfall, with excess running down the road. This has been more noticeable over the last few years. 1000 more homes would therefore cause further flooding problems for me directly.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**



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 Eaton