

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 23 March 2026 11:43
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 11:43 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

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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: - Design

Comments: Design. 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. To add further, 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]. 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. In addition, no genuine, independently demonstrated local housing need for 1,000 homes in this specific village has been established. Planning rules require that housing development addresses real, locally identified need, not simply that it adds to a district-wide number. The question is not 'does Horsham District need housing?' of course it does. The question is: 'is there genuine evidence that Southwater specifically needs 1,000 more homes, over and above the 1,150 already committed?' The honest answer is no. Much of the housing pressure in this part of West Sussex originates from Gatwick Airport's workforce, Crawley reaching its boundaries, and coastal towns to the south. These are pressures generated elsewhere and should be addressed near where they arise, not transferred to a village with limited employment of its own. Horsham's own economic strategy identifies North Horsham and the Gatwick Diamond as the primary employment and growth corridors, not Southwater. Building 1,000 homes in Southwater does not put people near jobs, it creates a commuter dormitory served by a congested A-road. Berkeley Homes owns this land. That is why it is promoting this site. Land ownership is not the same as planning justification. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Horsham District Council and Berkeley Homes have published

transparent, independently reviewed evidence that genuine local housing need for 1,000 homes in Southwater (not in Horsham District generally)has been established.

Kind regards

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**Horsham
District
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