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Sent: 02 February 2026 19:50
To: Planning
Subject: DC/25/2057 Land North of Little Slaughterford - OBJECTION

Categories: Comments Received

5 Saltbox Close,
Barns Green,
West Sussex,
RH13 0PN

2nd February 2026

To the Planning Officer,

OBJECTION – DC/25/2057 Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road, Barns Green 68 Dwellings – Miller Homes

As a resident of Barns Green, I strongly object to the application for 68 houses on the Land North of Little Slaughterford. I have no objection to sustainable growth in and around Barns Green and I am fully supportive of the sites allocated in the recently made Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan. This site however, was not identified as suitable for development in the Neighbourhood Plan and would have a catastrophic impact on the village, its residents and the environment. Please consider my objections on the following points:

1. Contravenes the made Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan

The Itchingfield Neighbourhood plan was approved by referendum on 4th September 2025 and formally made on 8th October 2025. This is a now legally binding plan that has been developed over years of community consultation including detailed assessment of all proposed sites. It clearly identifies where the community accepts growth in order to meet housing need. The Land North of Little Slaughterford was assessed as part of that process and was deemed not deliverable. It was consciously excluded as entirely unsuitable and unsustainable.

The government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill guidance (September 2025) states that the decisions about what to build and where 'should be shaped by local communities', and that is exactly what the current Neighbourhood Plan has done. This speculative application attempts to ignore this principle completely.

NPPF paragraph 14 states that where a Neighbourhood Plan is less than five years old and allocates sites to meet housing need, the adverse impact of conflicting development 'is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'.

Paragraph 7.5 of the applicant's own Planning Statement concedes:

"Being set outside of the built-up area boundary and not essential to this countryside location, the proposal would be in conflict with policies 2, 3, 4 and 26 of the HDPF."

As the proposed development site lies outside of the Built-up Area Boundary (BUAB) it is defined as 'Countryside'. Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework states that development in the countryside should only be permitted if it is essential to its location. This is a strategic policy designed to protect the rural character of the countryside by restricting development outside of the built-up area boundaries.

The success of their application relies entirely on the 'tilted balance' because Horsham lacks a five-year housing land supply. This however, does not take into account NPPF paragraph 11(d)(i) which makes clear that 'tilted balance' cannot apply where Framework policies indicate that development should be restricted i.e. for habitat sites; irreplaceable habitats like ancient woodland and where there is a flood risk – all of which apply to this site.

Planning law is clear that given the made Neighbourhood Plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirements this application should be refused as the adverse impact of approving it would "significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits". It is not essential to this Countryside location.

2. Loss of a rural amenity, Village Character, Listed Buildings and Heritage Impact

This field plays a vital role in the community. It is described in the Neighbourhood Plan's Landscape Character Assessment as one of the *'small pastoral fields that provide important green gaps that contribute to a settlement with rural character and provide transition to the wider countryside'*. The 'green gap' it provides would be completely destroyed by the proposed development permanently damaging the character of the village.

The field has historical significance; records show that it was the 'Green' referred to in the village's given name 'Barns Green'. It was used historically as the 'Green' where locals would meet and for entertainment and activities. In more recent years the field has been used by the community hosting the annual Classic Car Show which raises thousands of pounds for charities and also as an integral part of the logistical set up of the Barns Green Half Marathon which also raises significant charitable funds and is a community event.

The proposed development site is surrounded by listed buildings; Little Slaughterford, Bennetts, Heron's Reach and the Queen's Head. The heritage of these properties should be protected from housing schemes that bear no relevance to the existing village character to which, these historic buildings, contribute. These listed buildings would be detrimentally affected by the proximity of this new development and their historical significance undermined.

The proposed development would destroy this rural amenity and significantly harm the historic character of the village.

3. Loss of Village Amenity

The proposed road layout showing the entry road opposite the village shop and the Queen's Head Pub would have serious detrimental impact on both. They are both important community assets and their viability should be considered with the upmost importance. With limited public transport these village amenities are often a lifeline to locals who don't or can't drive. Equally the ability to park easily outside the shop widens its reach within parish. Both the landlord of the Queen's Head and the shop owner have stated that without the on-street parking currently available, their businesses would not be viable.

The Queen's Head, which is a listed building, gains destination customers due to its rural setting. That appeal, and the custom it draws, would be lost if instead, customers were overlooking a housing estate.

The loss of two vital community assets as a result of this development would impact everyone in the village detrimentally and their importance should not be underestimated.

4. Traffic Generation and Parking Impact

The proposed traffic plan and parking proposal included in the application relies on an inconsistent supporting report. It states there will be space for 10 parked cars and only actually shows 9 on the plans provided. The applicant proposes traffic calming features that would create pinch points and would also reduce the parking spaces available. The negative impact of loss of parking on local businesses has already been demonstrated in this objection.

The applicant has failed to take into account the cumulative traffic impact and have not provided any assessment. NPPF paragraph 116 requires 'residual cumulative impacts' on the road network. The applicant has incorrectly dismissed the wider impacts as being 'negligible' and has ignored the impact of the 32 new homes at Sumners Fields and the 50+ houses allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan as well as the combined effect this would have on the Chapel Road/Two Mile Ash Road junction.

The applicant has not demonstrated the cumulative impact on the local road network, are inconsistent in their proposed parking plan and have not taken into account the negative impact loss of on-street parking spaces would have on established local businesses.

5. Public transport not sustainable

Further to the inadequate assessment of the cumulative impact of traffic generation, the applicant's Transport Statement relies on a 'Vision Scenario' where a modal shift away from private car use is assumed. Anyone who lives in Barns Green will tell you that the public transport service to the village is all but non-existent and cannot be relied upon. This proposed scheme should only be considered in reality, as a car-dependant development. The implications of this are significant when considering sustainability, the impact on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, public health and social equity.

To be clear, the nearest station is 3.7km away at Christ's Hospital. Access on foot to the station would either be via unlit country lanes with no pavements or via a footpaths/bridleways across fields which are incredibly muddy and often unpassable during the winter or periods of wet weather. Buses are infrequent and unreliable with no evening or weekend service whatsoever and with timings such that it would be impossible to get to work for a 9-5pm job using busses alone.

The assumptions made in the applicants Transport Statement are simply not credible or based in reality. The village is not a location where sustainable transport can be considered as an alternative to car use.

6. Housing needs not met

The proposed 68 houses on this site would represent clear over development. HDPF states that the density of new dwellings should be a tailored approach that balances the need for housing with the character of the existing surroundings. This context led density should reflect the established character, density and layout of the surrounding neighbourhood. In rural areas lower densities are prioritised.

This application conflicts with that policy representing a disproportionate increase in dwelling numbers for the Parish at a density that is completely out of alignment with neighbouring properties (many of which are listed buildings). The design which includes housing at an unacceptable height (particularly when it is taken into consideration that the site slopes upwards away from the road making the high roof pitches even more dominant) would be more suited to an urban setting. No consideration has been given to the rural nature of the location or any attempt made to reflect the local character of the village in the design.

The proposed housing mix does not reflect the need identified on the Housing Register. The Council's Housing Officers consultation response dated 15th January 2026 does not support this development stating:

"The scheme would largely eliminate the identified two-bedroom requirement while failing to adequately address the most acute and long-standing housing needs within the parish."

They go on to express concerns that due to the rural location and the size of the development, the scheme may not attract Registered Providers. They state that there is:

"a risk that the applicant may seek a commuted sum in lieu of off-site affordable housing provision at a later stage."

It should be noted that in the recent Sumners Fields development this is the exact scenario that has played out as no Registered Provider was prepared to take on their allocation of affordable housing.

The applicant's primary justification for seeking approval for this speculative development which is outside of the BUBA and in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan, is that is addressing a housing need. This could not be further from the truth. It provides the wrong housing mix, out of character design at the wrong density and significant deliverability concerns.

7. Lack of Secondary School Provision in the Horsham area

With the approval of the 800 new dwellings at Horsham Golf Club, a letter from Cllr Jacquie Russell (WSCC) to Cllr Alex Jeffrey (HDC) dated 6th September 2025 states that: *"Without a Local Plan in place and the certainty of allocated sites this puts all authorities and service providers in a difficult position when planning and delivering services in the best location and in a timely manner. WSCC Education is now looking, in the absence of a Local Plan, to object to planning application in the area due to the lack of Secondary School places"*.

A school place monitoring exercise has been undertaken by WSCC and when the developments at Horsham Golf and Fitness Club, Lindfield Close, Warnham, Broadbridge Heath and Rusper are taken into account, there is an anticipated shortfall of secondary places in Horsham.

Without confirmation of a new secondary school within the area, this application should be refused as there simply won't be enough secondary school places available.

8. Lack of Consultation with UK Power Networks

The applicant has not provided evidence of any consultation with UK Power Networks on this proposal. Yet, it specifies that all proposed 68 houses will have electrically powered Air Source Heat Pumps which would constitute a significant draw on the power network. This is yet another example of how the applicant has not taken into consideration the rural nature of this location and that the power supply may not be adequate. As of the date of this letter, the 32 houses that make up the recent Sumners Fields development, require diesel generator back up for their power as the

local network cannot reliably supply these homes. How can it be assumed that the local supply would be sufficient for this further 68 houses with the increased draw of electrically powered heating.

It should also be noted that the in the Energy Statement provided by the applicant, they use the wrong postcode (GU9) for their wind power assessment. A further indication that they have failed to take into account the unique requirements of this particular site.

This proposal should not be given consideration by the council until UK Power Networks have clarified the available grid capacity to supply the proposed 68 houses.

9. Lack of sewage treatment works capacity

Horsham District Council's own committee reports document that in 2022 Barns Green experienced 43 sewage overflow events totalling 411 hours which equates to more than 17 days of raw sewage discharge. These were not isolated events and local residents continue to monitor and document them. These documented discharges of raw sewage contaminate local watercourses at times of heavy rainfall. This proposed development will compound this already unsanitary and polluting issue.

Southern Water's response to this application confirms that there is capacity for connection to 'manhole reference TQ12265901'. Unfortunately, this manhole reference is in Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey, not even in Sussex, let alone in Barns Green. It does not assess the downstream network capacity or the sewage treatment works ability to cope with the additional load, nor does it refer to the frequent sewage discharge events.

Southern Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan: Overview of the Adur and Ouse River Basin Catchment dated October 2022, specifies the Population Served by the Barns Green Water Treatment Works as being 1003. A letter from Southern Water to a local resident dated 9th April 2025 states that:

"with current estimates for daily usage per capita, the treatment works could support a population of roughly 1400 people before the dry weather flow would be over the consented limit."

If you take into account the recent Sumners Fields development plus Sumners Ponds Bluebell Park and tourist population, the estimated population is around 1390. The proposed development would increase that to in excess of 1550 significantly overwhelming the capacity of the exiting WTW and the consented limit of the dry weather flow.

The Water Industry Act gives developers the automatic right to connect to a sewer network, provided they have been given permission to build. Given the incomplete and mis-leading information provided by Southern Water with regards to this application, there should be no determination of this application until an accurate picture of the sewage network's capacity had been ascertained.

Barns Green Water Treatment Works is at capacity and frequently discharges raw sewage into water courses causing damaging pollution. The applicant has provided insufficient documentation, ignoring overflow events, providing no cumulative impact assessment and only considering the immediate connection point, which references the incorrect location.

10. Increased risk of flooding from surface water and other runoff

The applicant incorrectly states there is no evidence of flooding. Just last week we have experienced terrible flooding in the village with water entering buildings including the Village Shop that is opposite the proposed site. The flooding covered a wide area extending as far as Six Acres Close.

The proposed site currently plays a vital role in helping to reduce the amount of surface water runoff heading towards the road and properties opposite. The geology of the site is not just made up of Wealdon Clay, but also contains silt stone and lenses of sandstone and limestone which are permeable. Deep cracks in the clay that form in the summer allow the infiltration of water into the rocks below. The plants uptake water into their roots and also act to slow down the rate of water transfer. The flooding seen recently was exacerbated because the ground was already saturated. Any building of impermeable layers like roads, houses and hard-standings will make the amount of surface water run off worse and would be the equivalent of the ground being permanently saturated.

The drainage measures proposed by the developers will not guarantee the resolution of this flooding, particularly as their documentation denies any evidence of the existing flooding. The proposal also does not take into account the significant run off from fields above the site which will head straight into the proposed houses.

The consultant's Flood Risk Assessment report also incorrectly refers to the site being in the Arun catchment not the Adur and Ouse. This throws the entire credibility of the report into question. This means any sewage overflow during times of heavy rainfall goes into Parsons Brook and heads straight to the Knepp Wilding Estate and the Adur River and not to Southwater as suggested in the report. An increase of surface water run off into the water course, if it is unable to soak into the field, will increase the instances of sewage overflow.

Increased raw sewage pollution into Parsons Brook would threaten to put the Adur River Restoration Project at risk. Part of the Wilder Horsham District Initiative the project aims to '*restore nature, reduce flood risks, improve water quality and boost biodiversity in the River Adur area*', stretching '*from the Knepp estate to Shoreham, where the river meets the Sussex Bay restoration of the sea beds and kelp forests along the Sussex Coast*'. Sewage from this proposed development would add to overflows of untreated sewage from the WTW which would increase pollution and be detrimental to the aims of the Adur River Project, potentially putting the Sussex coast kelp forests at risk.

The proposed development will exacerbate existing flooding problems in the village from surface water run-off and increase the instances of sewage overflow into Parsons Brook causing damaging pollution.

11. Removal of Ancient Hedges, harm to Ancient Woodland and other habitat loss

The proposal includes the removal of the protected hedgerow that currently forms the boundary between the field and the road. The removal is to provide road access and widening along with the required clear site lines for safe traffic movement. This would be an unacceptable loss of an ancient and protected natural habitat; vital for wildlife.

The hedgerow not only hosts a wide range of wildlife but it is also integral to natural drainage management, acting as a buffer holding back the soil, preventing erosion and stopping it blocking drains. Under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 a 'strong presumption' exists in favour of protecting hedgerows that are 'important'. This hedge is an irreplaceable habitat and its destruction would result in a net loss of biodiversity that cannot be adequately compensated for by

new planting, breaching the Environmental Improvement Plan. The hedge provides a critical 'wildlife corridor' and its destruction would fragment the habitats of species including protected dormice, which are present. The hedgerow has Historic Landscape Value. Ancient hedges are part of the 'character of the English countryside' and this particular hedge is very much part of the character of the village. Its loss would impair the visual amenity and the historic landscape character of the village conflicting with local landscape character policies.

The western boundary of the site adjoins Ancient Semi Natural Woodland recorded on the ancient Woodland Inventory with reference ANCWO0122269. This is a protected and irreplaceable habitat. NPPF paragraph 186(c) states:

*"Development resulting in the loss or **deterioration** of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists."*

Natural England have confirmed that their Standing Advice on ancient woodland is 'a material consideration in determining applications'. The council must therefore apply their Standing Advice to this application. This application conflicts with the Standing Advice on several counts:

1. **Inadequate buffer zone** – the proposal only shows a 15m buffer zone however the Standing Advice states: *"Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone."* In this instance, Dormice are present, a European Protected Species, in the hedgerows connecting to the woodland. There will be significant recreational pressure with 68 homes (approx. 156+ residents plus guests and pets) on the woodlands edge. There are drainage sensitivities; changes to the surface water management could affect the hydrology of the woodland.
2. **Footpath through the buffer zone** - a surfaced, maintained footpath as a primary pedestrian route for 156+ residents is not a semi natural habitat. The Standing Advice clearly states: *"A buffer zone should consist of semi-natural habitats such as: woodland; a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland."* AND *"You should not approve development proposals, including gardens, within a buffer zone."*
3. Indirect effects will cause deterioration – the Standing Advice clearly identifies indirect effects that can cause deterioration of ancient woodland. All of which would occur if this development is allowed:
 - *"Increasing disturbance to wildlife from additional people and traffic"*. (68 houses plus 156+ residents plus 200+ daily vehicle movements).
 - *"Increasing damage to habitat from trampling"*. (Footpath through buffer zone, informal access beyond)
 - *"Increasing damaging activities like domestic pets."* (Cats preying on wildlife; dogs disturbing ground nesting birds and dormice).
 - *"Increasing light and air pollution."* (Street lighting, car emissions, changed drainage patterns).
4. No wholly exceptional reasons exist – this is a speculative development on an unallocated site. Through the Neighbourhood Plan the community has identified sites where housing can be delivered without harming Ancient Woodland. This site was deliberately excluded

This proposed development would destroy an ancient hedgerow and cause irreparable damage and deterioration to ancient woodland and should be refused.

To conclude, this is a speculative 'cut and paste' application that is not essential to the location, is full of inaccuracies, does not take into consideration the local history and character of the village, the impact on already overloaded power and sewage services, the local housing need, lack of public transport or the devastating affect this development would have on the environment including ancient hedgerow and ancient woodland. It contravenes the Countryside Policy and rides roughshod through a democratically made, legally binding Neighbourhood Plan.

For these reasons this application must be refused.

I request the full contents of this letter are placed before the Planning Committee.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.