

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 February 2026 13:35:41 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/25/2057
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 02/02/2026 1:35 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land North of Little Slaughterford Chapel Road Barns Green West Sussex
Proposal:	Proposed development of 68 dwellings with vehicular and pedestrian accesses, public open space, hard and soft landscaping and associated works including supporting foul and surface water drainage works, and works to existing culverted watercourse on site.
Case Officer:	Alice Johnson

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Customer Details

Address: Littlefields Trout Lane Barns Green

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 - Other - Overdevelopment - Privacy Light and Noise - Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

OBJECTION: Application DC/25/2057. Land north of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road, Barns Green 68 Dwellings - Miller Homes ("the Application").

I am writing to object to the application.

There has already been significant recent residential development within the village of Barns Green in addition to what is described as windfall developments (individual applications located within the pre-existing Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB)) which is clearly identified within the Horsham District Council (HDC) Local Plan.

That has included the Ash Mile development (which was made upon a green field site) and more recently the development of parts of the Sumners Field site. This was apparently regarded as a brown field site, presumably because agricultural land had previously been converted by way of use to being a holiday camp site. However the Sumners location was largely green fields in nature and has already significantly contributed to the erosion of the countryside and agriculture surrounding the centre of the village. It is notable that the Sumners field development being on the west side of Chapel Road, was outside of the BUAB and accordingly should be regarded as exceptional and not as a suitable precedent to allow development of further countryside or fields east of Chapel Road and which are essential to maintaining the character of the village.

Typically however, Miller Homes have no doubt been encouraged to raise their application on the basis that the location of the proposed development is close by, on the assumption that the planning committee might be more likely to disregard essential planning policies (as set out in the Local and Neighbourhood plans) which should, properly applied, safeguard that location from any such development and the village from such an unwarranted invasion and blight upon its character, amenity and resources (including in respect of water and electricity).

I recognise that there is a need over time to find locations for some new residences within the village area to meet local and national housing needs. However that has already been very carefully and extensively considered and provided for by and within the recent Neighbourhood plan (only made on 8 October 2025) which is accordingly very up to date and which identifies locations which are suitable for development, and which do not include the land which is the subject of the Miller Homes application (which land is also not allocated nor identified as suitable for development for any development within the HDC Local Plan).

There is "hopeful" and "speculative" reference within Miller Homes' Planning report to the concept of "the tilted balance", to suggest that, where the local authority and/or local residents

(through their contribution to the Neighbourhood Plan) have had difficulty in identifying sufficient locations for residential development to meet central government set targets proposed for a 5 year plan, that there should be an assumption in favour of granting permission for a "sustainable" development, provided that its adverse impact upon the local area does not significantly outweigh the advantage of providing additional new residential homes.

However, this may well be a misstatement and/or at least misapplication of the tilted balance principle for a number of clear reasons. These include (without limitation):-

- For a number of reasons (see below) the proposed development does not meet the requirements of a sustainable development (and therefore does not get to "first base").

- PPF paragraph 11(d)(i) makes clear that the tilted balance presumption doesn't apply where Framework policies indicate that development should be restricted - including for habitats sites (this requires HRA for water neutrality), irreplaceable habitats like ancient woodland (present on the boundary of the proposed development), and due to flood risk (documented locally).

- Para 14 of the PPF States that in situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and

- b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70).

Both of those necessary criteria apply.

- Miller Homes admits that its application conflicts with the Local Development Plan at paragraph 7.5 of their Planning Statement, in which it concedes that: "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." So the applicant accepts and admits that its application doesn't comply with the adopted Local Plan.

- See paragraphs 6.26- 6.27 of the HDC local plan which comments upon its countryside policy stating:- Strategic Policy 14: Countryside Protection 1.

Outside built-up area boundaries and secondary settlements, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to, and justify, its countryside location, and must meet one of the following criteria:

- a) Support the needs of agriculture or forestry
- b) Enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste;
- c) Provide for quiet informal recreational use;
- d) Enable the sustainable development of rural areas.

In addition, all proposals must be appropriately integrated within the landscape and be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, conserves, and seeks to enhance, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including; a) The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change; b) The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; c) The landform of the area; and d) The protection of dark skies, in particular where it may impact on a designated International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR), Neighbourhood Plan designations and High Weald AONB Management Plan objectives.

It is clear that the proposed development runs contrary to this key strategic policy and which is aimed precisely to prevent the dwindling rural village settlements of West Sussex/the Horsham area (of which category Barns Green is an extremely valuable and increasingly rare member) being ruined by what would constitute (when compared to Sumners Fields development) ribbon development which is destructive to the essential character of those settlements.

◦ I also draw attention to the Court of Appeal case of Gladman Developments Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government [2021] EWCA Civ 104 which upheld the authority of local planning, ruling that the "tilted balance" (NPPF §11dii, triggered by a lack of a 5-year housing supply) does (in any event) not automatically override the development plan. In that case the Court stated inter alia that:-

- the tilted balance is not a "trump card" and that the statutory primacy of the development plan remains.
 - Even if the tilted balance is engaged, development plan policies can still be weighed in the balance, and development can be refused if, for example, it is located in a protected area (like an AONB) or causes significant, demonstrable harm.
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Factors that militate against alleged Sustainability

Water Neutrality

The proposed development is to be located outside of settlement boundaries on an unallocated site on which basis the Sussex North water Certification scheme does not apparently apply and Habitats Regulations Assessment presumably accordingly fails. Sewage/Flooding.

In light of the significant and repeated sewage overflow events that have occurred in Barns Green (and precisely within the proposed area/location) in recent years it seems dubious that the existing infrastructure in Barns Green will have sufficient capacity to incorporate the proposed additional 68 homes, when added to the recently completed development at Sumner Ponds and other proposed areas for development identified in the Neighbourhood plan. Southern Water's report is currently still awaited and clearly must be obtained and thoroughly reviewed before any further consideration is given to the proposed application.

The introduction of 68 Houses and various garages and outbuildings as well as tarmac roads and parking will significantly increase the rain water running quickly off the proposed location and deprive the village centre of an area of field essential to soak up rain and prevent flooding. This will inevitably increase the risk and incidence of flooding in the village centre which has already sustained many flood occurrences particularly affecting the properties adjacent to Chapel road (including significantly the village shop).

Electricity

The proposed 68 homes are intended to use air source heat pumps - a source of a significant electrical load. I understand that the smaller Sumner Homes development already requires a back up diesel generator in order to obtain a sufficient electricity supply, because the local grid already is overloaded. A full review and report on how sufficient capacity can be provided (if it can) from UK networks is accordingly required in any event.

Transport

The local bus service is already wholly inadequate. The nearest local train station, Christs Hospital railway station, has limited parking and is only realistically accessible reliably by car. The proposed position of the development and its access road will cause major pressure on Chapel road and significantly reduce available parking for those wishing to visit the local shop and/or pub, which resources are already overloaded. The additional traffic will also no doubt significantly increase the pressure on the village's road system which is already under significant pressure

from those using Barns Green as a "rat run", particularly intensively during rush hour in the morning and late afternoon. All of this will also significantly contribute to damaging the character and peaceful nature of the village.

Ancient Woodland and wild life.

The development is far too near to ancient semi natural woodland and will also be damaging to wild life (including dormice which are reported to be present within the vicinity of the boundaries) as well.

Loss of amenity

The location of the proposed development has often and regularly been used as a venue for overflow parking and/or staging of village events such as the Barns Green half marathon and Classic car festival, both of which will be lost and/or significantly damaged and which events are essential to the life and character of the village and its community spirit.

The development also threatens the future continuation and use of both the Queens Head Pub and Village shop and Post Office, the owners of both of which key village resources are firmly opposed to the proposed development and consider their future use, existence and enjoyment to be threatened and/or at least significantly compromised by the proposed location of the proposed development.

Village character and heritage

The Neighbourhood Plan's Landscape Character Assessment - a document the applicant relies on - describes the fields north and west of the village as "important small pastoral fields" that "provide important green gaps that contribute to a settlement with rural character and provides a transition to the wider countryside." That's precisely what the subject field does. It's the green buffer between the village centre and open countryside. Building there would; destroy this green gap entirely -and substantially harm the setting of listed buildings situated close by, including including (very importantly); Little Slaughterford, Bennetts, and the Queen's Head all of which are contiguous to the proposed location. Their current unmolested location is essential to the character of the village and which landscape is unique and irreplaceable.

If this application were granted, the Village would lose the green gap that it currently enjoys on the east side of Chapel road and which links the village to the surrounding countryside and which would immeasurably change the landscape and character of the village. It would no doubt then more closely resemble the centre of Southwater which (with no intended disrespect to that settlement) which sadly has long since lost its original character as a result of

unbridled and unrestricted residential development in the centre of that former village.

I have always loved living in and visiting or arriving at Barns Green from any of the four points of the compass over the last 30-50 years (I have lived locally in the Horsham area for 45 years and in Barns Green for 26 years) which has until of late been a beautiful and tranquil country oasis separated from the ever urbanised surrounding districts and road systems. It used to remind me of the hidden village in Lorna Doone, or even the mythical village of Brigadoon. Residential development that paves over the fields surrounding the village centre will destroy that character completely and should be firmly resisted.

Cumulative Impact

The Village has already absorbed significant increase in housing to swell its population to currently in the region of 1400 -1500 people. The proposed development will presumably introduce in the region of 200 or more new residents to add to the those residents of the new Sumner Field Development (in the region of a further 100 or so?). That would indicate an increase of at least about 15-20% of the village in a very small period of time. This is when the number of holiday makers staying at Sumners Ponds holiday camp already significantly swells the capacity of the village including adding to the comings and goings of cars and caravans throughout the year and especially during the spring summer and autumn months.

In view of the above, "the tilted balance" that the applicant seeks to rely upon, even if it were capable of being applied and even if the development could reasonably be argued to be "sustainable", which I firmly deny, does not come anywhere near to overriding those adverse effects. Rather, the adverse impact of the proposed development clearly outweighs any benefit that granting permission for the proposed residential development in the proposed location would bring.

It is difficult to see how this application could reasonably or lawfully be permitted in light of these and many other very reasonable points of objection which have been made by concerned local residents and whose views (including as formally set out in the recent Neighbourhood Plan, should clearly be listened and adhered to.

I accordingly firmly object to this planning application which should be refused.

Yours sincerely

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



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