

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 March 2026 21:13:06 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0266
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 16/03/2026 9:13 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Thakeham Mushrooms Storrington Road Thakeham Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3DY
Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site to provide 150 dwellings, including affordable housing, land for the community land trust, works to public right of way and associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure.
Case Officer:	Sam Whitehouse

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: 37 Furze Common Road Thakeham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Overdevelopment - Privacy Light and Noise - Trees and Landscaping
Comments:	I object to this application on the grounds that it conflicts with national and local planning policy, repeats the issues that led to the refusal and appeal dismissal of the previous scheme, and

would place unsustainable pressure on Thakeham's limited rural infrastructure.

1. The Site Is Not Sustainably Located

WSCC Highways confirms that the development cannot provide safe, convenient or sustainable access, echoing the Planning Inspector's 2024 conclusion that the site "would not be sustainably located to minimise reliance on private vehicles." Key evidence includes:

- 85.8% of trips expected to be by car
 - 982 daily vehicle movements
 - Only one weekday bus service (74A/74B) and one weekly service (71)
 - Cycling unsafe due to narrow, constrained rural roads
 - Walking routes indirect, unlit and unsuitable for everyday travel
- These findings reflect long standing local concerns about the B2139 being over capacity, used as a commuter cut through, and unsafe for pedestrians. WSCC concludes the scheme fails NPPF para 115(a), HDPF Policy 40, and Local Plan Policy 24.

2. Air Quality and PM2.5 Requirements Not Met

HDC Environmental Health confirms that the Air Quality Assessment:

- incorrectly states no mitigation is required
- does not comply with the Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Sussex (2021)
- does not meet Defra's Interim PM2.5 Planning Guidance (2024)
- lacks construction traffic emissions data
- does not commit to required mitigation

3. Foul Drainage Capacity Is Inadequate

Southern Water confirms:

- the site lies within an Outer Groundwater Capture Zone
- the foul network has insufficient capacity, with risk of hydraulic overload

This demonstrates that the existing network cannot support the development.

4. Loss of Employment Land

HDC Economic Development states:

- "Enterprise do not support this application."
 - the proposal results in the permanent loss of commercial floorspace
 - the district has a limited supply of modern employment premises
- This conflicts with the Council's economic strategy and removes a rare opportunity for rural employment provision.

5. Ecological Sensitivity and Light Pollution

Previous local objections to nearby schemes have documented the presence of protected species in the area, including bats, barn owls, dormice and Great Crested Newts. The Thakeham Mushrooms site sits within a wider ecological corridor, and large

scale redevelopment risks further habitat fragmentation. Thakeham is also a low light rural environment close to the South Downs National Park. Introducing a large estate with street lighting would erode dark skies and negatively affect nocturnal species - a concern raised repeatedly in earlier applications.

6. Conflict with the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the strengths of the parish as its rural landscape, natural habitats, hedgerows, sunken lanes and countryside character. It states clearly that:

- new housing should be limited to small windfall sites within the built up area
- recent approvals already exceed local housing needs
- there is no justification for further significant development beyond settlement boundaries

A 150 home estate is fundamentally at odds with this adopted community strategy.

7. Character, Design and Cumulative Impact

In addition to the large Abingworth development, a further 28 homes have recently been approved to the north of High Bar Lane and 25 to the south of Furze Common Road, significantly increasing the scale of housing growth in a short period of time. When considered cumulatively, the addition of another 150 dwellings would represent a level of expansion far beyond what the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan considers appropriate for a small rural village. The cumulative impact on traffic, landscape character, dark skies, and local services is now substantial. Furthermore, the design of the proposed development is generic and suburban, repeating standardised house types seen in many recent estates. This approach does not reflect the distinctive rural vernacular of Thakeham, particularly the historic properties along The Street and the traditional Sussex architectural features that define the parish. As a result, the scheme would erode local character rather than reinforce it, contrary to the design principles of the NPPF and the Thakeham Neighbourhood Plan.

If new housing were ever considered appropriate on this site, modern, space efficient and genuinely innovative design would be far more welcome. Examples include underground or semi subterranean garages, flexible internal layouts, and energy efficient architectural forms that make better use of land without creating a sprawling suburban estate. These approaches would reduce visual impact, preserve more open space, and offer a more thoughtful response to the constraints of a rural setting.

8. The Application Does Not Address the Previous Appeal Decision

The Planning Inspectorate dismissed the previous appeal because the site is not sustainably located and residents would be highly reliant on private vehicles. WSCC confirms these issues remain unresolved.

9. More Appropriate Alternatives for the Site

I support regeneration of the site, but large scale housing is not the only option. Redundant mushroom farms and nurseries across the UK have been successfully repurposed into uses that generate local employment, reduce traffic and align with rural policy. Examples include:

- Rural employment hubs / small business units
- Modern food production / agri tech
- Wellbeing or outdoor education centres
- Artisan workshops and creative spaces
- Small scale, low density housing

These alternatives are more compatible with the site's rural location and avoid the unsustainable impacts identified by WSCC, Southern Water and Environmental Health.

10. If the Development Were Approved: Essential Mitigation

Should permission be granted, the following would be essential:

- Traffic calming on Storrington Road to prevent rat running
- Safe pedestrian crossings and reduced speed limits
- A funded, long term Demand Responsive Transport service
- Youth facilities such as a pump track, skate park or recreation space

Conclusion

This application fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF, the Horsham District Planning Framework and the emerging Local Plan. It does not address the reasons for the previous appeal dismissal and would place unsustainable pressure on the limited infrastructure of Thakeham.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Horsham District Council refuse this application.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk

