

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 02 April 2026 19:24
To: Planning
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 02/04/2026 7:24 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: the walled house the street Thakeham,

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	- Design - Highway Access and Parking - Other - Overdevelopment
Comments:	The Walled House The Street, Thakeham RH20 3EP 2nd April 2026 For the Attention of Sam Whitehouse By E-mail and Post

Dear Sir/Madam
Comments on Planning Application No. DC/26/0266 - Thakeham Mushrooms, Storrington Road, Thakeham, Pulborough RH20 3DY

I wish to object to this Planning Application on the following grounds: -

1) Overloaded of the Existing Sewage/Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure.

The sewage from this proposed development is likely to be treated at the Storrington Wastewater Treatment Plant located close to and discharging into the river Stor.

It is clear that Bellway from information contained in their first application for this site intend to seek up to 600 dwellings on the site. They drilled a borehole to augment the existing borehole provide for the mushroom farm before the initial Planning Application ref DC 23/2352.

The ability of the two boreholes together are confirmed by the consultant appointed by Bellway to be capable of serving 600 dwellings.

This current application should therefore be considered as an attempt to establish the principle of gaining P/P for dwellings on this site, followed by further applications for up to 600 dwellings. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority must assess the cumulative impact of the whole site's development potential when considering this application.

The Water Directive Framework and associated Regulations/Directions introduced standards for Phosphorus (Orthophosphates PO4 3-) in UK Rivers.

These standards are as follows: -

- High Ecological Value - Less than 0.077 ppm
- Good Ecological Status - Between 0.077 to 0.306 ppm
- Moderate/Poor - Greater than 0.306 ppm

A Citizen Science project being undertaken by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust has identified very high Phosphate readings downstream of the Storrington Wastewater Treatment Plant outfall, whilst upstream Phosphate readings in the river above the outfall show more normal Phosphate readings generally in the high & good ecological status bands (with a small number of exceptions).

The data collection started on the 31.01.2024 and is ongoing as of today's date.

Based on the citizen science project data we have prepared a table (which is attached) highlighting both the upstream and downstream phosphate levels. As can be seen the downstream phosphate levels are consistently very high.

The data suggests that the existing wastewater treatment plant on the Stor is already overloaded.

Southern Waters current 'Clean Rivers & Seas Plan' states the following for the Storrington Wastewater Treatment Plant [our highlighting in red and comments in italics] : -

Storrington Wastewater Treatment Works

Work status:

To be planned for after 2030

Regulatory deadline:

After 2030

Total estimated costs:

£4.05 million

What causes storm overflows here:

Too much rainwater getting into the sewers

Planned solutions:

We will implement a range of solutions which will likely include:

- Increased and optimised storage capacity.
- We estimate we need to manage approximately 2.1 hectares of impermeable land in the area. We'll work with partners to install sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in communities ranging from engineering solutions to planting trees and installing rain gardens. This will include installing at least 177 household water butts and similar solutions for businesses and public buildings.

[NB: Use of the word Likely suggests no firm plans have been formulated or agreed by SWA at this stage !]

Site of interest:

- No. (see note 1 below)

Average annual releases from overflow (2020-2021):

- We use data from 2020-2021 for average releases for regulatory reasons. (see Note 1 below).

[Note 1: We find this site of interest categorisation as very strange considering that the Stor flows into the Arun which adjoins, The Arun Valley Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar (designated wetland), and Pulborough Brooks SSSI. The Brooks are noted as being of outstanding importance for breeding and over-wintering bird communities nationally & internationally.

We have spoken to staff at The Brooks RSPB reserve, and they have confirmed that in the winter the Arun overflows its banks into the Brooks on a number of occasions bringing with it any pollution (including sewage) that may at that time be in the river. This possesses a significant risk to this SPA/SAC/Ramsar/SSSI site.

Southern Water identify above that too much rainwater entering the sewers is a big part of the problem and this will occur during the wettest time of the year ie the winter when the rivers will be at their peak. To solve this problem requires in part additional storage capacity to the Wastewater treatment Plant. (Planned AFTER 2030).

If we take into account the other SWA assets that also have wastewater outflows into the Arun close to The Brooks and have been shown to discharge high levels of untreated or partially treated sewage into the Arun in winter, such as Fittleworth/Pulborough & Bury, the chances of serious impacts on the wildlife in The Brooks is high.

In addition, according to SWA's own press releases (paraphrased) "This has been the wettest start to the year on record. Groundwater has been at extreme levels. With the ground being saturated and aquifers full, we have had to take extreme measure to protect homes & businesses with the use of 130 tankers across 30 sites being used".

Partially treated or untreated sewage releases can therefore be expected to have been high over this winter with river water levels very high as a result of the excessive rainfall. This only emphasises that The Brooks is at risk.

SWA Rainfall Statistics 2025/2026 (Dec to Feb)

Dec 25 - 97% of the annual average

Jan 26 - 215% of the annual average

February - 200% of the annual average

These statistics are startling, yet SWA state above that they use Average Annual Releases from Overflows during 2020 to 2021, to assess the upgrading works required to the Storrington Wastewater treatment Plant in order to meet regulatory requirements !

It is clear that Climate Change is making rainfall levels far more difficult to predict and SWA are not taking this into account if they use outdated data as a threshold for deciding what improvements to undertake.

Antibiotic Resistant E-Coli/Coliform Bacteria.

Recent research has highlighted that where sewage treatment plants are overwhelmed by ingress of rainwater to sewers due to high water tables in sub-soil & leaky pipes (or where the sewage treatment works is in need of upgrading) and discharges occur of sewage containing E-Coli and antibiotics into rivers, that antibiotic resistant E-Coli and other coliform bacteria are likely to arise.

The research also suggests that this problem is likely to be widespread and is a serious risk to human health and indeed wildlife.

Water Authorities are only required to test for E-Coli/other Coliform Bacteria in wastewater outflows to rivers & seas where there are designated bathing areas on the rivers or beaches. Other work by a Citizen Science project on The Rother and elsewhere (ie River Action Network) using Fluidion onsite sampling E-Coli testing kits have found high levels of E-Coli in rivers downstream from sewage outfalls.

Again, this should be factored in and considered a risk for The Brooks and the important wildlife using this protected site.]

2. Unsustainable Location, Car Dependency and Highway Impact

Thakeham's rural location, limited services and lack of public transport mean future residents would be heavily dependent on private cars, contrary to NPPF sustainability objectives and Active Travel England principles. Everyday needs cannot realistically be met without car ownership, as walking and cycling are unsafe and public transport is effectively absent. In

addition, the local road network is narrow, rural in nature and already congested at peak times, with poor maintenance and access focused on a single main route. Any increase in traffic would raise significant concerns regarding highway safety and capacity.

3. Highway safety- Pedestrian and cyclist safety etc.

The proposal would add to existing congestion from recent developments, and the applicant has not shown that the local highway network can safely support further growth, especially if later phases are also pursued as is suspected (as noted in reasons for objection 1 above). Concerns also remain about pedestrian, cyclist and emergency vehicle access. In addition, local GP services are already under strain, with limited appointments and long waits, and there is no clear evidence that extra healthcare capacity would be provided alongside the development.

4. Education

Local schools are already at capacity, and access from the site would rely on private vehicles due to their location, adding to peak time traffic congestion.

5. Cumulative Impact of Piecemeal Development of this Site.

Granting permission in phases without clarity on the site's full development risks undermining proper infrastructure planning and altering the character of the rural settlement beyond Local Plan intentions.

Incremental, piecemeal approvals should not proceed without a comprehensive masterplan. Local housing demand is already being met, with recent developments slow to sell, suggesting overdevelopment and limited local need. Therefore, any housing provided risks being occupied by people from outside the village. In addition continued expansion risks market imbalance and places unsustainable pressure on highways, infrastructure and community services.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above I object to this proposal.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted Signature]

Encs to follow by post

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**



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