From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 21 November 2026 22:32:33 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0530
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 21/11/2026 10:32 PM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land at Hornbrook Farm Brighton Road West Sussex
Proposal:	Outline planning application for up to 160 dwellings, open space and associated works and infrastructure with all matters reserved apart from access (revised 10.11.2026)
Case Officer:	Nicola Pettifer

Click for further information

Customer Details

Address:	4 Ghyll Crescent Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	TECHNICAL & COMMERCIAL SITE RISK BRIEF Hornbrook Farm, Horsham Planning reference: DC/26/0530 | Drawing referred to in the source brief: CSA/7416/108 | Focus: ground conditions, drainage and deliverable housing yield My assessment I do not believe the headline dwelling number should be taken at face value. The site has a combination of ground, groundwater, drainage and ecological constraints which could

have a material effect on the amount of land that can be developed and the cost of doing so.
I am not saying that the site cannot be developed. My concern is that the outline proposal has not, on the information summarised here, demonstrated that the stated yield can be achieved without substantial redesign, additional land take, abnormal construction costs or delay.
These matters are not separate problems. They interact. A drainage solution that is technically possible may still take land away from housing; a foundation solution may be possible but expensive; and ecological buffers or construction restrictions may further limit the layout.

1. Groundwater and drainage
The source material describes Weald Clay with very low matrix permeability, shallow winter groundwater reported at approximately 0.50-0.53 m below ground level, and shallow lateral groundwater movement towards Horn Brook. It also records seepage along the brook bank and rapid groundwater entry into shallow trial pits.
If these observations are representative of the site, they raise a serious question about the feasibility and reliability of infiltration-based drainage. Basins or other features set below the seasonal groundwater level may be affected by groundwater ingress, and the drainage design will need to account for that condition rather than assume the ground can absorb surface water.
The practical consequence is that drainage may require more land, shallower features, lined storage or engineered attenuation. Those options may be feasible, but they can increase cost and reduce the area available for housing.
The precise solution and its land take need to be demonstrated.

2. SuDS layout and net housing yield
The source brief identifies shallow basins, swales and 1:3 side slopes as potential requirements on sloping clay. It also questions whether the perimeter areas shown on the illustrative layout are wide enough to accommodate drainage features and their slopes.
This is a key issue for the proposed housing yield. The illustrative plan is not proof that the number of dwellings can be delivered once drainage, levels, access, open space and ecological constraints are resolved. If the drainage features have to spread out or move, plots may be displaced and the layout may need to be reduced or reworked.
I would expect the applicant to demonstrate this with a realistic drainage layout and a land-take calculation. Without that, the headline number remains an aspiration rather than a proven capacity.

3. Geotechnical conditions and abnormal costs
The source material refers to high-plasticity Weald Clay, shrink-

swell potential, difficult slope conditions and possible low-angle shear planes on the northern slope towards Horn Brook. These are matters that need to be addressed through appropriate ground investigation and engineering design. Depending on the actual ground conditions, foundations, retaining structures, slope stability measures and road construction may require more than standard solutions. The source brief also raises the possibility of sulfate-related ground chemistry affecting buried concrete. That should be confirmed by site-specific testing before a particular concrete design class or treatment is assumed.

The commercial point is straightforward: if these conditions are present, they may create abnormal costs across the development, not just at a few isolated plots. A prospective housebuilder would need to establish the extent and cost of those works before deciding what the land is worth.

4. Horn Brook, ecology and downstream drainage

I have supplied video evidence of brook lamprey in the tributary, and the source brief records other wildlife observations, including bats, owls and kingfishers. The presence of lamprey and other protected species needs to be properly considered in the ecological assessment and in the design of any works affecting the brook or its tributaries.

The brief also identifies the downstream outfall route as unresolved and describes Horn Brook as a hydraulic bottleneck, with flooding concerns in the Kerves Lane area. These issues need to be assessed together. It is not enough to show that water can be discharged from the site; the applicant must demonstrate that the proposed discharge and its route will not worsen flooding or create unacceptable effects downstream.

Riparian stand-off distances, lighting, pollution control and construction timing may all affect the layout or programme. The exact requirements must come from the relevant ecological and drainage assessments, but they cannot simply be treated as incidental details.

5. What this means for a prospective housebuilder

The outline application leaves important matters to a later stage. That does not remove the risk; it transfers much of the detailed design and cost uncertainty to the stage when the land is being acquired and the reserved matters are prepared.

Before relying on the stated dwelling yield, a purchaser should establish:

- whether the groundwater observations represent the site and seasonal conditions;
- whether the drainage strategy can be accommodated without materially reducing the developable area;
- what ground investigation says about foundations, slope stability

and buried concrete;
- whether the access, drainage outfall and downstream effects have been fully resolved;
- what ecological constraints and construction requirements apply along Horn Brook;
- and whether the resulting layout still supports the proposed number of homes at an acceptable cost.

6. Conclusion
The concern is not that every constraint is insurmountable. It is that the combined effect of these constraints may be substantial, and the current headline figure does not by itself demonstrate a viable scheme.
A housebuilder considering this site should not assume that the stated number of dwellings will be achieved, or that the costs of doing so will be ordinary. Groundwater, drainage land take, slope conditions, ecological requirements and unresolved outfall matters could all affect the residual land value.
In my view, the site requires a proper technical and commercial appraisal before its development capacity can be treated as established. Until that work is done, there is a real risk that the housing yield is overstated and that significant abnormal costs and programme risks remain unresolved.
Important qualification: This brief is based on the technical points and measurements stated in the source brief. Before external circulation, each measured value and engineering conclusion should be checked against the original investigation reports, drawings and consultation documents. The source brief refers to up to 180 dwellings; later application material has also referred to 160. The dwelling figure and drawing revision should be confirmed against the version being assessed.
Hornbrook Farm - Technical & Commercial Site Risk Brief

Kind regards

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Horsham District Council

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