

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk
Sent: 24 March 2026 15:26
To: Planning
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0366

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 24/03/2026 3:25 PM.

Application Summary

Address: Land North West of Southwater

Proposal: Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for primary access to the highway) for a phased development comprising: the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Classes C2 and C3); a mixed-use neighbourhood centre (Use Classes E and F); education facilities (Use Class F1(a)); business and employment floorspace (Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g)); redevelopment of existing agricultural buildings including construction of a building for community use (Use Classes E and F2); improvements to public rights of way; sports pitches; gypsy and traveller pitches/plots; public open space; landscaping, and associated infrastructure.

Case Officer: Matthew Porter

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: Braclea New Road Southwater Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

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: Overdevelopment. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater. Southwater residents voted in a democratic referendum in

June 2021 to approve a Neighbourhood Plan that set a clear and legally binding limit on new housing in the village (between 420 and 460 homes). That was agreed through a proper community-led process. Berkeley Homes is now proposing more than double that number (1,000 homes). This is not just slightly more but it is a 117% breach of the limit that we as residents set. National planning rules state clearly that where a proposal conflicts with the current and in-date Neighbourhood Plan, planning permission should not usually be granted. The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) is recent, legally adopted, and carries full weight. Berkeley Homes has provided no independent evidence to justify overriding a community plan that was voted for by local people just five years ago. Housing planners may state that the plan is "out of date" being 5 years old but an online petition against this proposal has already attracted over 3400 signatures and demonstrates that community sentiment back in 2021 is still current. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused because it directly and fundamentally conflicts with the adopted Southwater Neighbourhood Plan on the number of homes allowed. In addition, the SNP contains a specific and clear policy: Southwater must remain a single-centre village, with its shops, services and facilities focused around Lintott Square. This is not a minor preference; it is a core planning principle that we voted to adopt. Berkeley Homes' proposal includes a large new cluster of shops, community facilities, a primary school, and other services on the western edge of the village, therefore effectively creating a second village centre. This would split the village in two, diverting activity away from the existing centre and changing the fundamental character of Southwater. The proposal fails to consolidate the existing settlement of Southwater and would effectively create a split two-neighbourhood settlement instead of a coherent community. The proposal also extends development well beyond the village boundaries set in the SNP. Much of the proposed site is on land that the Plan specifically identifies as outside the permitted development area. A previous Berkeley Homes application for 1,500 homes on the same site (reference DC/22/1916) was withdrawn in February 2023 after Horsham District Council planning officers concluded it was unacceptable. These fundamental concerns have not been resolved; they have simply been repackaged. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused because it violates Neighbourhood Plan policy SNP1.1(a) by creating a second village centre and extends beyond the village boundaries set in the adopted plan. Neighbourhood planning exists to give communities a genuine say over where and how their village grows. Southwater residents invested significant time and effort in creating a plan that was put to a referendum and passed in June 2021. That is the strongest form of community consent available under the planning system. In December 2025, Southwater Parish Council held an extraordinary meeting and voted to begin a full review of the Neighbourhood Plan - in part because of the pressure being applied by this very proposal. That review is now underway and represents the proper democratic process for deciding Southwater's future. If Berkeley Homes is permitted to build 1,000 homes before that review is complete, the Neighbourhood Plan's housing limit is rendered completely pointless. It would send a clear message to every community in England that spending years producing a Neighbourhood Plan means nothing if a large developer simply lobbies hard enough. No material planning evidence has been put forward by Berkeley Homes or Horsham District Council to justify why the community's own plan should be overridden and clearly does not satisfy the social and housing needs of the local community. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused, or at minimum deferred until the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan review is complete, so that the community's democratic voice is properly respected. I object further on the grounds that the site cannot be safely drained. The entire site sits on Weald Clay (a soil type officially classified by the Environment Agency as having almost no ability to absorb water). This is the fundamental hydrological character of this land. It is not a marginal issue that can be engineered away. On Weald Clay, standard drainage solutions; soakaways, permeable paving, infiltration trenches, simply do not work. Berkeley Homes would have to rely entirely on large above-ground storage ponds, underground tanks, and carefully managed outflows to local streams and ditches. At the scale of 1,000 homes, with thousands of roofs, roads and driveways replacing farmland, this is an enormous engineering challenge. Planning rules now require drainage systems to cope with a 40% increase in rainfall intensity to account for climate change. It appears that Berkeley Homes has not provided an independently verified drainage strategy that proves this is achievable. Gardens on the Blakes Farm estate nearby have flooded repeatedly over many years demonstrating direct evidence of what happens when this clay soil is built over without adequate drainage. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until an independent, specialist drainage engineer - with specific Weald Clay experience - has verified that flooding risk will not increase for existing residents or downstream watercourses. This overdevelopment will affect me directly

as a Southwater resident because I took part in the SNP process as I feel strongly about how my village is protected from overdevelopment for the sake of the community.

Trees and Landscaping. Loss of General Amenity. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the wildlife impact surveys are incomplete, and Berkeley Homes is seeking to carry them out after approval rather than before, which is not permitted. Planning law is clear: the impact on protected wildlife must be properly assessed before planning permission can be granted. It cannot be deferred to a later stage. This is not a technicality, it is a fundamental safeguard designed to prevent irreversible harm to wildlife being done first and assessed second. There is established evidence of [REDACTED] wildlife using foraging routes across this land that have existed for generations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The disruption caused by a 1,000-home development to these routes and habitats has not been adequately assessed. Berkeley Homes has argued that full surveys should wait until after the allocation is confirmed. This approach is legally improper and should be rejected. It is designed to avoid scrutiny at the stage when it is most meaningful. The scale of wildlife using this land, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has not been assessed in any rigorous, independent way. This is a significant and unresolved gap in the evidence base. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until fully independent, comprehensive wildlife surveys covering the entire site have been completed, published, and independently assessed. In addition, I am objecting because the drainage works required could permanently damage two areas of ancient woodland. Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse, lie immediately alongside the proposed development site. Both are designated ancient woodlands; habitats that have been continuously wooded for over 400 years and are considered irreplaceable under national planning law. Once damaged, ancient woodland cannot be restored. The threat is not just from bulldozers entering the woodland directly. Large-scale drainage engineering on Weald Clay can lower or alter groundwater levels across a wide surrounding area. Ancient woodland trees have root systems extending far beyond the woodland boundary, and changes to soil moisture caused by attenuation ponds and drainage channels nearby can kill these trees silently over years, without any direct physical contact. This is a well-evidenced, recognised risk, yet Berkeley Homes has not submitted any independent hydrological assessment of the impact their drainage works would have on these woodlands. A developer's own consultant assessment is not sufficient for something this serious and irreversible. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a fully independent, peer-reviewed hydrological impact assessment on Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse has been completed and published for public scrutiny.' As a Southwater resident, this affects me directly because the existing landscaping of the village will be under threat by the planned application. I feel very strongly about protecting this ancient woodland and the wildlife that lives there.

Other. Flooding. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the development will increase surface water flooding that already affects existing residents. The 141-hectare site is currently farmland. Farmland, even on clay, slows the movement of rainwater into local streams and ditches. Once it is replaced with 1,000 homes' worth of roofs, roads, driveways, pavements and car parks, the volume of rainwater running off the site into local watercourses will increase dramatically; and it will arrive faster. The scale of attenuation required to manage this runoff is substantial. The roofs alone (at 50m² per home across 1,000 properties and a rainfall of 0.75m) would generate enough water to require 7.5 hectares of child-safe attenuation area (defined as no more than 50cm water depth). Once anticipated climate change factors are applied, that figure rises to 10.5 hectares. This is an enormous land take within the development, and there is no evidence that Berkeley Homes has adequately planned for it. Local streams and drainage channels in this area already overflow during heavy rain. Residents already experience waterlogged gardens and flooded access routes after storms. Adding the runoff from 141 hectares of new hard surfaces (however it is managed by attenuation ponds) creates a real and material risk of making this significantly worse. Climate change is making extreme rainfall events more frequent and more intense. The drainage system for this development must be designed for the worst case, not average conditions. There is no evidence that Berkeley Homes has done this. If flooding increases after the development is built, there is no remedy available to affected residents. The damage is permanent. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that it poses an unacceptable and unmitigated risk of increasing flood risk to existing Southwater residents and properties. As a Southwater resident, this affects me directly because my garden and drainage ditches have

been full to overflowing during the winter months after prolonged rainfall, with excess running down the road. This has been more noticeable over the last few years. 1000 more homes would therefore cause further flooding problems for me directly.

Other. Infrastructure. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because no proper assessment has been made of the combined impact of all the growth Southwater is already absorbing. Southwater is not starting from zero. Approximately 350 homes are already under construction at Broadacres. Around 800 more have planning permission at the Horsham Golf Club site. That is already around 1,150 new homes committed before Berkeley Homes has started with this new application. Adding 1,000 more houses brings the total to over 2,150 new homes; more than doubling the number of households in a village whose roads, schools, doctors' surgeries and sewage system were not built to cope with growth at this scale. No one has carried out an assessment of what all this growth means for Southwater's infrastructure together. Berkeley Homes has assessed only its own proposal in isolation; ignoring the 1,150 homes already in the pipeline. That approach is unacceptable. The timescale of this development compounds the problem further. At Berkeley Homes' known build-out rate of 50-60 homes per year, and with a further estimated 200 units yet to be built elsewhere, construction on this site would extend over 20 years. A planning authority is only legally obliged to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply; yet approving this application would effectively hand a single developer a 20-year land supply in this location. Locking up this land for two decades since one developer's build-out capacity is not a sound or proportionate use of the planning system. When Berkeley Homes applied for 1,500 homes on this same site in 2022, Horsham planning officers concluded the cumulative infrastructure impact was one of the key reasons the application was unacceptable. That application was withdrawn in February 2023. The infrastructure position has got worse since then, not better; yet Berkeley Homes is now asking for 1,000 homes with no better evidence. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a full, independent cumulative infrastructure assessment covering all committed and proposed Southwater development has been completed and published. In addition, I am objecting on the grounds that NHS and healthcare infrastructure is already overwhelmed, and no plan exists to expand it. Anyone who lives in Southwater knows how hard it is to get a GP appointment. The surgeries serving the village are already under serious pressure from the population that is already here, let alone the 1,150 new homes already approved and under construction. The situation is not simply one of physical capacity: the local surgery appears to have room to accommodate additional GPs but is currently unable to recruit them. Approving 1,000 more homes does nothing to solve a staffing crisis that the NHS itself has not been able to resolve. Access to NHS dentistry in the area is also severely constrained, with many residents unable to register with any NHS dentist at all. Southwater is also geographically isolated from the main hospitals. As a result, ambulance response times for our area are among the worst in the whole of Sussex. Adding over 2,000 more homes will put even greater pressure on emergency response capacity. NHS England has not confirmed that primary healthcare capacity exists or can be funded to serve the additional population from Berkeley Homes' proposal. There is no costed legally secured plan for a new GP surgery or expansion of existing facilities. 'We will work with the NHS to address this' is not a plan - it is a hope. Previous large Southwater developments came with promises of community infrastructure that did not materialise on time, or at all. Residents have already been let down once. Approving 1,000 more homes based on promises is not acceptable. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until NHS England has formally confirmed that funded, deliverable primary healthcare provision exists to serve the combined population increase from all committed Southwater developments. This directly affects me as a Southwater resident because I had the misfortune to be at East Surrey Accident & Emergency Department in February 2026 following a head injury. On a Wednesday evening, I spent 9 hours in the department. An increase in housing will most definitely put more pressure on our valuable NHS services and this is not acceptable. In addition, I have not been able to secure a same day appointment following my accident at my GP practice because they do not have any available appointments. In addition, I am objecting on the grounds that water scarcity is a real, unresolved infrastructure constraint and the removal of the formal water neutrality planning condition has not changed the physical facts on the ground. In October 2025, Horsham District Council announced that the 'water neutrality' requirement (which had paused large housing developments in this area for several years) had been lifted. This has been used to suggest the water supply problem is solved. It is not. Removing a planning rule does not create more water. It simply removes the formal mechanism that required the problem to be addressed before building proceeded. The Sussex North Water Supply Zone, which serves

Southwater, is a designated water-stressed area. Southern Water has itself confirmed that cumulative housing growth in this zone creates risks to its ability to sustainably manage groundwater abstraction at Hardham. The physical constraint has not gone away, it has been administratively set aside. The 2025 drought was the worst in over 130 years. Hosepipe bans were imposed. The Environment Agency confirmed England needed a full winter of above-average rainfall to recover, which did not happen. England already faces a projected water deficit of nearly 5 billion litres per day by 2050, with Sussex among the worst-affected regions. We also have direct local evidence that the water supply for Southwater is already under strain. Residents on the recently built Berkeley Homes Broadacres estate (a development on the same side of the village) have had to remove water-saving flow restrictors from their taps and showers because they were not getting enough water pressure or volume for basic daily needs. This is happening now, before 1,000 more homes are added. In addition, Horsham District Council's own water demand monitoring is misaligned with Southern Water's published consumption figures by 21%. This means the official planning calculations used to argue that water supply is adequate are themselves unreliable. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until an independent hydrogeological assessment (not a Southern Water self-assessment) has confirmed that potable water supply in the SussexNorth Water Supply Zone is sufficient and sustainable for 1,000 additional Southwater homes across all weather conditions, including drought years. This affects me directly as a Southwater resident as I have experienced reduced water pressure to my property on several occasions over the last few years.

Highway Access and Parking & Infrastructure. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because the local road network is already at breaking point and this development will enhance the problem. The A24, which is the only realistic route in and out of Southwater for most journeys, is already at or beyond capacity at peak times. This is not residents' opinion, it is confirmed in Horsham District Council's own evidence base. The Hop Oast roundabout, which would be one of the main access points for the Berkeley Homes development, is already at capacity according to the Council's own figures and this is before a single Berkeley Homes home is built. Adding 1,000 new homes, alongside the 800 already approved at the Horsham Golf Club site, would bring 1,800 new car-dependent households through this single junction. Adding 1000 homes will increase car dependency and increase the number of cars on local roads by approximately 1500 in the village which will add to the traffic attracted to the village for school drop off and pickup from villages outside Southwater. The problem will not simply be an increase of traffic due to houses but also due to the new school being promoted as part of the proposal. When Berkeley Homes previously applied for 1,500 homes on the same site, West Sussex County Council Highways raised serious unresolved objections on traffic grounds. The application was withdrawn. Those concerns were never resolved and the traffic position has deteriorated since then. Adding traffic signals or road markings to an already-overloaded junction does not solve the problem. It delays it and makes it slightly more orderly. The underlying capacity is still exhausted and would create traffic bottlenecks within the village and on the A24 resulting in gridlock for new and existing residents. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that the A24 corridor and local road network cannot accommodate the traffic it would generate, and no viable mitigation has been demonstrated. As a Southwater resident, this affects me directly because it already takes me an additional 10 minutes to be able to exit my road in the mornings for work, due to the extra cars created by the existing Broadacres estate, compared to when I moved to the village in 2010. Furthermore, I am objecting because this application is one of the worst possible locations for large-scale housing in terms of car dependency. Southwater has no railway station. Christ's Hospital station (the nearest) is remote from the village, served by infrequent trains and has no meaningful car parking. The bus service is sparse and does not serve newer housing estates. There is no viable cycling or walking route across the A24 dual carriageway or the railway line that separates Southwater from Horsham town centre and the district's main employment areas. The result is that every new Southwater resident will need a car for virtually every significant journey. This is not a lifestyle choice, it is a geographical fact. HDC's own Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2020) confirms that the A24 and railway are hard physical barriers that cannot realistically be crossed on foot or by bike. Southwater has very limited employment of its own. People who move here for work will commute by car, adding daily vehicle movements to roads that are already at capacity. This is the opposite of the sustainable development that planning rules require. The question of where new residents will look for services and schools deserve scrutiny. Berkeley Homes' supporting documents suggest a school linkage with the Horsham Golf Club development, but this connection has

not been made sufficiently clear by the applicant. It is also unclear whether the Golf Club development is looking to Southwater more broadly for other services and infrastructure, or whether, in practice, residents of both developments will look to Horsham for schools, healthcare and employment rather than to Southwater at all. If the latter is the case, it further undermines the case for locating large-scale development here: new residents will not be served by Southwater's limited facilities, they will simply add to the traffic burden on routes into Horsham. Berkeley Homes' proposal includes aspirational commitments to bus services and cycle routes, but these are not funded, not contracted, and not enforceable. Aspirations are not infrastructure. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that the site is inherently car-dependent by geography, with no credible prospect of genuinely sustainable travel alternatives being delivered. I would like to add that the traffic assessment for the proposed secondary school is seriously flawed and creates a real child safety risk. Berkeley Homes' transport assessment claims the new secondary school would generate very little additional traffic, arguing that most pupils will walk or cycle. This conclusion is not credible. A new secondary school south of Horsham would attract pupils from across a wide area, including from the 800 homes already approved at the Horsham Golf Club site. However, the A24 dual carriageway lies between the Golf Club development and the proposed school. The A24 is a highspeed, high-volume trunk road. There is no safe pedestrian or cycle crossing at a suitable point for school-age children. Without a safe crossing, the assessment's walking and cycling projections for school trips are worthless. Children who try to cross the A24 at an informal or unsignalized point are at serious risk of a road accident. This is not a detail to be sorted out at a later stage; it is a fundamental safety constraint that must be resolved before planning permission is granted. The only adequate solution is a grade-separated crossing; either an underpass or a footbridge. This is expensive infrastructure that Berkeley Homes has not committed to fund, design or deliver. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Berkeley Homes has committed in writing to fund and deliver a fully safe, grade-separated pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A24 as a condition of any permission.

Loss of General Amenity. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the legal requirement for a 10% biodiversity gain has not been credibly demonstrated. Since 2024 all major planning applications must achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity as a legal condition of planning permission. This is not optional. Berkeley Homes must demonstrate before permission is granted, that biodiversity will measurably increase because of this development. On a Weald Clay site, achieving meaningful biodiversity gain on the development site itself is particularly difficult. The ground conditions that cause drainage problems also limit the types of habitats that can be successfully created. Furthermore, the land taken up by attenuation ponds and drainage infrastructure reduces the space available for genuine habitat. There is a serious risk that Berkeley Homes will seek to meet the 10% requirement by purchasing 'biodiversity credits' relating to habitat improvements somewhere entirely different, potentially far from Southwater. This would mean the local area around the development ends up as an ecological desert, while the paperwork shows a net gain on a distant field. Southwater residents deserve to know whether the biodiversity gain required by law will be delivered in or near the development, where people living there can see and benefit from it. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a credible, independently verified biodiversity net gain strategy is submitted that demonstrates genuine local ecological improvement (not remote offsetting). I chose to live in Southwater 16 years ago because of the green spaces and wildlife and natural landscape. As this directly affects me in the fields next to my property, I will suffer more noise and loss of privacy and dark skies. I feel strongly that we need to retain these natural settings as much as we can for our long-term positive mental health. I benefit from the open spaces behind my property which support my positive mental health.

Design. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because at this scale, it does not extend the village, it fundamentally transforms it. Southwater is a village. That is what it is and what residents chose to live in. The open farmland to the northwest (141 hectares) the equivalent of roughly 200 football pitches, currently forms a natural transition between the village edge and the open Low Weald countryside. Once it is built over, that countryside is gone permanently. A development of 1,000 homes is not a modest expansion. Combined with the 800 homes already approved at the Golf Club site and 350 at Broadacres, Southwater would be adding more than 2,000 homes in a single generation. That transforms a large village into a small town - irreversibly. The scale of this proposed development vastly exceeds anything Southwater was designed to

absorb. It is not an extension of an existing settlement; it is being dumped on top of one. The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan, voted for by residents, specifically requires that development avoids coalescence with neighbouring settlements and respects the existing landscape character of the village. This proposal does the opposite. Berkeley Homes has not demonstrated that it has engaged seriously with any design framework governing how growth should be integrated into Southwater. It is unclear whether the applicant has referenced Horsham District Council's design guidance, any settlement-specific design guide, or the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan's own design principles. HDC should satisfy itself that such a framework exists and that Berkeley Homes has been required to demonstrate compliance with it. Without that, there is a real risk that this development degrades the character and coherence of the settlement rather than adding to it. No combined landscape assessment has been carried out looking at the Berkeley Homes proposal alongside the Golf Club site and Broadacres development together. The cumulative visual impact on Southwater, and on the risk of coalescence with neighbouring settlements, has never been honestly assessed. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that it will cause permanent and unacceptable harm to the landscape character and rural setting of Southwater village. To add further, the homes described as 'affordable' are not affordable to the people who live and work in Southwater. In the planning system, 'affordable housing' means homes priced at up to 80% of the open market value. In Southwater, where the median house price is approximately [REDACTED], that means an 'affordable' home would cost around [REDACTED]. Berkeley Homes does not appear to be proposing any social rented housing at all - only affordable homes to buy. Yet 80% of market value is unaffordable to most people on local wages, making the distinction between 'affordable to buy' and 'market price' largely meaningless in practice. The median wage for people in this area is approximately [REDACTED]. A person on that salary can borrow approximately [REDACTED] on a standard mortgage. That is less than half the price of an 'affordable' home. This is not affordable. Calling it affordable does not make it affordable. The gap between local wages and local house prices is so wide that the standard definition of 'affordable housing' is essentially meaningless in this part of West Sussex. Horsham District Council's policy requires 40% of homes in major developments to be genuinely affordable - 70% as affordable rent and 30% as shared ownership. Berkeley Homes must demonstrate, with independent evidence, that it will deliver this in a form that local people can genuinely access. Crucially, Berkeley Homes has not demonstrated that any registered provider has committed to taking on the affordable housing element of this development. Without that commitment, the affordable housing offer is unverified and cannot be relied upon. Where housing is intended to accommodate residents displaced from other municipalities, it is essential that those homes are in places with good access to employment, schools, services and public transport. Southwater currently lacks all of these at the scale this development would demand. Placing displaced residents in a location where they cannot access work, education or services without a car does not constitute a housing solution - it creates a dormitory settlement. That would represent a serious failure of planning policy and an unacceptable outcome for the people placed there. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Berkeley Homes demonstrates, with independently verified evidence, that the affordable homes proposed will be genuinely accessible to people on local average wages in Southwater. In addition, no genuine, independently demonstrated local housing need for 1,000 homes in this specific village has been established. Planning rules require that housing development addresses real, locally identified need, not simply that it adds to a district-wide number. The question is not 'does Horsham District need housing?' of course it does. The question is: 'is there genuine evidence that Southwater specifically needs 1,000 more homes, over and above the 1,150 already committed?' The honest answer is no. Much of the housing pressure in this part of West Sussex originates from Gatwick Airport's workforce, Crawley reaching its boundaries, and coastal towns to the south. These are pressures generated elsewhere and should be addressed near where they arise, not transferred to a village with limited employment of its own. Horsham's own economic strategy identifies North Horsham and the Gatwick Diamond as the primary employment and growth corridors, not Southwater. Building 1,000 homes in Southwater does not put people near jobs, it creates a commuter dormitory served by a congested A-road. Berkeley Homes owns this land. That is why it is promoting this site. Land ownership is not the same as planning justification. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Horsham District Council and Berkeley Homes have published transparent, independently reviewed evidence that genuine local housing need for 1,000 homes in Southwater (not in Horsham District generally) has been established.

Other. Water Scarcity. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes

northwest of Southwater on the grounds that the water supply infrastructure for this area cannot reliably support this level of additional demand. The summer of 2025 was the hottest since weather records began in 1884. The preceding spring was the driest in 132 years. Hosepipe bans were imposed across the region. The Environment Agency confirmed in October 2025 that England needed at least 100% of average winter rainfall just to recover from drought and that rainfall did not materialise at the required levels. Sussex is among the parts of England where water stress is already most acute. The Environment Agency projects a national water deficit of nearly 5 billion litres per day by 2050. This is not a future forecast that planners can choose to ignore, it is a present reality that is getting worse year by year. The basis on which Horsham District Council is monitoring water demand capacity is itself fundamentally flawed, and this materially undermines any assurance that supply infrastructure can accommodate this development. HDC's Planning Policy Team Leader has confirmed that the Council uses an assumed consumption figure of 110 litres per person per day (lpppd) described as being in line with Building Regulations for a water-stressed area. That figure is not a current consumption measure. It is an aspirational target set by the Environment Agency for achievement by 2050. Using it as a monitoring baseline is a methodological error, not a pragmatic approximation. Southern Water's own published data for April 2025 to March 2026 records actual average consumption as follows: 232 litres per day for single occupancy households; 301 litres per day for dual occupancy households; and approximately 335 litres per day for an average 2.5-person household. HDC's assumption of 110 lpppd equates to approximately 275 litres per day for a 2.5- person household - a discrepancy of approximately 60 litres per household per day, representing an underestimate of around 21%. A sample survey of actual consumption at the nearby Broadacres new-build development, properties fitted with water-efficient fittings, recorded average consumption of approximately 200 lpppd, nearly double the Council's monitoring assumption. This error was raised explicitly with HDC, supported by Southern Water's own published data. Despite being informed that its methodology is in error by approximately 21%, the Council has confirmed it intends to continue using this figure. Save Rural Southwater has raised this failure as a formal maladministration complaint. The Council is therefore on notice that its monitoring methodology is not only technically wrong but is the subject of an active formal complaint, and yet it continues to use that methodology as the basis for approving major new development. The 31 practical consequence is that HDC risks approving a volume of development that will exceed Southern Water's actual supply capacity, resulting in water shortages for existing and future residents alike. Berkeley Homes' own application contains no credible water supply strategy. There is no assessment of cumulative demand from the 1,150 homes already committed in Southwater alongside the 1,000 proposed. There is no independently verified analysis of whether Southern Water's network - already under stress in dry years, has the headroom to serve this additional population. There is no contingency for the worsening drought conditions that the Environment Agency has already identified as a structural trend. The application simply assumes that water will be available. That assumption is not evidence, and in a formally designated water-stressed area it is not an acceptable basis for granting planning permission. Southern Water imposed hosepipe bans in 2025. It cannot currently guarantee supply reliability to its existing customers in dry years. Adding 1,000 new homes, on top of the 1,150 already committed in Southwater, without a confirmed, independently verified supply strategy is not acceptable. Removing the formal water neutrality planning condition in October 2025 removed a legal mechanism, it did not solve the physical water supply problem. The drought is real. The shortage is real. I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until Southern Water has provided a formal, independently verified confirmation that water supply can reliably serve 1,000 additional homes in Southwater - including during drought years.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**



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