

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 April 2026 12:18:30 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
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 08/04/2026 12:18 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 up to 1,000 residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Class C3); up to 80 specialist accommodation units (Use Class C2); 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

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Customer Details

Address: 8 Warren Drive Southwater

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments: As a 10 years plus resident of the village of Southwater - I strongly object to this proposal on a number of grounds:

Mostly being traffic, the local plan, over development, lack of infrastructure, lack of services and the fact that there are multiple half finished sites around locally that need completing prior to any future developments are even considered. Horsham golf club is going which is around 0.3 miles from this site do we really need even more? I doubt it assuming Berkeley struggled to sell what they had in Southwater before..

DO NOT APPROVE THIS...

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 a slight overshoot. It is a 117% breach of the limit that residents themselves set.

National planning rules state clearly that where a proposal conflicts with the current and in-date Neighbourhood Plan, planning permission should not normally be granted. The Southwater

Neighbourhood Plan 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 3000 signatories so the 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.

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater.

The Southwater Neighbourhood Plan contains a specific and clear policy: Southwater must remain a single-centre village, with its shops, services and facilities focused around Lintot Square. This is not a minor preference - it is a core planning principle that residents 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 - 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

Neighbourhood Plan. 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.

Sub-Objection 4A: The A24 and local road network are already at capacity - adding 1,000

homes makes it unworkable

A24 status: Already at or beyond capacity at peak times - confirmed in HDC's own evidence base

Hop Oast roundabout: Already recorded at capacity by HDC - without any Berkeley Homes homes being built

Combined pressure: 800 homes at Golf Club site (already approved) + 1,000 Berkeley Homes =

1,800 new homes all feeding the same junction

Previous objection: West Sussex County Council Highways raised unresolved objections on traffic

grounds to Berkeley Homes' previous 1,500-home application

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 make it far worse.

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 got worse 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.

Sub-Objection 4B: Southwater is a car-dependent location - every new resident will need a car for every journey

Sub-Objection 5A: Two areas of irreplaceable ancient woodland are immediately adjacent and at direct risk

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because it poses a serious risk to two irreplaceable areas of ancient woodland.

Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse sit immediately alongside the proposed development site. Both are designated ancient woodlands - habitats that have existed continuously for over 400 years.

Under national planning law, ancient woodland has near-absolute protection. It cannot be recreated. It cannot be compensated for by planting trees elsewhere. Once damaged, it is gone.

The risk is not limited to direct physical encroachment. The massive drainage engineering that would be required on this Weald Clay site - large attenuation ponds, underground storage tanks, and controlled drainage channels - would change the movement of water through the soil across a wide area around the site. Changes to groundwater levels and soil moisture can damage and kill ancient woodland trees through their root systems without any physical entry into the woodland.

Berkeley Homes has not provided any independent assessment of this specific hydrological risk to Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse. A developer's own consultant report is not sufficient for a risk that is permanent and irreversible.

Sub-Objection 6A: At 1,000 homes, this turns a village into a small town - forever

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.

Sub-Objection 9A: Southwater is already absorbing four times its Neighbourhood Plan housing allocation

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater because Southwater has already committed to far more housing growth than its own community plan identifies as appropriate.

In 2021, Southwater residents voted to set our housing contribution to Horsham District at approximately 420 to 460 homes. That figure was arrived at carefully, based on what the village's infrastructure could support.

Since that vote, two large developments have been approved that already far exceed this figure.

Broadacres (around 350 homes) is under construction. The Horsham Golf Club site (around 800 homes) has planning permission. Together, that is already 1,150 homes - two and a half times the figure residents voted for.

Berkeley Homes now wants to add another 1,000 on top - bringing the total to over 2,150 new homes. That is nearly five times the Neighbourhood Plan figure. That would represent a 62.9%

increase on top of what is already in the pipeline.
There is no planning principle that requires a single village to absorb this level of growth. Housing need exists across Horsham District and should be distributed across many locations - not concentrated on a village that has already done more than its fair share.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that Southwater has already substantially exceeded its proportionate and democratically agreed housing contribution. Enough is enough.

Sub-Objection 9B: This is a developer-driven proposal - not a community-identified need

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes northwest of Southwater on the grounds that this is a developer-led scheme with no independent planning justification. Berkeley Homes applied for 1,500 homes on this same site in 2022 (Horsham reference DC/22/1916). Horsham District Council's own planning officers concluded it was unacceptable on multiple grounds - including infrastructure, ecology, and highways. The application was withdrawn in February 2023.

Remarkably, within ten months of that withdrawal, Horsham District Council published a new Draft Local Plan allocating the same land - for 1,000 homes, under the same developer's stewardship.

Berkeley Homes' own promotional materials confirmed the land had been 'identified in the draft Local Plan as suitable for development.'

This is not how the planning system is supposed to work. A Local Plan is meant to be a community document, based on independently assessed evidence of need, identifying the most suitable locations for development. It is not meant to adopt a developer's withdrawn planning application as its strategic housing policy.

The 1,000-home figure in the plan matches Berkeley Homes' commercial proposition precisely. No independent evidence base has been published explaining why 1,000 homes - rather than the 420-460 in the Neighbourhood Plan, or any other figure - is the right number for Southwater.

I ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused on the grounds that it is a developer-led scheme with no credible independent planning justification, and that its inclusion in the Local Plan appears to reflect developer lobbying

rather than genuine
community need.

Kind regards

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