

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 September 2026 19:20
To: Planning
Subject: OBJECTION – DC/26/0933 Land North West of Chapel Road & South of Muntham Drive, Barns Green

Categories: Comments Received

5 Saltbox Close,
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6th September 2026

To the Planning Officer,

OBJECTION – DC/26/0933 Land North West of Chapel Road & South of Muntham Drive, Barns Green 31 Dwellings – Shanly Homes

As a resident of Barns Green, I strongly object to the application for 31 houses on the Land North West of Chapel Road. I have no objection to sustainable growth in and around Barns Green and I am fully supportive of the sites allocated in the recently made Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan. This site however, was not identified as suitable for development in the Neighbourhood Plan and would have a catastrophic impact on the village, its residents and the environment. Please consider my objections on the following points:

1. Contravenes the made Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan

The Itchingfield Neighbourhood plan was approved by referendum on 4th September 2025 and formally made on 8th October 2025. This is a now legally binding plan that has been developed over years of community consultation including detailed assessment of all proposed sites. It clearly identifies where the community accepts growth in order to meet housing need. The Land North

West of Chapel Road & South of Muntham Drive was assessed as part of that process and was deemed not deliverable. It was consciously excluded as entirely unsuitable and unsustainable. It is deemed undevelopable under both the current (made) Horsham District Planning Framework and SHELAA. HDC have endorsed the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan and stated that it 'carries full weight as part of the development plan for this part of the district'.

The government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill guidance (September 2025) states that the decisions about what to build and where 'should be shaped by local communities', and that is exactly what the current Neighbourhood Plan has done. This speculative application attempts to ignore this principle completely.

NPPF paragraph 14 states that where a Neighbourhood Plan is less than five years old and allocates sites to meet housing need, the adverse impact of conflicting development 'is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'.

As the proposed development site lies outside of the Built-up Area Boundary (BUAB) it is defined as 'Countryside'. Policy 26 of the Horsham District Planning Framework states that development in the countryside should only be permitted if it is essential to its location. This is a strategic policy designed to protect the rural character of the countryside by restricting development outside of the built-up area boundaries.

The success of this application relies entirely on the 'tilted balance' because Horsham lacks a five-year housing land supply. This however, does not take into account NPPF paragraph 11(d)(i) which makes clear that 'tilted balance' cannot apply where Framework policies indicate that development should be restricted i.e. for habitat sites; irreplaceable habitats like ancient hedgerows and where there is a flood risk – all of which apply to this site.

Planning law is clear that given the made Neighbourhood Plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirements this application should be refused as the adverse impact of approving it would "significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits". It is not essential to this Countryside location.

2. Loss of a rural amenity, Village Character, Listed Buildings and Heritage Impact

This field plays a vital role in the community. It is described in the Neighbourhood Plan's Landscape Character Assessment as one of the *'small pastoral fields that provide important green gaps that contribute to a settlement with rural character and provide transition to the wider countryside'*. The 'green gap' it provides would be completely destroyed by the proposed development permanently damaging the character of the village. Building here will destroy the current Rural Amenity bestowed by the field with grazing animals adjacent to historic buildings.

The Grade II listed building Bennetts is very close to the boundary of the proposed site and would be at threat of serious structural damage both during and as a result of this development. Bennetts was built with no foundations and the proposed piling element mooted in the design for the proposed houses could cause damaging vibrations with the potential to damage or destabilise Bennetts footings. The proposed development site is also surrounded by other listed buildings including Blacksmiths Cottage and the Queen's Head. The heritage of these properties should be protected from housing schemes that bear no relevance to the existing village character to which, these historic buildings, contribute. These listed buildings would be detrimentally affected by the proximity of this new development and their historical significance undermined.

The proposed development would destroy this rural amenity and significantly harm the historic character of the village. It could also cause catastrophic damage to the adjacent listed building; Bennetts.

3. Traffic Generation and Parking Impact

The proposed development would increase traffic and cause congestion in the village, increasing the risk of accidents. The new access point located on Chapel Road is at pinch point with dangerous blind spots. The new entrance would also reduce the parking spaces available to valuable local businesses; The Queen's Head and The Village Shop. The negative impact of loss of parking on these local businesses would be damaging to these community assets.

The Transport Statement provided by the developers includes a traffic survey carried out over a week in October and has based its traffic assumptions on this period. It should be noted that Sumners Ponds campsite traffic which includes many caravans and motorhomes would peak over the summer months and these have not been taken into consideration. The consultation report from WSCC also refers to the likely traffic generated from a 'care home' of up to 15 two-way trips during peak hours. Clearly there has been an error in the interpretation of the figures provided and the likely usage as there is no care home within the application. With 31 new homes proposed in a car lead development it seems highly likely that there would be more than 15 two-way trips at peak times and the usage has been significantly underestimated. TRICS calculation surveys used to calculate car trips for this development are predominately based in suburban or edge of town locations which this development is not. Its rural location with limited public transport means that private car usage would be far higher than suggested.

In their Transport Statement, Shanly Homes have shown their proposed road layout and new access onto Chaple Road (Drawing no: 25-782-SK01 rev B) with visibility splays based on the road scheme proposal from the recently refused, Miller Homes application. Given this application was refused they should update this accordingly, as without the changes proposed by Miller Homes, they cannot assume the new pavements and traffic calming will be in place. It also impacts their assumed width of the road and visibility lines.

The applicant has failed to take into account the cumulative traffic impact and have not provided any assessment. NPPF paragraph 116 requires 'residual cumulative impacts' on the road network. The applicant has incorrectly dismissed the wider impacts as being 'negligible' and has ignored the impact of the 32 new homes at Sumners Fields and the 50+ houses allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan as well as the combined effect this would have on the Chapel Road/Two Mile Ash Road junction.

The applicant has not demonstrated the cumulative impact on the local road network, has underestimated car usage and have not taken into account the negative impact loss of on-street parking spaces would have on established local businesses.

4. Public transport not sustainable

Further to the inadequate assessment of the cumulative impact of traffic generation, the applicant's Transport Statement relies on a 'Vision Scenario' where a modal shift away from private car use is assumed. Anyone who lives in Barns Green will tell you that the public transport service to the village is all but non-existent and cannot be relied upon. This proposed scheme should only be considered in reality, as a car-dependant development. The implications of this are significant when considering sustainability, the impact on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, public health and social equity.

To be clear, the nearest station is 3.7km away at Christ's Hospital. Access on foot to the station would either be via unlit country lanes with no pavements or via a footpaths/bridleways across fields which are incredibly muddy and often unpassable during the winter or periods of wet weather. Buses are infrequent and unreliable with no evening or weekend service whatsoever and with timings such that it would be impossible to get to work for a 9-5pm job using busses alone.

The assumptions made in the applicants Transport Statement are simply not credible or based in reality. The village is not a location where sustainable transport can be considered as an alternative to car use.

5. Housing needs not met

The proposed 31 houses on this site would represent clear over development. HDPF states that the density of new dwellings should be a tailored approach that balances the need for housing with the character of the existing surroundings. This context led density should reflect the established character, density and layout of the surrounding neighbourhood. In rural areas lower densities are prioritised.

This application conflicts with that policy representing a disproportionate increase in dwelling numbers for the Parish at a density that is completely out of alignment with neighbouring properties (many of which are listed buildings). No consideration has been given to the rural nature of the location.

The proposed housing mix does not reflect the need identified on the Housing Register. The proposed affordable housing allocation is made up of 72% 1 and 2 bedroom units whilst the Housing Register shows that 61% demand is for 3-4 bedroom family homes. There is no agreed provider for the finance or management of the affordable houses and there are legitimate concerns that due to the rural location and the size of the development, the scheme may not attract Registered Providers. It should be noted that in the recent Sumners Fields development no Registered Provider was prepared to take on their allocation of affordable housing. This throws any commitment to the fulfilment of affordable housing at this development into doubt.

The 'need' for this development in this location is tenuous at best, with many properties at the recent Sumners Fields development remaining unsold with the second phase of building showing no sign of commencement as there is no appetite from buyers for the properties.

The applicant's primary justification for seeking approval for this speculative development which is outside of the BUBA and in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan, is that is addressing a housing need. This could not be further from the truth. It provides the wrong housing mix, out of character design at the wrong density and significant deliverability concerns.

6. Lack of Consultation with UK Power Networks

The applicant has not provided evidence of any consultation with UK Power Networks on this proposal. Yet, it specifies that all proposed 31 houses will have electrically powered Air Source Heat Pumps which would constitute a significant draw on the power network. This is yet another example of how the applicant has not taken into consideration the rural nature of this location and that the power supply may not be adequate. Many of the houses that make up the recent Sumners Fields development, required diesel generator back up for their power as the local network could not reliably supply these homes. How can it be assumed that the local supply would be sufficient for this further 31 houses with the increased draw of electrically powered heating.

This proposal should not be given consideration by the council until UK Power Networks have clarified the available grid capacity to supply the proposed 31 houses.

7. Lack of sewage treatment works capacity

Horsham District Council's own committee reports document that in 2022 Barns Green experienced 43 sewage overflow events totalling 411 hours which equates to more than 17 days of raw sewage discharge. These were not isolated events and local residents continue to monitor and document them. Data from The Rivers Trust show that in 2024 the Barns Green WTW storm overflow spilled 60 times into Parsons Brook totalling 502.57 hours of discharge, and then in 2025 the storm overflow spilled 47 times for a total of 417.13 hours discharging into Parsons Brook. These documented discharges of raw sewage contaminate local watercourses at times of heavy rainfall. This proposed development will compound this already unsanitary and polluting issue.

Southern Water's response to this application dated 17th August 2026 states that there is capacity for connection to 'manhole reference TQ12265901'. In a subsequent letter dated 20th August 2026 they confirm their statement that there is capacity, yet caveat that tests are currently being carried out, the results of which will not be available until September 2026. These statements from Southern water are mis-leading and do not reflect the daily reality. In a response to an application for 63 houses in Barns Green in 2015 (DC/15/0029) Southern Water state in their letter dated 23/03/2015 *"Following initial investigations, there is currently inadequate capacity in the local network to provide foul sewage disposal to service the proposed development."* No upgrade to the capacity of Barns Green WTW has taken place since this statement was made in 2015, so it is unclear how the perceived capacity has altered since then.

Southern Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan: Overview of the Adur and Ouse River Basin Catchment dated October 2022, specifies the Population Served by the Barns Green Water Treatment Works as being 1003. A letter from Southern Water to a local resident dated 9th April 2025 states that:

"with current estimates for daily usage per capita, the treatment works could support a population of roughly 1400 people before the dry weather flow would be over the consented limit."

If you take into account the recent Sumners Fields development plus Sumners Ponds Bluebell Park and tourist population, the estimated population is around 1390. The proposed development would significantly overwhelm the capacity of the exiting WTW and the consented limit of the dry weather flow. These calculations do also not take into account the proposal from Southern Water to close the Itchingfield WTW and reroute to the Barns Green WTW. A letter sent to Barns Green residents on the 15th May 2026 from Southern Water with reference 870357, states:

"I am writing to you in relation to a proposed pipeline from Itchingfield Wastewater Treatment Works to the Barns Green area, as part of Southern Water's ongoing environmental improvement programme."

"We are proposing to pump the wastewater that flows into Itchingfield WTW to the neighbouring wastewater network in Barns Green village, through which it will flow to Barns Green WTW. Once complete, the site at Itchingfield will no longer treat any wastewater."

This proposal would clearly exasperate the problem and make the additional proposed houses even more unviable.

The Water Industry Act gives developers the automatic right to connect to a sewer network, provided they have been given permission to build. Given the mis-leading information provided by Southern Water with regards to this application, there should be no determination of this application until an accurate picture of the sewage network's capacity had been ascertained.

Barns Green Water Treatment Works is at capacity and frequently discharges raw sewage into water courses causing damaging pollution. The applicant has provided insufficient documentation, ignoring overflow events, providing no cumulative impact assessment and only considering the immediate connection point

8. Increased risk of flooding from surface water and other runoff

The applicant incorrectly states there is no evidence of flooding. There is documented evidence of terrible flooding in the village with water entering buildings including the Village Shop that is opposite the proposed site. The flooding covered a wide area extending as far as Six Acres Close.

The proposed site currently plays a vital role in helping to reduce the amount of surface water runoff heading towards the road and properties opposite. The geology of the site is not just made up of Wealdon Clay, but also contains silt stone and lenses of sandstone and limestone which are permeable. Deep cracks in the clay that form in the summer allow the infiltration of water into the rocks below. The plants uptake water into their roots and also act to slow down the rate of water transfer. The flooding seen over the winter of 25/26 was exacerbated because the ground was already saturated. Any building of impermeable layers like roads, houses and hard-standings will make the amount of surface water run off worse and would be the equivalent of the ground being permanently saturated.

The drainage measures proposed by the developers will not guarantee the resolution of this flooding, particularly as their documentation denies any evidence of the existing flooding. The proposal also does not take into account the significant run off from fields above the site which will head straight into the proposed houses.

Any sewage overflow during times of heavy rainfall goes into Parsons Brook and heads straight to the Knepp Wilding Estate and the Adur. An increase of surface water run off into the water course, if it is unable to soak into the field, will increase the instances of sewage overflow.

Increased raw sewage pollution into Parsons Brook would threaten to put the Adur River Restoration Project at risk. Part of the Wilder Horsham District Initiative the project aims to '*restore nature, reduce flood risks, improve water quality and boost biodiversity in the River Adur area*', stretching '*from the Knepp estate to Shoreham, where the river meets the Sussex Bay restoration of the sea beds and kelp forests along the Sussed Coast*'. Sewage from this proposed development would add to overflows of untreated sewage from the WTW which would increase pollution and be detrimental to the aims of the Adur River Project, potentially putting the Sussex coast kelp forests at risk.

The proposed development will exacerbate existing flooding problems in the village from surface water run-off and increase the instances of sewage overflow into Parsons Brook causing damaging pollution.

9. Removal of Ancient Hedges and other habitat loss

The proposal includes the removal of the protected hedgerow that currently forms the boundary between the field and the road. The removal is to provide road access and widening along with the required clear site lines for safe traffic movement. This would be an unacceptable loss of an ancient and protected natural habitat; vital for wildlife.

The hedgerow not only hosts a wide range of wildlife but it is also integral to natural drainage management, acting as a buffer holding back the soil, preventing erosion and stopping it blocking drains. Under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 a 'strong presumption' exists in favour of protecting hedgerows that are 'important'. This hedge is an irreplaceable habitat and its destruction would result in a net loss of biodiversity that cannot be adequately compensated for by new planting, breaching the Environmental Improvement Plan. The hedge provides a critical 'wildlife corridor' and its destruction would fragment the habitats of species including protected dormice, which are present. The hedgerow has Historic Landscape Value. Ancient hedges are part of the 'character of the English countryside' and this particular hedge is very much part of the character of the village. Its loss would impair the visual amenity and the historic landscape character of the village conflicting with local landscape character policies.

This proposed development would destroy an ancient hedgerow and should be refused.

To conclude, this is a speculative application that is not essential to the location, does not take into consideration the local history and character of the village, the impact on already overloaded power and sewage services, the local housing need, lack of public transport or the devastating affect this development would have on the environment including ancient hedgerows. It contravenes the Countryside Policy and rides roughshod through a democratically made, legally binding Neighbourhood Plan. The recent refusal of the application for the adjacent field for Miller Homes highlighted the depth of feeling in the local community for these speculative applications. The reasons for the Miller Homes refusal all hold true for this application as well and the same principles should be applied. **For these reasons this application must be refused.**

I request the full contents of this letter are placed before the Planning Committee.

Yours faithfully,

