

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 March 2026 18:53:23 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 26/03/2026 5:53 PM.

Application Summary

Address: Land North West of Southwater

Proposal: Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for primary access to the high-way) 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: Flat 3. Turnpike House Fairbank Road, Southwater Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

- Design
- Highway Access and Parking
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

I am a local resident living in the centre of the village. At the last consultation on the current applicants prior rejected application, the staff employed by the Developer said they would like to move here out of London. All this development does is allow migration from different areas of the country to this part of the country and is simply a way of allowing people to move to cheaper housing from city centres and ruining rural locations in the process. It doesn't go to solve the lack of housing generally in any way at all. The plan will include 5 bedroom properties with price tags in excess of £1 million. This is not affordable housing.

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 live in the centre of the village and do not wish to see the centre moved elsewhere at the whim of a developer who has absolutely no interest in the welfare of existing residents.

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. 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.

I am aware that this area is at risk of flooding and I have seen this data on maps and plans for the area. Further building cannot but adversely affect the existing drainage. I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater 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. The 2025 drought - the worst in 132 years - demonstrates this is not a theoretical risk. 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 - 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.

As someone with a Botany degree and a lifelong interest in wildlife especially wildflowers, building over vast areas of land cannot but have an adverse effect on local biodiversity of all forms of wildlife. we are close to Knepp Castle rewilding project and we have been delighted to see the return of species not previously in this area for a very long time.

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

I have today been able to secure an excellent service from the local Village Surgery (Doctor's surgery). A vast and substantial increase in the local population cannot be sustained without massive investment in infrastructure which this project does not allow for. I am a teacher and I know whilst the proposal may suggest the building of another school, there is absolutely no commitment nor any intention on the behalf of the developer to build such a facility and the mere provision of space or some vague plan is worthless.

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

I am a local resident needing to use a car for all needs except a trip to Horsham or Worthing by bus. The current road system is vastly inadequate and the authorities have insufficient funds and resources to maintain what we have. any increase in traffic usage of local roads will cause untenable traffic congestion and further excessive use of roads causing unaffordably irreparable wear and tear.

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.

I am a local resident having moved here as a key worker in 2006. The village has already changed immeasurably in that time. This was a semi-rural village and we were graced with the presence of visible local agriculture and a sense of being in our environment. This proposal just seeks to "concrete over" a seriously large tract of land and to increase the size and nature of our village with no benefit whatsoever to local residents and is specifically designed and intended for the benefit of a developer who will move on and take no interest in the development and the welfare of the residents once the profits have been banked.

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.

Kind regards

Telephone:

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**Horsham
District
Council**

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