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Sent: 03 February 2026 22:33
To: Planning
Subject: DC/25/2057 Land North of Little Slaughterford

Categories: Comments Received

Dear planning department,

Objection to Planning Application DC/25/2057 - Land North of Little Slaughterford, Barns Green

I am writing to **object** in the strongest terms to planning application DC/25/2057 (Land North of Little Slaughterford, Barns Green). My objection is based on material planning considerations including traffic and highway safety, local infrastructure capacity, flood risk, rural character and environmental impact, and conflict with adopted planning policy.

As detailed below, the proposal would cause significant harm in these areas and should be refused. Similar developments in rural villages have been rejected on these grounds, and Horsham District Council should likewise defend our community by doing the same.

Traffic and Highway Safety Concerns

Barns Green's narrow rural roads and lanes are ill-suited to a large increase in traffic from a 68-home estate. The sole access via Chapel Road is a constrained village road, often lined with parked cars by the local shop and pub. Adding construction vehicles and the daily cars of dozens of new households will increase congestion and accident risk on this small road.

The safety of pedestrians, including children walking or biking in the village, already on a road with no traffic calming measures, would be put at further risk by the extra traffic on roads with poor visibility and little parking. The junction by Muntham Drive and Chapel Road is already a safety nightmare with dozens of taxis in the morning going up to Muntham school, and heavy traffic pressure on a crossing that also serves a playgroup, primary school, social club and village hall.

Moreover, Barns Green has almost no public transport, meaning new residents will almost entirely rely on private cars. Virtually every adult will commute or run errands by car. This car-dependency will increase vehicle miles, emissions and wear on rural roads, contrary to sustainability goals.

Crucially, the village shop and pub, which are vital community amenities, already see roadside parking that frequently causes pinch-points. Additional traffic from the new estate would exacerbate these pinch-points, worsening congestion and road safety right in the village centre. We should not wait for serious accidents to occur before recognizing this impact.

The proposal's suggested traffic mitigations would actually make the situation worse; Chapel Road has very poor visibility at that point in the road and often the row of cars outside the shop makes it difficult to pass. Adding a T junction on top of that, whilst reducing parking spaces and pushing those cars elsewhere or making parking there more frantic is a phenomenally bad idea.

In summary, the proposal fails on highway grounds: unsafe access and increased traffic on unsuitable roads. These are valid planning reasons for refusal. The Highway Authority would be expected to object to such a scheme, as was seen in other villages where developments were stopped over safety concerns with narrow access. It is far better to avoid creating a dangerous traffic situation than to attempt to mitigate it after the fact.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Local Services

Barns Green is a small rural village with limited infrastructure and services, which are already under pressure. A development of this scale (68 homes) would overwhelm facilities that are sized for a much smaller population:

- **Sewerage and Utilities:** The sewage and drainage systems in our parish are already operating at their limits. The Billingshurst sewage works (serving this area) is known to be exceeding capacity with current loads, even *before* accounting for the new homes recently built at Sumners Fields.

During heavy rains, there have been incidents of overflows and even discharge of untreated sewage - an unacceptable public health and environmental risk. Adding 68 more houses worth of wastewater could overload the sewer system, as warned by similar cases elsewhere. Without substantial infrastructure upgrades (which are not proposed), this development would likely lead to sewage back-ups or pollution events.

- **Flooding and Drainage:** The site and its surrounds suffer from poor drainage, with water running off fields onto local roads. In fact, the Barns Green village shop on Chapel Road (downhill of this site) is prone to flooding during wet periods.

Paving over green fields with new roofs, driveways and roads will greatly increase runoff. The applicant's documents may claim sustainable drainage (SuDS), but residents' experience is that heavy rain already overwhelms drainage. Increasing the hard surface area will worsen flood risk to Chapel Road and nearby properties.

National planning policy is clear that new development should not increase flood risk elsewhere, and we have every reason to believe this plan would push more water toward the village centre.

- **Other Services:** The single small village shop and pub would face immense pressure from a sudden 25-30% population increase. These businesses have limited parking and stock; they are community assets, not designed to serve a large estate's needs. Likewise, our local GP surgery (Southwater) and other utilities (electricity, broadband, etc.) are limited. Village residents in other planning cases have successfully argued that without expanding services, large developments are unsustainable in rural locations.

In short, the essential infrastructure (schools, drainage, roads, utilities, amenities) in Barns Green is not capable of supporting a development of this magnitude. Approving it would result in strain and failures of services, harming both existing and new residents' quality of life.

These practical constraints are *material considerations*: a proposal cannot be deemed sustainable if it lacks adequate infrastructure support. Horsham's planning policies and the NPPF both require sufficient infrastructure capacity for new development - clearly not met in this case.

Flood Risk and Drainage Issues

Flood risk is a major concern for this site and the wider village. Barns Green has low-lying areas and clay soil; during winter rains the groundwater rises and fields become saturated. We frequently experience standing water and flash flooding on local roads (e.g. Chapel Road by the shop and at the nearby river/pond areas).

As the proposal itself shows, the fall of the land points directly into the areas of the village with the most flood risk. Developing this greenfield will worsen flooding by reducing the land's capacity to absorb water.

It is well established that when considering planning applications, councils must ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. In this case, there is a real risk of displacement of water onto neighbouring properties and roads. The applicant's Flood Risk Assessment should be scrutinized closely. Local knowledge suggests high water table and poor percolation in this area. Any SuDS ponds or tanks could overflow in extreme weather.

In Barns Green, we have photographs and records of past flooding. The site may technically be in Flood Zone 1, but that does not mean "no risk" - groundwater and surface water flooding are the key issues. The precautionary principle should apply: no development should proceed that might make flooding worse for existing residents.

The Environment Agency and WSCC Lead Local Flood Authority should be consulted; if they have any objection or even hesitation, that alone is a strong reason to refuse. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency of intense rainfall.

Approving a major housing estate in a spot that channels water toward the heart of the village would be irresponsible and contrary to national policy.

Harm to Rural Character and Environmental Impact

Barns Green is a small rural village with a distinct character: a compact settlement surrounded by fields, hedgerows, and countryside. This proposal would place an estate of 68 houses in the centre of the village, in a highly prominent location. Such a development threatens to erode the rural character of our community.

An extra 68 houses in Barns Green (on top of recent developments) is a huge increase for a village of our size. It would no longer feel like the same village. The social fabric and identity of Barns Green would be irreversibly altered by an estate of this size dropped over a characterful aspect of the village.

Furthermore, the design and density of the proposal appear out of alignment with neighbouring properties. Barns Green's homes are mostly along established roads, with generous gardens and green gaps. Cramming nearly 70 houses on this site at higher density than surrounding lanes will stick out poorly. This conflict with the village's character and pattern of development is a valid reason to oppose the scheme.

The environmental impact on local greenery and biodiversity is also significant. The site is bounded by an ancient hedgerow along Chapel Road. The development plans call for removing a large section of this hedge to create access and sightlines. That hedge is not only historically important but also

provides a habitat for wildlife and a natural landscape feature. As noted in the application's own documents, it likely qualifies as an "important hedgerow" under the Hedgerow Regulations.

Removal of the hedgerow would cause a loss of ecology and also eliminate a natural buffer that currently helps absorb runoff and defines the rural lane's character. Hedgerows take decades to grow and are integral to our countryside scene - once gone, you can't simply replace an old hedge with a fence and expect no impact. The plan also necessitates building over open fields that host deer, bats, birds and other fauna seen regularly by residents. It is inevitable that such wildlife would be displaced and harmed.

The proposal suggests a farcical 10% biodiversity net gain - given the plan to take a natural environment, dig it up and concrete over most of it, this seems somewhat impossible. At a time when planning authorities have duties to conserve biodiversity, this development would do the opposite.

In sum, the proposal would cause an unacceptable loss of rural character and environmental quality. It fails to respect the context of Barns Green. Developments in rural villages should be limited, sensitively located, and in keeping with their surroundings - this scheme is none of those. The visual impact (an estate where there was countryside) and the urbanization of the village's centre are contrary to Horsham District's design and landscape policies. Our village's identity - close-knit, rural, surrounded by green - is at stake, and that is a material planning consideration.

Conflicts with Planning Policy (Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan)

This proposal is fundamentally at odds with the adopted planning policies for our area. Both the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the Itchingfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (made in 2021) direct housing to appropriate locations and exclude this site for development:

- **Outside Settlement Boundary:** The site lies outside the built-up area boundary of Barns Green as defined in the development plan. It is essentially unallocated greenfield land. The HDPF (and emerging Local Plan) prioritizes brownfield and within-boundary development; building a large estate on open countryside breaches the plan's spatial strategy.
- **Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan (NP):** Our parish's NP was democratically prepared and made (adopted), meaning it is part of the development plan. The NP went through a site selection process and notably rejected this site (Land north of Little Slaughterford) as unsuitable.

In fact, when this site was put forward during the NP's "call for sites", public feedback was overwhelmingly negative. The NP allocates other, more appropriate sites for the parish's housing needs and specifically aims to protect the rural setting. Allowing 68 houses here would directly contradict our Neighbourhood Plan's vision and policies. National policy gives significant weight to recent NPs, even where a district may not have a full 5-year housing land supply. Horsham District Council should honour our Neighbourhood Plan. To do otherwise would render years of community planning effort meaningless and discourage future communities from engaging in planning.

- **Housing Need and Recent Development:** Barns Green has already contributed substantially to housing supply in recent years (a material consideration, “incremental cumulative impact”). The Sumners Fields development, comprising dozens of new homes, was only recently completed in the village. Not all of those homes are even occupied or sold yet, indicating that local demand is not insatiable.

The proposed 68 houses would represent a dramatic, disproportionate increase in the parish’s housing stock, well beyond what is planned for in both the HDPF and NP . It would push Barns Green far above its indicative housing numbers.

Horsham District currently can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (or is very close to it), and regardless, unmet housing targets do not justify overriding established plans in a way that would double-count growth in one small community. We urge HDC to recognize that Barns Green needs time to assimilate recent growth and that further major development here is unwarranted and unwanted.

- **Other Policy Conflicts:** The proposal likely conflicts with numerous specific policies: for instance, those on design/character, on environment (hedgerows, biodiversity), on heritage (if any nearby listed buildings or conservation areas are impacted), and on climate change (car-dependent, greenfield loss).

While a full policy analysis is beyond the scope of this comment, it is apparent that the application runs counter to the development plan on multiple fronts. Planning law (NPPF and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act) dictates that decisions must accord with the development plan unless material considerations strongly indicate otherwise. Here, the material considerations - as I have outlined - actually reinforce the case against the development. There are no overriding benefits that outweigh this conflict.

In conclusion, I urge the Council to **REFUSE** planning application DC/25/2057. The proposal would irreparably harm Barns Green’s character, overload our rural infrastructure, exacerbate traffic dangers and flood risks, and flies in the face of our hard-won Neighbourhood Plan and District policies. It is neither sustainable nor in the public interest for our village.

There are plenty of more suitable locations for new housing in the district without sacrificing a greenfield and our community’s wellbeing. As demonstrated by the case studies referenced, councils have strong grounds to reject such speculative developments in unsustainable locations - and I respectfully request Horsham District Council do the same for Barns Green.

Thank you for considering my objections. I trust the planning officers and committee will give substantial weight to these material considerations and the voiced concerns of local residents. Please put the long-term interests of our village first and refuse this application.

Kind regards


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