

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 March 2026 22:19:03 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 25/03/2026 9:19 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: The Landings New Road Southwater

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
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

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

My family have been living in Southwater for the last 23 years and during that time we have witnessed an exponential growth in the number of properties. Our current home adjoins the planned development area and this plan threatens the very idea of the rural location we chose. We have serious concerns about overdevelopment, flooding risks, traffic, privacy, security and the potential visual / light impact on our home.

Over-development

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 built a single house.

Adding 1,000 more 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 not good enough.

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.

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.

Rural location

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.

Traffic

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.

Flooding Risk / Drainage

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, demonstrated 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 providing direct evidence of what happens when this clay soil is built over without adequate drainage.

My own garden adjoins the planned site. Repeated winters have shown very high levels of surface water that have failed to drain away with large areas of my own garden being a quagmire. The underlying risk of flood represents a very personal problem to me and my family, my property, its value and potential insurance increases.

Privacy / Security

The plan shows 3 storey developments directly to the west of our property. This introduces serious concerns regarding privacy and how a developer could provide any level of appropriate mitigation.

From a security / policing perspective, there are further concerns. The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's response dated 17 March 2026 is an objection.

I quote:

"I trust this sets out sufficiently our Office's request for infrastructure contributions relating to this development at Land North West of Southwater. In the absence of developer contributions towards the provision of essential policing infrastructure, Sussex Police would raise objection, as the additional strain placed on our resources would have a negative impact on policing of both the development and force-wide policing implications within the district."

Visual / light Impact

The proposed development would have a huge impact on my family. Our current position of overlooking fields and trees which have been there for hundreds of years would be destroyed. Ancient woodland and wildlife habitats would be shattered and they are irreplaceable - once they are gone, they are gone. The proposed 3 storey buildings would have an impact on light which we have enjoyed for many years.

The Prescription Act 1832 (specifically Section 3) grants a legal right to light for buildings that have enjoyed uninterrupted daylight through the same apertures (windows/skylights) for at least 20 years. Once established, this right becomes absolute and prevents neighbours from building structures that significantly obstruct light, unless written consent was previously granted.

Kind regards

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