

**From:** Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 25 March 2026 23:43:57 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 10:43 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

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### Customer Details

**Address:** 8 FLETCHERS SOUTHWATER

### Comments Details

**Commenter Type:** Neighbour

**Stance:** Customer objects to the Planning Application

**Reasons for comment:**  
- Highway Access and Parking  
- Other

Comments:

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing to object to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater. I have lived in Southwater for 10 years and have seen the village change over that time. While I understand the need for housing in the district, this development raises serious concerns about flooding, traffic, and affordable housing that cannot be overlooked.

Flooding and Drainage Concerns

The land proposed sits entirely on Weald Clay, which is notorious for poor drainage. Standard soakaways and other infiltration methods simply do not work here. Rainwater cannot soak away, and existing nearby developments, such as Blakes Farm, have experienced repeated garden flooding due to this soil type. Climate change has made rainfall more intense, and current planning rules require drainage systems to manage at least 40% more rainfall than in the past. Berkeley Homes has provided no independently verified drainage plan proving they can handle this risk at the scale of 1,000 homes.

Beyond the technical difficulties, the drainage works themselves threaten ancient woodlands adjacent to the site - Courtland Wood and Smith's Copse. Trees in these areas rely on consistent groundwater levels, and large-scale drainage engineering nearby could damage these habitats irreversibly. I am deeply concerned that, once harmed, this ancient woodland cannot be restored. Finally, replacing 141 hectares of farmland with roofs, roads, and hard surfaces will dramatically increase surface water runoff into local streams and ditches, many of which already overflow in heavy rain. The drainage impacts of this development would be permanent, with no way to undo damage to existing homes, gardens, or local watercourses.

Traffic and Access Issues

Southwater's roads are already at breaking point. The A24, the Hop Oast roundabout, and other key junctions operate at or beyond capacity during peak times. Adding 1,000 homes - along with the 800 already approved at the Horsham Golf Club site - would push the village into gridlock.

Southwater is also highly car-dependent. There is no local railway station, the nearest train station is poorly connected, and bus services are infrequent. Cyclists and pedestrians face barriers in crossing the A24 and railway safely. This development would force nearly every resident to rely on cars for work, school, and basic services. Any "aspirational" commitments to buses or cycle routes are not enforceable and cannot mitigate the reality of our village's geography.

The traffic assessment for the proposed secondary school is also dangerously flawed. It assumes children can walk or cycle safely, but the A24 stands between the school and much of the potential student catchment area. Without a safe grade-separated crossing, this poses a serious risk to children - a risk that Berkeley Homes has not addressed or committed to resolve.

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#### Affordable Housing and Local Need

Berkeley Homes' so-called "affordable" homes are not truly affordable for local people. At 80% of market value, the cheapest homes would cost around £344,000. Local median wages are approximately £36,000, allowing for a mortgage of only £144,000. There is a huge gap between what is considered affordable by the developer and what local people can realistically afford. Even the mechanism meant to guarantee 40% affordable homes can be reduced through "viability assessments," which are prepared and controlled by the developer's consultants. There is no independent verification, and past practice suggests this often leads to fewer affordable homes being delivered than promised. Additionally, Berkeley Homes has previously marketed properties to overseas investors, raising questions about whether local need is truly being addressed.

Finally, it is not clear that Southwater actually needs 1,000 new homes. Much of the housing demand in this area originates from Gatwick, Crawley, or coastal towns, not Southwater itself. Building such a large development here would create a commuter dormitory with limited access to jobs, schools, and services - a situation that planning rules explicitly aim to avoid.

#### Conclusion

For all these reasons - the risk of flooding and damage to ancient woodlands, the unsustainable traffic pressures, and the lack of genuinely affordable housing for local people - I urge Horsham District Council to refuse the Berkeley Homes proposal. This development is not suitable for Southwater, and the risks are far too great for current and future residents.

I appreciate your consideration of my objection. Please take into account the lived experiences of local residents like myself, who have lived in Southwater for a decade and understand the practical realities of the village far better than any developer's plan or report can convey.

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Kind regards

**Telephone:**

**Email:** [planning@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:planning@horsham.gov.uk)



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