

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 March 2026 10:53:06 UTC+00:00
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 12/03/2026 10:53 AM.

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: 59 Charlock Way Southwater Southwater, Horsham

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:
- Loss of General Amenity
- Other

- Overdevelopment
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

I strongly object to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater. This creeping concretisation of the natural landscape must be restrained. It not only robs the area of its green identity, adversely affecting the positive effects on residents, but it also destroys valuable wildlife habitat. The animals we share the land with are often regarded as incidental at best, or a nuisance at worst, but their interests must be considered.

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.

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.

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.

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 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 ask that the Berkeley Homes 1,000-home proposal be refused until a full, independent cumulative infrastructure assessment covering all committed and proposed Southwater development has been completed and published.

Kind regards

Telephone:

Email: planning@horsham.gov.uk



**Horsham
District
Council**



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