

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 March 2026 09:29:10 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 9:29 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

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: Labri 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
- Other
- Overdevelopment
- Privacy Light and Noise
- Trees and Landscaping

Comments:

I am objecting to the Berkeley Homes proposal to build 1,000 homes on farmland northwest of Southwater, for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Berkeley Homes' 1,000-Home Proposal Breaks Southwater's Own Neighbourhood Plan
- The Land Cannot Drain Properly and the Development Will Make Flooding Worse
- Local Infrastructure Cannot Support 1,000 More Homes - No Joined-Up Assessment has been undertaken against other planned or in-approval developments in the area, thus a cumulative effect is not assessed.
- The Roads Cannot Handle the Traffic and There Is No Realistic Alternative to the Car
- The Development Will Damage Irreplaceable Ancient Woodland and Destroy Local Wildlife - Loss of natural amenities.
- This Development Will Permanently Change the Character and Feel of Southwater - Impact on mental health
- The 'Affordable' Homes Will Not Be Affordable to Local People and Local Need Has Not Been Proven .
- There Is Not Enough Water and the Sewage System Is Already Failing - a change in policy with respect to Water Neutrality does not remove the reality of the physical problem.

The 141-hectare site is currently farmland. Farmland, even on clay, slows the movement of rainwater into local streams and ditches. As global warming is increasing the frequency and ferocity of rainfall, as has been seen in the early months of 2026, even this farmland is flooding but water has been able to dissipate to local ditches that are running at full capacity. Once it is replaced with 1,000 homes' worth of roofs, roads, driveways, pavements and car parks, the volume of rainwater running off the site into local watercourses will increase dramatically - and it will arrive faster. The resultant flood water will almost certainly arrive at our property, threatening damage, and likely subsidence to our 100 year old property foundations.

More over, inconsistencies between the environmental assessment, and proposed planned properties exist. Specifically, whereas largely 2 storey buildings are suggested in the environment reviews, the planned residential properties immediately behind our chalet bungalow are slated at being up to 3 stories, and 12M high. Whilst it is difficult to determine the exact distance from our property on the overly simplistic visuals provided we estimate it to be approximately 10M, meaning the new buildings will be taller than they are away from our back door. This is a totally unacceptable loss of privacy and light, not mention

the fact that an ancient oak tree within our property boundary sits in the land between our house and the planned properties. Infrastructure and building work will almost certainly impact the extensive root system of this 40M tall oak tree - death of this tree will result decay of the root system that extends under our existing property leading to probable collapse, as Weald Clay is specifically named by the British Geological Survey as one of the UK's highest shrink-swell risk soils - alongside London Clay and Gault Clay.

A development that is 12M tall, this close to largely single storey countryside properties, will forever destroy the character and aesthetic of the area - and we note that the visual montages conveniently do not include a visual from the bridlepath adjacent New Road as this would demonstrate a completely abhorrent impact on the visual character and natural amenity.

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.

Additionally, the Neighbourhood Plan included a Secondary School located in the field behind our property as being a more appropriate use of the space if further infrastructure is indeed required in the village - the Berkeley Homes Proposal is completely ignoring this Neighbourhood Plan recommendation, in favour of building inappropriate residential properties not in keeping with the local character. We also note the provision of land for a secondary school elsewhere in their plan, but not the actual funding of the build of such. The Berkeley Homes location for the school in itself drives the provision of extensive roadway infrastructure further destroying the local rural area.

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.

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.

If Berkeley Homes is permitted to build 1,000 homes before that review is complete, the Neighbourhood Plan's housing limit is rendered completely pointless. It would send a clear message to every community in England that spending years producing a Neighbourhood Plan means nothing if a large developer simply lobbies hard enough.

No material planning evidence has been put forward by Berkeley Homes or Horsham District Council to justify why the community's own plan should be overridden and clearly does not satisfy the social and housing needs of the local community.

Kind regards

Telephone:

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