

From: Planning@horsham.gov.uk <Planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 September 2026 10:38:49 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning" <planning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application DC/26/0954
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 08/09/2026 10:38 AM.

Application Summary

Address:	Land at 518017 129871 Athelstan Way Horsham West Sussex
Proposal:	Residential development for 21no. 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings with associated parking, hard and soft landscaping at Land South of Athelstan Way, Horsham.
Case Officer:	Nicola Pettifer

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address:	12 Athelstan Way Horsham
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Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
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 write to object to application DC/26/0954. The objection is not founded on opposition to housing in principle. It is based on the concern that the proposal may understate the landscape,

ecological and cumulative effects of introducing built development and highway infrastructure into Muggeridge Field.

The application should be refused unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied, on robust and independently tested evidence, that the proposal is genuinely self-contained, that the correct ecological baseline has been used, and that the effects on the wider field and the Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site have been properly assessed. If those matters cannot be resolved on the submitted evidence, determination should be deferred.

Summary of grounds

Piecemeal development and failure to assess the relationship with the remainder of Muggeridge Field.

Harm to openness, landscape character and the settlement-edge transition.

- Potentially unreliable ecological baseline following reported removal of established hedgerows after the land was purchased in May 2024.

- Potential harm to the function and connectivity of the Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site.

- Insufficient assessment of cumulative transport, ecological, drainage and infrastructure effects if the access is intended to serve later development.

1. Piecemeal development of Muggeridge Field

The application is presented as a standalone scheme for 21 dwellings. However, the proposed access runs alongside the retained part of Muggeridge Field and appears positioned so that it could be extended to serve further development. This raises a legitimate question as to whether the proposal is functionally the first phase of a larger development strategy.

The Local Planning Authority should require the applicant to explain why the access is laid out in this form, whether its width, alignment, construction and termination are proportionate to the current scheme, and whether any rights, service corridors or engineering details preserve the ability to extend it into the adjoining field.

The Council's June 2026 Site Assessment Report identifies the relevant land as "Land South of Athelstan Way", site SA060. SA060 appears in Part D, "Sites not Identified for Potential Allocation for Housing Development". The assessment concludes that the site is not recommended for allocation and records an estimated housing yield of 0. The current proposal should

therefore not be described as implementing, or being supported by, an emerging Local Plan housing allocation.

The assessment records that SA060 lies outside the settlement boundary, within the Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site, and forms part of an open area of high amenity value. It identifies a highly sensitive landscape, sloping topography, views from public rights of way, protected boundary trees and the loss of informal recreational space as material constraints. It also notes that vehicular access would require improvement and currently relies on narrow residential roads with limited capacity.

The earlier site submission proposed approximately 63 dwellings across part of the 4.1 hectare site. The Council nevertheless rejected the site for allocation. This is directly relevant to the present planning balance, although it does not by itself determine application DC/26/0954 and does not prevent a planning application from being considered on its individual merits.

The Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 remains an emerging plan under examination and has not yet been adopted. The non-allocation of SA060 should therefore be given the weight lawfully appropriate to the plan's stage and the underlying evidence. The Council's own June 2026 assessment is nonetheless a current and directly relevant evidence-base document, particularly where it identifies landscape, wildlife, recreation and access constraints affecting the same land.

The concern is not that a future application can be determined now. It is that the design and environmental effects of the current application may only be properly understood by considering the realistic function of the access and the likely cumulative consequences of development enabled by it.

2. Harm to openness and landscape character

The application site forms part of a wider undeveloped field at the edge of the existing settlement. Its planning value is not limited to its agricultural or habitat classification. It also contributes to openness, the visual separation between built form and countryside, and the character of the settlement edge.

The introduction of dwellings, an estate road, parking, lighting, domestic boundaries, refuse storage and associated activity would permanently urbanise this part of the field. The access running beside the retained field would extend that urban influence and could weaken the perception that the remaining land is countryside rather than a future development parcel.

The Council should therefore assess the proposal in verified public and residential views, including the combined effects of highway engineering, lighting and domestic paraphernalia, rather

than treating landscaping as an immediate or complete substitute for the existing open character.

3. Ecological baseline and reported hedgerow removal

Residents report that the land was purchased in May 2024 and that established hedgerows were grubbed out shortly afterwards, before the ecological survey work relied upon by the application. On that chronology, the clearance was recent in relation to the current application. The exact clearance date, location, length, composition and legal status of the hedgerows should be established from evidence rather than assumed.

This matters because hedgerows can provide habitat, nesting opportunities, bat commuting and foraging routes, structural diversity, landscape screening and ecological connectivity. A survey of the site after their removal may accurately record the later condition while still failing to describe the pre-clearance ecological function relevant to assessment and mitigation.

The Council should obtain and review dated aerial imagery, photographs, sales particulars, land management records and any earlier ecological information. It should also establish whether removal required consent under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997, whether any hedgerow qualified as important, and whether protected species or nesting birds may have been affected. No allegation of unlawful conduct is made in this representation; the point is that the facts and the correct baseline require investigation.

The biodiversity metric and all claims of net gain should be checked to ensure that the baseline complies with the applicable statutory rules, including any provisions addressing deliberate degradation of onsite habitat before the relevant date. If the submitted baseline does not properly account for the former hedgerows, the ecological conclusions and proposed compensation may be materially understated.

4. Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site

The site must be considered in the context of its relationship with the Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site. Development may affect ecological function not only through direct habitat loss but also through fragmentation, interruption of movement corridors, lighting, noise, pets, recreation and greater activity at the boundary.

The reported hedgerow loss and the alignment of the new access are especially relevant to connectivity. The Council Ecologist should confirm whether the retained buffers are adequate in width, composition and long-term management, whether a genuinely dark corridor can be secured, and whether the proposal would

prejudice the integrity or functioning of the wider local ecological network.

Until those matters are resolved, reliance on future landscaping or headline biodiversity net gain figures would not provide a sufficient basis to conclude that harm has been avoided or adequately mitigated.

5. Traffic, access and cumulative effects

Residents are understandably concerned about additional traffic. The most material issue, however, is whether the transport evidence assesses the actual function and capacity of the proposed access. If it is laid out to enable later development, an assessment confined to 21 dwellings may not explain the wider consequences of the infrastructure being approved now.

The Council and highway authority should examine the design speed, carriageway and footway dimensions, junction form, visibility, turning arrangements, drainage, lighting and terminal treatment. They should state whether the layout is necessary and proportionate for the present application and whether it has been designed or safeguarded for extension.

The same cumulative approach should extend to drainage, utilities, ecology, landscape and access to services. The current application must be acceptable on its own merits, without assuming that impacts can be revisited only after the physical route into the wider field has already been established.

6. Information and action requested before determination

- Obtain a written explanation of the access road design, its termination and any provision for future extension.
 - Acknowledge that SA060 is not allocated in the emerging Local Plan, is listed in the June 2026 rejected-sites assessment with an estimated housing yield of 0, and explain the weight given to that evidence in determining DC/26/0954.
 - Require the applicant to provide the pre-clearance habitat evidence and a dated account of hedgerow removal.
 - Ask the Council Ecologist to verify the biodiversity baseline, statutory metric and any deliberate-degradation implications.
 - Confirm whether the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 applied and whether any consent or notice was required or obtained.
 - Assess cumulative landscape, ecological, transport, drainage and infrastructure effects associated with the access alignment.
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- Require enforceable plans for buffers, lighting, habitat creation, management, monitoring and long-term maintenance if permission is contemplated.

7. Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the proposal should be refused if the Local Planning Authority concludes that it would cause unacceptable landscape or ecological harm, represents unjustified piecemeal development, or is supported by an incomplete baseline and inadequate cumulative assessment.

Alternatively, determination should be deferred until the Council has independently verified the recent history of the site, the former hedgerows, the purpose and proportionality of the access, and the resulting cumulative effects. The officer report should expressly reconcile any recommendation for approval with the Council's June 2026 conclusion that SA060 is not recommended for allocation, has an estimated housing yield of 0, and is constrained by landscape sensitivity, Local Wildlife Site status, recreation, protected trees and access. Approval should not be granted on the basis of unresolved assumptions that go to the heart of the planning balance.

Kind regards

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