



# Itchingfield Parish Council

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28th May 2026

Horsham District Council  
Albery House  
Springfield Road  
Horsham West Sussex  
RH12 2GB

Dear Planning Team,

**Planning application DC/25/2057: Land North of Little Slaughterford, Chapel Road, Barns Green**

**Addendum representation on behalf of Itchingfield Parish Council**

Itchingfield Parish Council writes further to its objection dated 5 February 2026. The Parish Council has reviewed the amended submission dated 2 April 2026 and has commissioned an independent highways review by John Russell Transport Planning, which is appended to this letter.

This letter and the highways review should be read alongside the Parish Council's original representation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Parish Council maintains its strong objection and requests that planning permission is refused.

You will also appreciate, given the extent of local objection to the scheme as set out in the representations the District Council has received to date, that the Parish Council's views also reflect the consensus of the local community, and that whilst new residential development within the parish that accords with the Neighbourhood Plan would be supported, development proposals that do not accord with the development plan and which will result in numerous harmful impacts, should be refused.

The amendments to the scheme proposed by the applicant do not overcome the proposal's conflict with the adopted development plan. Nor do they address the Parish Council's concerns regarding landscape harm, the loss of the Chapel Road hedgerow, harm to the rural edge of Barns Green, highway and pedestrian safety, car dependency, open space provision, affordable housing mix and deliverability, and impacts on the local community and village facilities.

The applicant presents the amendments positively. However, when assessed against the development plan and the evidence now before the Council, they do not materially change the planning balance. Recent consultee responses reinforce many of the Parish Council's original concerns.

## **The changes**

The Parish Council notes that the amended submission includes:

- changes to the housing mix;

- revisions to the layout and appearance of some plots;
- revised landscaping, including rain gardens, tree planting and changes to the ancient woodland edge;
- a four-space gravel car park near the shop and pub;
- revised landscape, drainage, air quality, arboricultural and biodiversity information; and
- further responses to consultee and public comments.

The Parish Council is disappointed that the applicant has not sought to engage with it since the original objection was submitted. The Parish Council remains willing to discuss whether its concerns can be addressed.

### **The development plan remains the starting point**

The Parish Council's earlier representation set out the status of the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan and the need to determine the application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

That position remains unchanged.

The development plan comprises:

1. the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan 2024 to 2031;
2. the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 to 2031; and
3. other relevant adopted development plan documents.

The Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan was made on 8 October 2025. It is the most recent part of the development plan for the parish. It identifies how housing growth should be accommodated and confirms the Built-Up Area Boundary for Barns Green. The application site lies outside that boundary and is not allocated for residential development.

As set out in the Parish Council's original submission, the site was considered through the neighbourhood plan process and was not selected for allocation. The Neighbourhood Plan provides for housing growth in a planned and locally supported way, through identified sites and windfall development within the Built-Up Area Boundary.

The proposal therefore conflicts with the Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan, including Policy 11, and with the spatial strategy in the Horsham District Planning Framework, including Policies 2, 3, 4 and 26, which seek to direct development to sustainable locations and protect countryside outside defined settlements.

The applicant refers to the site as a draft allocation in the emerging Horsham District Local Plan. This does not materially alter the position. The emerging Local Plan is not adopted and, given the current stage of examination, it is questionable what weight can be given to it, but given its current draft status it cannot override the recently made Neighbourhood Plan or establish the principle of development.

The Parish Council therefore remains firmly of the view that the proposal is contrary to the adopted development plan in principle.

The Parish Council also maintains that paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged. The Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan became part of the development plan less than five years ago and contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

In those circumstances, national policy is clear that adverse impacts are likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The amendments to the proposed development do not remove that conflict. The delivery of 68 dwellings can be considered a benefit, but it is not enough to set aside the neighbourhood plan strategy, particularly where significant harms and technical objections remain.

## **Landscape, settlement edge and loss of hedgerow**

The Parish Council's original representation raised concerns about the impact on the landscape setting of Barns Green, the loss of the Chapel Road hedgerow, harm to the settlement edge and the suburbanising effect of the development.

Those concerns remain.

The further response from Place Services is particularly important. Place Services remains "*not supportive on landscape grounds*". It considers that the applicant's LVIA continues to underplay the magnitude of change, particularly in relation to the loss of grassland, the complete removal of the managed hedgerow along Chapel Road, and the effect on pedestrian users of Chapel Road.

The applicant argues that replacement hedgerow planting and an overall increase in hedgerow units address the loss. Replacement hedgerow may assist with biodiversity net gain, but it does not address the planning harm identified by the Parish Council and Place Services. Replacement planting further west into the site may have ecological value over time, but it would not mitigate the loss of the enclosed, green and rural character of Chapel Road. The existing hedgerow is not simply a biodiversity feature, it is a defining landscape and settlement-edge feature.

The Parish Council maintains that removing the Chapel Road hedgerow would cause significant and unnecessary harm to local character. This is directly relevant to Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan Policies 1, 5 and 12, HDPF Policies 25, 26 and 31, and the NPPF requirement for development to respond positively to local character and conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Place Services has also said the layout should be revised to retain the roadside hedgerow, including by moving the swale further west into the site. The applicant has not done this. In the Parish Council's view, retaining the hedgerow should be a core design and landscape requirement, not something to be traded off against the applicant's preferred layout.

The Parish Council also notes Place Services' concern about Plot 55 and the Ancient Woodland buffer. Place Services advises that Plot 55 should be removed to respect the buffer, improve safety along the southern boundary and reduce the risk of future encroachment. This further shows that the layout has not been properly led by the site's context, character and constraints.

The proposal therefore remains in conflict with Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan Policies 1, 5 and 12, and HDPF Policies 25, 26 and 31.

## **Open space, play and recreation**

The Parish Council notes the response from Horsham District Council's Parks and Countryside team. This response identifies that the applicant has used Fields in Trust standards rather than Horsham District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review standards. When assessed against the correct standards, the development's open space provision is significantly and materially deficient.

The Parks and Countryside response identifies a total open space requirement of 7,590 sqm and proposed provision of 5,405 sqm, thereby resulting in a deficiency of 2,185 sqm. In particular, the response identifies:

- no allotment provision, against a requirement of 294 sqm;
- a shortfall in play and youth provision;
- a significant deficiency in natural green space; and
- the need to adjust amenity space calculations to account for the new car park.

The Parks and Countryside team has identified ways some matters might be addressed, including an allotment contribution and possibly counting the attenuation basin and ancient woodland buffer as natural green space. However, that does not make the current scheme acceptable. It confirms that it remains deficient. Put simply, the development is too cramped, with too many houses and too little open space.

The applicant's open space strategy appears to have been fitted around the housing layout and drainage requirements, rather than planned as an integrated, accessible and high-quality community asset. The need to count engineered drainage features as natural green space shows the weakness of the approach.

The Parish Council supports the recommendation that the play provision should be revised to meet the needs of a wider age range, particularly upper primary age children, given the existing deficiency in Barns Green. This is not a minor detail. Sufficient and appropriate play provision are key factors in the consideration of whether the development provides suitable community infrastructure and meets local needs.

The Parish Council also remains concerned about the connectivity of the LAP to the existing settlement. The use of "mown paths" gives the impression that the front of the site is well connected. In reality, there is only one self-binding gravel path to this space, leading from within the development. As a minimum, the path connecting the car park at the front of the site to the LAP should be hard surfaced and usable year-round by all users.

These matters are relevant to Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan policies concerning green infrastructure, design and community infrastructure, and to HDPF Policies 31, 39 and 43.

### **Highways, access and sustainable transport**

The Parish Council's original representation raised concerns regarding traffic, highway safety, pedestrian safety, access arrangements, parking impacts and car dependency.

The applicant's amended submission seeks to rely on the absence of an objection from the Highway Authority and identifies the provision of a four-space gravelled car park near the site access.

To test its concerns, the Parish Council commissioned independent highways advice. That advice (set out in a review report by John Russell Transport Planning, as appended to this representation) reaches a fundamentally different conclusion to the highways/access case presented by the applicant. The review concludes that the site performs very poorly in sustainability terms, with the Department for Transport Connectivity Tool placing it within the lowest 10th percentile nationally for sustainable transport connectivity. Walking and public transport connectivity are particularly poor, whilst cycling connectivity does not account for real-world route quality or safety.

The review also notes high car dependence in Barns Green and concludes that the development would be highly car-dependent. This is directly relevant to NPPF paragraph 110, which requires significant development to be focused in locations which are or can be made sustainable by limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

This proposal does not provide such a choice.

The Parish Council also remains concerned about the location of the site access. It would sit directly opposite the village shop, (whether as existing or as approved under HDC ref DC/19/2052), close to the Queens Head public house, in the part of Chapel Road where pedestrian movements, parking manoeuvres and short-stay vehicle activity are likely to be greatest. The redevelopment of the village shop, as permitted by DC/19/2052, intends both deliveries and customer parking for the shop to continue to be on Chapel Road.

The independent review identifies likely conflict between:

- vehicles entering and leaving the development;
- pedestrians crossing to and from the village shop and pub;
- vehicles manoeuvring into and out of on-street parking spaces;
- potential delivery vehicle movements;
- displaced parking activity; and
- cyclist movements through widened carriageway sections and build-outs.

The four-space gravel car park does not resolve these concerns. It also raises further questions, including:

1. whether gravel is suitable for regular use, or whether the surface should be tarmac;
2. who will maintain it and prevent gravel being dragged onto the highway; and
3. how it will be kept for village use rather than becoming overflow parking for the new houses.

At best, the car park merely provides a small number of 'extra' parking spaces within the local area. It does not, however, address the poor location of the site access, highway geometry, build-outs, pedestrian visibility, parking displacement, or the wider effect on Chapel Road.

The independent review also raises concern that the proposed on-street parallel parking dimensions appear unrealistic. If the spaces cannot be used safely and conveniently, the scheme risks worsening parking pressure and encouraging unsafe parking around the shop and pub.

The independent review also notes that these significant highway concerns are further reinforced when consideration is given to extant permission DC/19/2052, and notes that the implementation of that permission "*materially alters the highways context from that assessed by the applicant*" and the highways mitigation proposed by the applicant would be either ineffective or incapable of implementation.

The Parish Council agrees with the independent review that fundamental access and highway safety matters cannot simply be left to a future section 278 process. To be acceptable, safe and suitable access must be demonstrated and shown to be deliverable at the point of determination. On the evidence before the Council, this has not been done.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the transport and design objectives of the development plan, including HDPF Policy 40, and NPPF paragraphs 110, 115 and 116.

### **Affordable housing mix, local need and deliverability**

The Parish Council recognises the importance of affordable housing. It does not object in principle to genuinely needed affordable homes in sustainable and appropriate locations. However, a scheme is not acceptable simply because it includes affordable housing.

The key question is whether the scheme would deliver homes that meet local need, in a location where they are likely to be occupied and sustainable in practice.

Housing Officers have identified a need for affordable housing in Itchingfield and Barns Green, but have also raised concerns about the mix and deliverability of the proposed affordable homes. The HDC Housing response identifies 151 households on the Housing Register for Itchingfield and Barns Green, with the greatest need being for three and four-bedroom homes. Those households represent 61% of current demand and face the longest waits. The applicant has amended the

affordable housing mix and states that three and four-bedroom units would now make up 10 of the 24 affordable homes. In percentage terms 10 units equates to 41.67%, well below the 61% need identified. The Parish Council accepts the amended mix now proposed by the applicant is an improvement to that originally proposed, but it still falls some way short of addressing local need.

The Parish Council is also concerned that the affordable housing case being presented focuses too much on headline housing numbers, rather than whether the homes are deliverable and suitable for Barns Green. Housing Officers note that 24 affordable units may be a relatively small scheme for Registered Providers, and that Barns Green may be seen as a less attractive location. The Officers also identify a risk that, without early Registered Provider confirmation, the applicant may later seek a commuted sum instead of on-site affordable housing.

That concern is not theoretical. The Parish Council is aware that the recent development at Sumners Ponds remains largely unsold, with the developers website indicating that only 9 of the 32 units have been sold/reserved at the time of writing. This raises a real concern that housebuilders are not delivering the right homes in the right locations for the local market and local need. Adding more housing to Barns Green will not solve that problem if the location, mix, tenure and price do not match demand.

This is especially important given the settlement's poor connectivity. Poor connectivity can increase household transport costs and make occupation less practical, particularly for lower-income households. The Parish Council is concerned that the scheme may provide affordable housing on paper, but not in a form or location that properly meets need.

The Parish Council therefore agrees with Housing Officers that further reassurance is needed before significant weight can be given to the claimed affordable housing benefit. This should include evidence of Registered Provider interest and confirmation that the proposed mix and tenure are deliverable on site.

Until then, the affordable housing 'benefit' should be treated with caution and afforded limited weight in the planning balance.

### **Local businesses and village facilities**

The Parish Council remains concerned about the impact on existing village facilities, particularly the shop/post office and the Queens Head public house.

The applicant proposes a four-space gravel car park. However, for the reasons set out above, this is not adequate mitigation.

The issue is not simply the number of spaces. It is the combined effect of the access, highway widening, changed parking, construction activity, pedestrian movements and delivery needs on the day-to-day operation of the village centre. The shop and pub are important community facilities. Harm to their access, visibility, servicing or customer convenience would have wider detrimental social and community effects.

The applicant has not provided a robust assessment of the operational impacts on these businesses, either during construction or once the development is occupied. This is relevant to the social dimension of sustainable development and policies seeking to protect community facilities and settlement vitality.

### **Drainage and the relationship with landscape design**

The Parish Council notes that the applicant has submitted revised drainage information and relies on the absence of objection from the Lead Local Flood Authority, subject to conditions.

However, drainage cannot be considered in isolation. A key issue is that the drainage strategy appears to be driving the removal of the Chapel Road hedgerow and the urbanising reconfiguration of the site frontage. Place Services has expressly noted that the roadside hedgerow could be retained by relocating the swale further west into the site.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the drainage strategy remains inadequately integrated with the landscape and design strategy. A technically workable drainage solution is not necessarily an acceptable planning solution if it causes avoidable harm to landscape character, the settlement edge and the rural approach to Barns Green.

If the Council is minded to continue discussions and negotiation with the applicant, it should require the applicant to revisit the drainage and layout strategy to retain the Chapel Road hedgerow and better respond to the site's landscape constraints.

### **Planning balance**

The Parish Council recognises that the proposal would deliver housing, including affordable housing. However, those benefits must be considered in the correct policy context.

This is not an allocated site in the adopted development plan. It is not within the Built-Up Area Boundary. It conflicts with the recently made Itchingfield Neighbourhood Plan. It would result in significant landscape and visual harm, including the loss of a valued roadside hedgerow and harm to the rural settlement edge. It raises unresolved concerns regarding the Ancient Woodland buffer, open space provision, affordable housing deliverability, sustainable transport, highway safety and the operation of existing village facilities.

The amended scheme does not remove those harms. In several respects, the post-amendment consultee responses reinforce the Parish Council's position. Place Services remain not supportive on landscape grounds. Parks and Countryside identifies deficiencies in open space provision when assessed against the correct HDC standards. Housing Officers identify concerns regarding mix and deliverability. The independent highways review identifies significant concerns regarding sustainable transport connectivity, car dependency, access safety and the adequacy of the highway design.

The Parish Council therefore considers that the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, particularly having regard to NPPF paragraph 14 and the conflict with the recently made Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Conclusion**

The Parish Council maintains its objection to planning application DC/25/2057 and respectfully requests that Horsham District Council refuses planning permission.

Kind regards,

Alan Strudley - Chairman

On behalf of Itchingfield Parish Council

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**Enclosed:** Transport Appraisal (John Russell Transport Planning, April 2026)

