

Save West of Ifield



Rusper Parish Council Meeting 18th September 2025

<https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/>

Agenda

1. Myths, issues and objections
2. How to respond
 - the process, deadlines, the planning documents, etc.
3. Who else to write to



A dirt path leads through a lush green field and dense forest. The path is narrow and unpaved, winding through a vibrant green landscape. On the left, there are tall grasses and white flowers. On the right, a field of green crops, possibly corn, stretches towards the path. In the background, a dense forest of tall, leafy trees frames the scene, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Myths, issues and objections

Myth 1. “Crawley desperately needs these houses”

Homes England and Horsham Council both claim the houses are needed for Crawley residents. But there's no mention of the **social housing** (40% cheaper than market price or rent) that Crawley Council needs. The so-called “affordable” housing will not help.

The application clearly implies that the site serves more as an extension of Crawley rather than being meaningfully integrated into Horsham. **But Crawley doesn't want it.**

- Michael Jones - Leader of Crawley Borough Council stated: *“...new housing has to be built in the right place as well – and the West of Ifield is emphatically not that place.”*

The location immediately adjacent to the Crawley boundary raises a concern of functional and visual **coalescence between Crawley, Horsham and rural settlements** such as Rusper and Ifieldwood. This contravenes Horsham's own policies (HDPF).

In December 2024, the **Planning Inspector** seemed concerned that Horsham's draft Local Plan didn't consider the impact of the West of Ifield on Crawley.

So **WOI is an 'urban extension' dumped on the edge of another town that doesn't want or need it. Political dumping of unpopular development on another district?**

Myth 2. “Plenty of jobs at Gatwick and in Crawley”

Homes England and Horsham Council assume that because Crawley sits “at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond” it **enjoys an unlimited supply of jobs**, particularly at Gatwick and Manor Royal.

But they ignore some critical points:

- Manor Royal **offices are being replaced by warehouses**, with low employment density and low-paid jobs.
- The majority of **jobs at Gatwick are low-paid and insecure**, which is a mismatch with the type of houses planned for West of Ifield.
- **Crawley is constrained for space, and is short of employment land.**
- Providing 1,400 FTE jobs on site is not adequate.

“WOI delivers too much housing and too little employment in an area which already needs significant additional employment land. In fact, it will only worsen Crawley’s existing need for employment land. The Plan’s reliance on Gatwick and Crawley to drive employment is likely to be misplaced, both in terms of the numbers and quality of jobs.”

Stuart Crossen – Planning consultant, Cerda

Myth 3. “Crawley already has good infrastructure”

The application ignores the fact that **Crawley sewage treatment works are almost at capacity** and red-flagged by Thames Water. Crawley Council and Thames Water have raised this as a concern over the past two years. But Homes England, and Horsham Council, appear to have done no planning to mitigate the risks. **The application documents contradict each other about whether Thames Water have even been consulted.** This failure is a strong basis for objecting, and could be a legal breach.

*“The development proposal is fundamentally unsound because it fails to acknowledge the woeful status quo. There is a real risk that the delicate and nascent progress to reduce sewage spills by Thames Water, already floundering under existential threat from financial mismanagement, will be submerged in a **torrent of additional pressure brought upon it by climate change impacts exacerbated by increased urban cover, more housing, increased population, inevitable urban creep and vulnerable water supply.**”*

Simon Collins – River Mole River Watch

Myth 3. “Crawley already has good infrastructure”

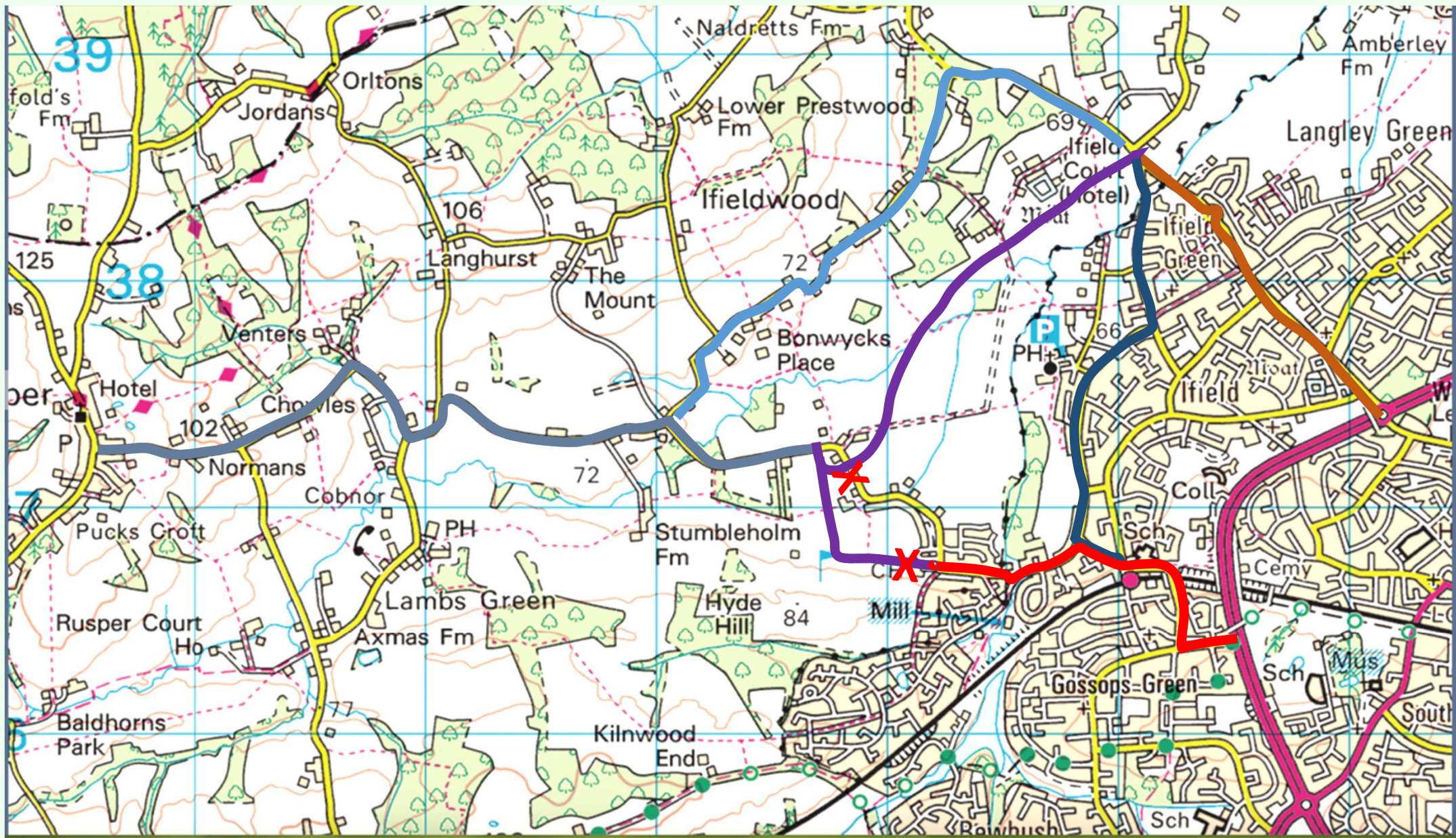
The proposals for roads and transport are deeply flawed with disastrous effects on traffic volumes and safety around Ifield and Rusper.

See short films on congestion on Ifield roads and Ifield station: <https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/media>

The plan fails to provide strategic links into Crawley or major transport routes. Instead it will **channel all traffic from the development onto two rural roads**: Rusper Road (to Rusper) and Charlwood Road / Ifield Avenue, which are already dangerous and at capacity.

We believe the traffic modelling has been 100% desk-based and is seriously inadequate:

- The baseline is current traffic volumes, and additional volumes are then predicted. But current congestion is proof that previous modelling hasn't worked.
- The **modelling is overly optimistic about the extent to which residents will shift away from car use** towards walking, cycling and using public transport.
- And the impacts on nearby villages such as Rusper, Faygate and Charlwood have been underestimated.



Myth 3. “Crawley already has good infrastructure”

So the Rusper Road closure means much longer journeys for residents between Ifield and Rusper. **Homes England views Ifield Wood and Ifield Green as suitable alternatives.**

The closure also risks creating a 600m residential cul-de-sac (from The Maples to Furlong Farm) which could be completely inaccessible to emergency or other vehicles in case of an accidental roadblock.

The negative **impact on congestion at local traffic hotspots will be severe** even with the suggested mitigations of traffic lights.

Construction traffic will be routed through Gossops Green, then Overdene Drive, Tangmere Road, Rusper Road and onto the golf course. This will create havoc at the Ifield Station junction, and will risk the safety of children and parents around the Ifield schools and on the pavements approaching them.

Cycling on the development may be easy, but **connectivity with Crawley cycle network is poor, and unsafe**, necessitating cycling on narrow, busy roads. This will discourage switching away from car use.

Myth 3. “Crawley already has good infrastructure”

The need for new health services is not addressed.

- The region needs hospitals. There is mention of Crawley hospital, but not that it has no A&E provision. And no mention of East Surrey hospital.
- And there’s a desperate need for actual GPs, not just the bricks and mortar of a surgery.

Given the infrastructure issues, no wonder Crawley Council is strongly opposed to WOI!

Even John Milne, when Horsham Lib Dem deputy leader in April 2023, agreed!

*“We’ve been going about this the wrong way for some years. Under successive Conservative administrations in HDC we followed a policy of **endless urban add-ons – extensions to existing settlements – the trouble with that is you’re never going to get the infrastructure that you need for a new development.** That’s because you’ll always be forced to piggy-back off existing schools, existing clinics and existing roads. If you can see something that’s not been working for years, why keep doing it?”*

Myth 4. “The Government has deep pockets”

Clearly not true. We hear all the time about the relentless pressures on the UK’s public finances. **The Treasury is not going to magic up funding** to make WOI a good quality, well-resourced place to live. Instead it’s likely to be built to the cheapest minimum standards, and highest densities.

The experience at other Homes England sites is a chilling warning of what we might be getting West of Ifield. Yet another report from Northstowe – a 3,000 house development near Cambridge where years in there is still a lack of community and health facilities, shops and bars, meaning that residents must drive to buy even a pint of milk.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2025/09/13/town-offers-glimpse-into-britain-future-labour/>

How will Homes England guarantee that WOI doesn’t suffer from these problems?

Given WOI is an expensive site in terms of mitigations needed, how will facilities be funded – by the taxpayer, or will the developers pay by reducing build quality, affordable housing, etc.?

And why should taxpayers foot the bill for a site beset with structural problems that Crawley Council and local residents strongly object to?

Myth 5. “The area is virtually brownfield”

We’ve heard of **Homes England and Horsham Council representatives describe the site as low-grade and virtually brownfield.** Couldn’t be further from the truth.

HE’s own ecological surveys show that the site is of **high biodiversity value.** **Many rare, threatened and priority species** for conservation that are legally protected have been recorded.

Their **habitats will be damaged by the development and it is inevitable that some of these species will be lost from the area, particularly during construction.** Mature trees and established hedgerows that provide wildlife habitats and corridors will be removed.

How can these losses be mitigated by the new planting required for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain? How can this work with such rich and diverse habitats and biodiversity, all established and evolving for hundreds of years?

Myth 5. “The area is virtually brownfield”

Sussex Wildlife Trust has said they are “... *very concerned about the impacts on Ifield Meadows as presumably it will be surrounded by development. No comment has been made as to how this will impact on its functionality within the District’s wider ecological network.*”

But there’s no evidence of consultation with Crawley Council about Ifield Brook Meadows. Or impacts on Willoughby Fields Local Nature Reserve and other Local Wildlife Sites.

Horsham Council’s draft Plan ignored Ifield Brook Meadow’s status and importance as a Local Green Space for the local community.

In terms of **Heritage**, the rural setting of Ifield Village Conservation Area will be lost, along with the historical link between the village, Ifield Court Farm, Ifield Wood and the rest of the ancient parish of Ifield. **Ifield Green, a village street within the conservation area, is designated as a route for additional and diverted traffic.**

Myth 6. “Ifield Golf Course is easily replaced”

Despite loss of 18 holes at Horsham Golf and Fitness Homes England still maintain that the needs of Crawley’s golfers can be met via minor improvements to Tilgate Golf Course, Rookwood and Goffs Park pitch and putt.

They ignore that Ifield has a thriving junior section, offers affordable memberships and coaching and provides high-quality golf experiences for all.

Homes England claims that displaced members could be absorbed by other local clubs.

The course itself is top-notch golf-wise, beautiful and the opposite of brownfield!

- Designed by a top golf architect in 1927, and described at the time as “as close to the ideal of inland golf as a parkland course could possibly be”.
- Rich in diverse habitats and biodiversity. Homes England are having to mitigate for the fact that local colonies of rare Bechstein’s bats use it for feeding and roosting.

See our short film on Ifield Golf Club: <https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/media>

Myth 7. “There are no plans for 10,000 houses”

But Homes England admit they are still “reviewing” the opportunity for the full 10,000 house proposal.

In fact the 3,000 application has the hallmarks of being the first phase of the 10,000.

- The high-rise buildings round the market square, typical of a town centre, are at the edge of the development – poised strategically to have the outer stretches of a town to be built later over the surrounding countryside.
- The continuation of the main road (CWMMC) towards Faygate is marked on Phase 1B Highway Plan.

Horsham Council should be considering the impacts and the infrastructure needs of the full 10,000, not just the first phase in isolation.

This ‘phasing’ of the 10,000 plan feels sneaky, and undemocratic.

As does the fact that the WOI site is not allocated in HDC’s adopted Local Plan which means the application is “speculative”. Homes England had made clear they wouldn’t seek to avoid the full and proper scrutiny of the Local Plan process in this way, but they have.

This is not what a government agency should be doing.

And finally ... water and flooding

We've seen **no evidence that the Homes England solutions to water neutrality are sustainable**. They propose a combination of rainwater harvesting, extraction via boreholes, and water credits from SNOWS.

But none of these methods is proven and there are **too many uncertainties** with all of them which **should have been resolved before application**.

For example, the Environment Agency haven't yet reported on whether extraction via boreholes is feasible and sustainable, and whether they will grant an abstraction licence.

Flooding










Homes England seem confident in their plans for expensive-looking landscaping and drainage systems. But have the uncertainties around climate change been adequately taken into account.

The following list of document(s) can be sorted via the column headers, filtered by entering a word or phrase in the filter box, viewed via the view button on each row, or you can download one or more documents in a zip file by selecting them and using the link at the bottom of the list

Show entries

Search:

The Process

<input type="checkbox"/>	View	Document Type		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter		
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	14/09/2025	The Limes Burnt Oak Lane Dorking
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	14/09/2025	Well house Crawley Rh110lt
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	14/09/2025	2 Hoy Crescent Ifield, Crawley
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	14/09/2025	April Cottage Capel Road Rusper
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	13/09/2025	2 Stackfield Road Ifield, Crawley
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	13/09/2025	66 Banks Road Pound Hill Crawley
<input type="checkbox"/>		Representation letter	12/09/2025	67 STAFFORD ROAD LANGLEY GREEN CRAWLEY

2. How to respond – the process

You can respond on-line, by email, or by post. You must include your **name, full postal address**, and the application reference number **DC/25/1312**

To respond on-line

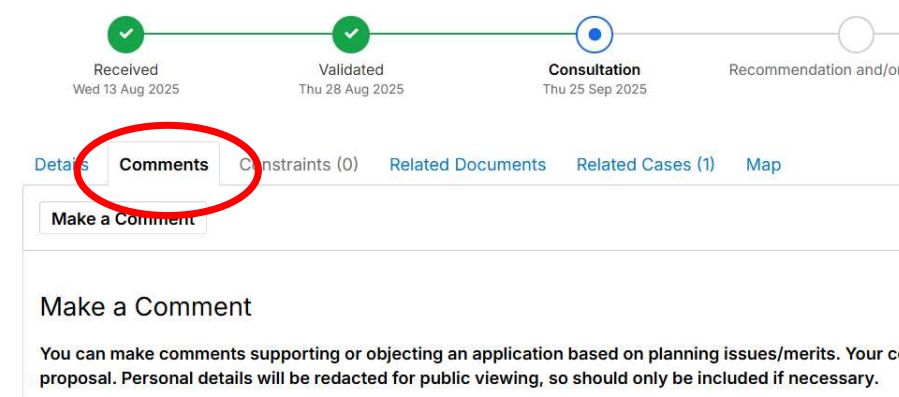
Go to the Horsham District Council Planning & Development portal:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/view-and-comment-on-planning-applications>

Search under the reference DC/25/1312

Click on Comments and input your text directly into the form.

Photos and files cannot be submitted via the portal but can be sent as attachments to emails to HDC, with your name, full address and the application number to: planning@horsham.gov.uk.



The screenshot displays the application process timeline and the 'Comments' tab. The timeline shows four stages: 'Received' (Wed 13 Aug 2025), 'Validated' (Thu 28 Aug 2025), 'Consultation' (Thu 25 Sep 2025), and 'Recommendation and/or...'. The 'Comments' tab is highlighted with a red circle. Below the tabs, there is a 'Make a Comment' button and a text area for comments. The text area contains the following text: 'Make a Comment' and 'You can make comments supporting or objecting an application based on planning issues/merits. Your comment will be redacted for public viewing, so should only be included if necessary.'

2. How to respond – the process

To respond by email

write to: planning@horsham.gov.uk

Include your **name, full address** and application number **DC/25/1312**

To respond by post

Write to the case officer – Jason Hawkes– at: Horsham District Council, Planning Department, Albery House, Springfield Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2GB.

Include your **name, full address** and application number **DC/25/1312**



2. How to respond – the process

Further guidance on how to respond can also be found on this page

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/view-and-comment-on-planning-applications>

including the types of comment that will be considered relevant or not

Relevant material considerations

- Planning Policy including government guidance
- Case law and previous decisions
- Highway, safety, traffic and parking
- Noise, disturbance and smells
- Overshadowing and loss of privacy
- Effects on listed buildings and areas of conservation
- Loss of trees
- Design, appearance, materials and character
- Matters covered by other legislation

Irrelevant considerations

- Effect on value of property
- Private property right
- Personal and financial circumstances
- Loss of views
- Moral or religious issues
- Restrictive covenants
- Private disputes between neighbours



2. How to respond – the deadline

We've been working with Rusper PC and HDC to clarify exactly what the different deadlines mean in practice, and whether they should be extended given the size and complexity of the application

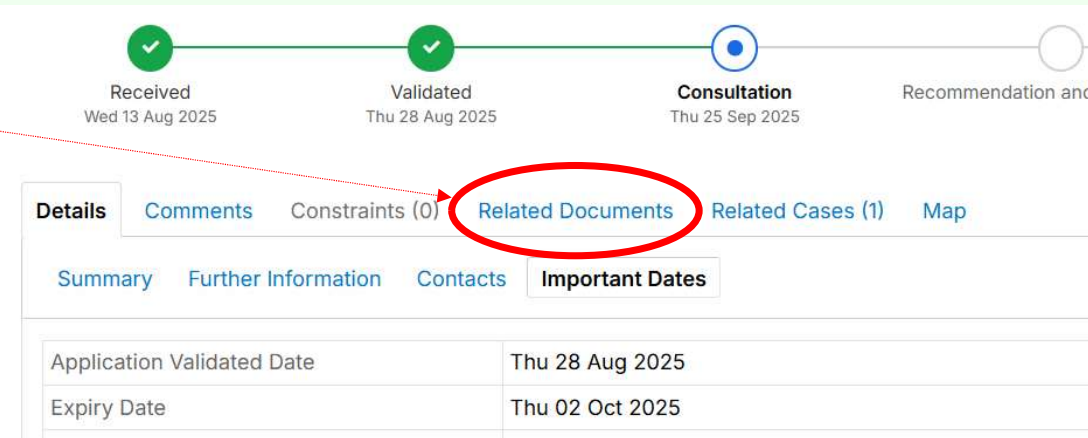
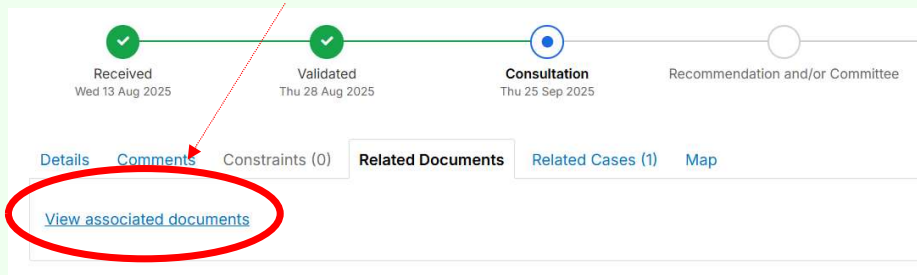
Latest position and advice:

- **Try to respond by 12th October if possible.** Try to get an initial response in by this date even if you later send others as a result of more information being available, etc.
- Responses can be submitted after 12th October and they will be fully considered.

2. How to respond – the documents

Search for DC/25/1312 on the HDC portal: <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/view-and-comment-on-planning-applications>

Then click on Related Documents, and then View associated documents.



There are 347 documents so far and more will be added as comments are submitted.



But you can search by the type of document and by words in the document names, eg "statement", "plan", "response" or "water", "biodiversity", "Crawley", "WSCC", etc.

2. How to respond – key documents

We're still ploughing through the documents, but these are the ones we think are key so far. They should give a good sense of what's planned, with a fair degree of detail:

- [PLANNING STATEMENT \(INCL. AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT\): WOI-HPA-DOC-PS-01](#)
- [DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT CHAPTER 3 PART 1: WOI-HPA-DOC-DAS-01, REV 1](#)
- [DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT CHAPTER 3 PART 2: WOI-HPA-DOC-DAS-01, REV 1](#)
- [ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY: WOI-HPA-DOC-ESNTS-01, REV 1](#)



3. Who else to write to

1. Statutory consultees

Write to ...	About ...
West Sussex County Council	Transport, schools
Sport England	Golf
Environment Agency	Water supply, sewage, flooding, air pollution
Natural England	Biodiversity
Historic England	Heritage
Crawley Council	All topics

2. Your MP

John.milne.mp@parliament.uk

peter.lamb.mp@parliament.uk

3. Horsham councillors

<https://horsham.moderngov.co.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=WARD&PIC=1&VW=TABLE>



4. SWOI plans and activities

- Meetings and Zoom calls to help supporters with their responses
 - **Link to recording of Zoom call on Traffic impacts ?? –**
- Reviewing planning documents and drafting SWOI responses
 - Working with our professional consultants and other experts, to submit the most effective representation possible
 - Identifying need for professional expertise on specific topics, funds permitting.
- Sharing information and updates on our website, social media and by email.
- Raising awareness via social media and the press.
- **Please do spread the word. The number of objections sent will make a difference.**



If you're able to donate ...

Account name: Save West Of Ifield,

Number: 55426514

Sort code: 53-50-39.

NB It's a Business account.

THANK YOU!





Thank you
for listening



