

Thakeham's Future - Write NOW!



Your LAST chance to save your village

Abingworth Developments and Sussex Mushrooms have applied for planning permission for 146 new houses and 5 acres of new mushroom buildings on greenfield land in Thakeham.

Thakeham Village Action says these proposals are outrageous and should not be permitted.

Write NOW to make your views known.

What is being proposed?

In the Abingworth application: 146 houses, including 63 'market' houses, 51 retirement (over 55 years) houses, 12 affordable (social) houses and 20 'key worker' houses, together with a village hall (including rooms for a shop and doctor's surgery), a facility for Thakeham pre-school and a children's play area, sports pitches and 'community workshops'.

In the Chesswood application: new mushroom compost bunkers with aerated floors, mushroom growing & ancillary buildings (including pasteurising tunnels and material store), covering 2.02 hectares (5.0 acres).

What can I do?

Write now to Horsham DC - full details are given overleaf - using points from this leaflet as you wish.

What they say - and we say

They say	We say
146 houses	Increases number of houses by practically 60%!!! Adds about 400 to 500 people to the Thakeham population taking it from 1800 to 2300. The number of cars using the B2139 (Storrington/Coolham Rd) would increase massively. The school, already practically full to capacity, could not cope. It may therefore have to close. Infrastructure (water, sewerage, etc) would be overwhelmed.
Retirement houses	Older people prefer to live in places with plenty of shops and facilities close by, plus good public transport, not isolated in a small village.
Key worker houses	Key worker houses are for people key to the survival of the community, like fire officers, police, and teachers. There is no proven need for this type of housing in Thakeham.
Village hall, sports pitches, children's play area	We have these already.
Reduce the odours	Reducing odour is now a legal requirement. If the equipment is not installed and the business does not get an environmental permit then it faces prosecution. Therefore this cannot be claimed as a 'benefit' of permitting development.
Secures viability of Sussex Mushrooms	The commercial health of the business should not depend on a housing development. And what if planning permission was given one day and Sussex Mushrooms folded the next?
New mushroom composting & growing buildings	A massive 4 acre building would go on what is now a grass field. All the buildings would be compressed onto one site and, with capacity for greater mushroom production, likely to generate more mushroom lorry movements. Composting would be moved closer to residences.
There is no council policy against housing development here	The developers comment is considered untrue as it fails to recognise all the council's policy, especially that of not reinforcing unsustainable patterns of development.

What will we lose?

Our Village Character: These proposals will completely change the character of our village. As we all know, Thakeham is a relatively small out-of-the-way village with several settlement areas, surrounded by fields.

Our Fields: Five fields, measuring some 20 acres (8 hectares), would disappear under housing development and new mushroom buildings. These fields are classified as high-quality Grade 2 agricultural land.

Our Quality of Life: Thakeham is relatively peaceful, congestion free, pollution free place, (apart from the mushroom smells which, with the new legislation, have to be go anyway) - most people in village surveys have said they want to keep it that way.

What do the planning rules say?

Location of Development: Developments should only be located in areas with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

Thakeham is a Category 2 village: Category 2 villages means those "villages with a more limited level of services which should accommodate only small-scale development or minor extensions that address specific local needs. 'Local need' in relation to Category 2 Settlements will be assessed on the basis of the contribution to meeting identified local requirements for housing, including affordable housing, the retention or enhancement of community facilities and services, and the extent to which the addition of new development will not reinforce unsustainable patterns."

Make Efficient Use of Land: If development is to be permitted, it should make efficient use of land. Efficient use is frequently considered as 30 houses per hectare (12 houses per acre), not the 4 per acre proposed here.

Greenfield Land: Agricultural buildings are classified as greenfield land. So any presumption in favour of using brownfield land is not relevant in this case.

Grade 2 Land: The whole area around the mushroom sites is Grade 2 quality, the best quality soil in Horsham District. Policy says that Grade 1, 2 and 3a soil should not be built on unless absolutely necessary.

Where do I write to?

If you love the place you live in and do not want to see it wrecked then write to:

by post: Horsham District Council, Development Control South, Park North, North Street, Horsham RH12 1RL

or by e-mail: planning@horsham.gov.uk

or comment on-line via <http://public-access.horsham.gov.uk/public-access/>

Remember, everyone in your household should write separately, as each response is dealt with as a separate objection. This includes youngsters, you don't have to be a voter. And ask your friends and relatives who care about Thakeham to write in as well.

In all cases quote references DC/10/1314 and DC/10/1316 and give your name and address.

Although the public consultation period ended on 16th September 2010, further responses to the applications will be accepted by Horsham District Council.