

West Sussex County Council

Horsham Local Plan examination

Response to Inspector's Question Ref IDJB11

1. The Inspector has raised the query on the secondary capacity in the Billingham planning area, specifically asking the County Council to respond on secondary school capacity if the Adversane allocation for 3,200 was not factored into projections.
2. The National Audit Office (NAO)¹ advises that a 5% buffer is maintained for school capacity to allow for parental preference, year-on-year fluctuations in demand and variations in cohort sizes. A school planning area is therefore deemed to be at capacity at 95% to allow for this flexibility.
3. The attached appendix shows the secondary pupil projections for the school planning area if Adversane is discounted. Factoring in other allocations in the emerging local plan, current capacity and existing housing commitments, the advised 5% capacity buffer is reached in 2035/2036 and this buffer continues to decrease to the end of the plan period and the planning area is considered to be full.

14th October 2026

¹ [Planning School Places 2026, Page 2. West Sussex County Council](#)

Appendix

Horsham District Local Plan excluding Adversane - Housing Site Totals and Trajectories in Billingshurst school planning area

Housing *Trajectories from HDC Statement on Matters 5a and 5b document ID MJ81.01																			
Site / Settlement	Units Allocated	Units Delivered in Plan Period	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	2031/2032	2032/2033	2033/2034	2034/2035	2035/2036	2036/2037	2037/2038	2038/2039	2039/2040
Strategic Sites																			
East of Billingshurst	1,000	1,000	-	-						50	75	120	120	120	120	120	120	100	55
Total Strategic Sites	1,000	1,000							0	50	75	120	120	120	120	120	120	100	55
Smaller Sites - Settlement Total in the Billingshurst planning area																			
Billingshurst (HA(NP2))	80	80							20	40	20								
Pulborough (HA13)	25	25							10	15									
Rudgwick and Bucks Green	105	105					47	48	10										
Barns Green (BGR3)	20	20							20										
TOTAL Smaller Sites	230	230				0	47	48	60	55	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL Strategic Sites and Smaller Sites	1,230	1,230	0	47	48	60	105	95	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	100		55

Total Secondary places required (0.16 pupils per dwelling)	197
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Secondary Education Capacity															
	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031	2031/2032	2032/2033	2033/2034	2034/2035	2035/2036	2036/2037	2037/2038	2038/2039	2039/2040	
Sec places available forecast by Edgeanalytics (June 2026) based on housing up to 31/03/25 for The Weald Sec School	298	302	257	276	271	214	199	180	161	142	122	103	84	68	
Demand for places generated by planning applications submitted between 1/4/25 to 1/10/26* in the Billingshurst planning area	40	40	40	40	40										
Demand for places generated by emerging Local Plan June 2026 onwards EXCLUDING ADVERSANE* See above.	0	8	8	10	17	15	19	19	19	19	19	19	16	9	
Places available surplus or deficit (+/-) based on Edge forecast + planning applications from 1/4/25 + numbers in the Emerging Local Plan	258	255	210	227	214	199	180	161	142	122	103	84	68	59	
% of places available surplus or deficit (+/-) across the Billingshurst planning area	12%	11%	9%	10%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	

*Edgeanalytics forecasts are based on data up to and including planning applications permitted and housing allocated to 31/03/2025

Planning applications from 1/04/2025 to 1/10/2026 are monitored separately via HDC and WSCC. Both monitoring systems are based on 0.19 pupils per dwelling.

A 5% buffer is the NAO benchmark for sufficient capacity