



Note

Horsham Local Plan 2040 Examination – Response to IDJB11 Inspector’s Question on Education Surplus

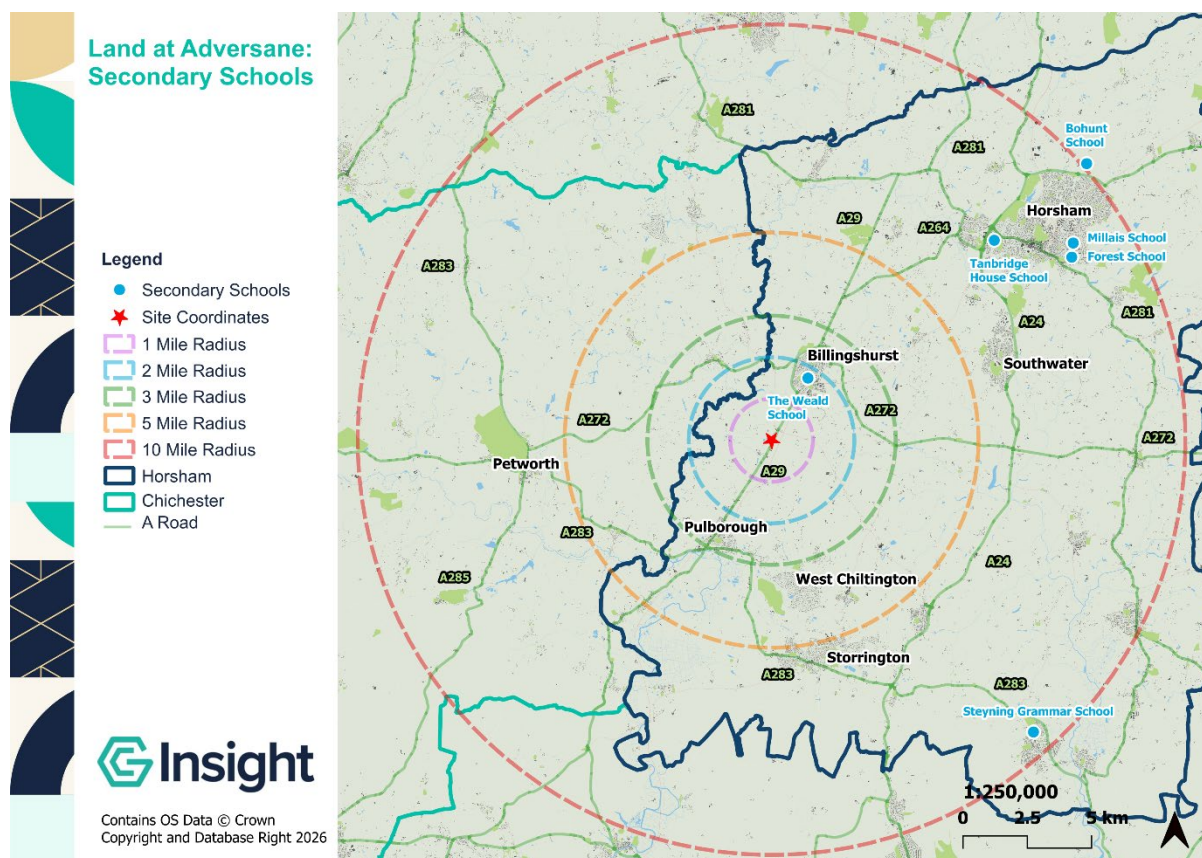
- 1.1 This note has been prepared by Quod on behalf of Our Place Sustainable Development Ltd ('Our Place'), with input from education and socio-economic specialists GC Insight. It responds to the comments made by the Inspector in his note dated 14th October 2026 (IDJB11) relating to secondary education provision in the Billingshurst planning area.
- 1.2 The County Council has provided evidence showing there is a need for secondary education provision to support the Billingshurst school planning area, from which it can be deduced that the need remains with or without housing delivery on Land at Adversane.
- 1.3 As the County Council explain in paragraph 4 of their note, that assessment is based on total school capacity rather than pupil admission numbers. This is relevant for at least two reasons:
 - 1.3.1 the County’s assessment does not necessarily deal with capacity or deficit in a particular year although this is material because (for instance) having capacity in years 10-12 does not help pupils in years 7-9; and
 - 1.3.2 it makes a direct comparison with the information in the Planning School Places 2026 report less straightforward.
- 1.4 To address both of those points, GC Insight has produced a technical note that is appended. It seeks to follow the same approach as used in the Report and shows that there is a significant deficit throughout the plan period even excluding the proposed strategic allocation of Land at Adversane; peaking at 121% in 2030/31 and averaging at 112% thereafter (as a reminder, the target is for capacity to not exceed 95%). GC Insight’s calculations are likely to be conservative as they do not factor in any windfall allowances and nor do they account for the prospect of any additional growth that may be planned through the emerging Horsham Local Plan 2045.
- 1.5 Billingshurst is a sustainable location for housing delivery as recognised by Strategic Policy 2. It is a Tier 2 settlement with a range of features that make it suitable for supporting the District’s growth, and the allocation of various sites in and around Billingshurst (e.g. Land South of Billingshurst and Land East of Billingshurst) is evidence of this. However, it is clear that without additional secondary education provision, that growth will be stymied, effectively sterilising what is otherwise a highly sustainable location for future growth.
- 1.6 As the County Council have noted in their Additional Hearing Statement (HDCJB30, para 4) The Weald School is unable to expand as it is landlocked and already at 10FE. Therefore, a new secondary school is needed to address the capacity deficit and support sustainable planned growth in the Billingshurst area.
- 1.7 Land at Adversane is the only site before the Council that can provide a secondary school in the Billingshurst area and help redress the imbalance in secondary education provision within the District. It is therefore entirely sound, reasonable and aligned with NPPF para. 95 for the Council to give great weight to this factor as part of its strategic site assessment.

Local Plan Examination: Secondary Schools

The Weald School Existing Size and Current Capacity

The Weald School in Billingshurst is the only secondary school within the Billingshurst School Place planning area. With the exception of Steyning Grammar School, which is approximately 13 miles from Billingshurst and 11 miles from Adversane by road, all other secondary school provision in Horsham is north of Billingshurst (see figure 1 below). Two new secondary schools are planned in the north of the District at Land West of Ifield (Strategic Policy HA2) and Land North West of Southwater (Strategic Policy HA3).

Figure 1 – Secondary Schools in Horsham



The Weald School is a 10 Form of Entry school with an overall capacity of 1,800 including 300 places for post-16 provision. Capacity for ages 11-16 is 1,500 and the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for Year 7 places is 300.

According to the latest available data from the department for education¹, **years 7 to 11 are operating at capacity (1,485 pupils) across the school as a whole, with only 1% surplus**, which is below the 5% buffer of sufficient capacity according to the National Audit Office. The sixth form is operating just over capacity with 301 pupils.

¹ Department for Education, 2024/25, School Place Planning Statistics

The most recently available West Sussex School Place Planning Report ('the Report') was published in June 2026. It includes current capacity and forecasts of secondary schools for the period 2026 to 2035. These forecasts are underpinned by:

- ONS birth data
- School census data
- Housing development trajectories – according to the 2026 School Place Planning Report (page 78), for Horsham, these have been based on housing development trajectories included within the current adopted Local Plan (2015) which planned for 16,000 new dwellings between 2011 and 2031 including:
 - SD1 Land North of Horsham 2,500 dwellings
 - HDPF SD10 Land West of Southwater 600 dwellings
 - HDPF SD11 And South of Billingshurst 150 dwellings

The above data sets are modelled using Edge-ucate developed by Edge Analytics. We do not have access to this tool to analyse it or bring it up to date.

The Report notes (page 79) that **the Local Plan review may lead to significant new housing, likely necessitating one or two secondary schools to serve Horsham, Billingshurst and neighbouring Crawley**. Subsequently, the document will be updated when more certainty is available, anticipated to be in 2026/27.

According to the Report, the historic trends for the Billingshurst area (the Weald School) Year 7 intake measured against planned admission numbers (PAN) indicates the school has been operating at or over capacity since 2021 (page 71). In 2025, there was 1% surplus capacity which is below the aforementioned 5% benchmark buffer.

The Report indicates that the forecast intake in Year 7 is expected to peak in 2028 with 108% of capacity in use and thereafter declining to 85% by 2035 (page 74). As noted, **these forecasts do not account for any updates to the council's housing trajectory**.

In the absence of these updates, we have modelled the potential impact of proposed new housing allocations in the Billingshurst school place planning area on the forecast intake of secondary school pupils.

WSCC apply a secondary school pupil yield of 0.16 per dwelling for secondary school pupils aged 11-16. We understand this is a reduction in pupil yield compared to previous rounds of school place planning (0.18) to reflect the decline in birth rates. This pupil yield has been applied to the Council's Housing Trajectories for Sites within the Billingshurst School Planning Area that are expected to come forward within the plan period.

This demonstrates that without units on Land at Adversane, the remaining units would generate a requirement for 197 secondary school places or 1.3 Forms of Entry increasing to 425 places and 2.8 Forms of Entry when units on Land at Adversane are included.

As noted earlier, The Weald Secondary School currently has just 1% (15 spaces) capacity amongst years 7 to 11.

Table 1-1: Total Pupil Yields (years 7-11) from Planned Housing Sites

Site/Settlement	Units within Plan Period	Total Pupil Yield	Forms of Entry
Land at Adversane	1,425	228	1.5
East of Billingshurst	1,000	160	1.1
Billingshurst (HA(NP2))	80	13	0.1
Pullborough (HA13)	25	4	0.0
Rudgwick and Bucks Green	105	17	0.1
Barns Green (BGR 3)	20	3	0.0
<i>Total with Adversane</i>	<i>2,655</i>	<i>425</i>	<i>2.8</i>
<i>Total without Adversane</i>	<i>1,230</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>1.3</i>

Source: GC Insight.

We have also modelled the impact of the housing sites listed in Table 1-1 above on the potential Year 7 intake and overlayed these with WSCC's forecasts set out on page 74 of their Planning School Places report which forecasts the Year 7 intake up to 2035 but excluding the above sites. In the absence of access to the impact model used by WSCC, we have had to make the following high-level assumptions:

- The baseline forecast year 7 intake (i.e. excluding the above housing sites) modelled by WSCC in their 2026 Planning School places Report remains at 255 from 2036 onwards (page 74).
- The Year 7 PAN remains constant at 300.
- The year 7 yield from the new housing allocations is based on the phasing set out in the "WSCC Additional Hearing Statement – Education" (see Appendix 1) for all sites.
- The year 7 yield also includes demand for places generated by planning applications submitted between 0.10.4.2025 and 01.10.2026 according to "WSCC Additional Hearing Statement – Education" which equates to 40 places per year from 2026/27 to 2030/31 and the equivalent of 8 Year 7 places using the method described below to estimate year 7 places.
- WSCC child yield of 0.16 is applied to each dwelling and then divided by 5 to estimate the number of pupils in year 7 alone.

Tables 1.2 and 1.3 below are indicative of the ongoing demand for secondary school places that surpasses the capacity of The Weald School both with and without Land at Adversane included.

Table 1-2: Billingshurst Secondary School Year 7 Pupil Intake Forecasts vs PAN

WITH Land at Adversane						WITHOUT Land at Adversane					
Year	PAN	WSCC Forecast Intake (without LP Sites)	Forecast Intake (with LP Sites)	Surplus/ deficit	% of Capacity in use	Year	PAN	WSCC Forecast Intake (without LP Sites)	Forecast Intake (with LP Sites)	Surplus/ deficit	% of Capacity in use
2026/27	300	299	307	-7	102%	2026/27	300	299	307	-7	102%
2027/28	300	314	332	-32	111%	2027/28	300	314	332	-32	111%
2028/29	300	325	352	-52	117%	2028/29	300	325	352	-52	117%
2029/30	300	313	350	-50	117%	2029/30	300	313	350	-50	117%
2030/31	300	316	366	-66	122%	2030/31	300	316	364	-64	121%
2031/32	300	287	343	-43	114%	2031/32	300	287	338	-38	113%
2032/33	300	295	359	-59	120%	2032/33	300	295	350	-50	117%
2033/34	300	296	369	-69	123%	2033/34	300	296	355	-55	118%
2034/35	300	271	352	-52	117%	2034/35	300	271	334	-34	111%
2035/36	300	255	345	-45	115%	2035/36	300	255	322	-22	107%
2036/37	300	255	354	-54	118%	2036/37	300	255	326	-26	109%
2037/38	300	255	364	-64	121%	2037/38	300	255	329	-29	110%
2038/39	300	255	373	-73	124%	2038/39	300	255	333	-33	111%
2039/40	300	255	380	-80	127%	2039/40	300	255	334	-34	111%

Source: WSCC and GC Insight